

THE AGRICULTURAL MACHINE MENACE

By David Sonley

GARGRAVE is a beautiful little place, right at the entrance to the Dales National Park and, indeed, the first village in the North Yorkshire Dales after passing through Skipton, the so called Entrance to The Dales and heading west. During the foot and mouth epidemic it was mind-numbing to see all the animals being slaughtered and the tourist trade simply disappearing. That is except for cyclists, who actually kept the cafes going. After that era, the farmers were compensated by the E.U. and given money which could only be spent on restocking and rebuilding the farms. They could also buy machinery and with the very generous grants they bought themselves very generous-sized machines and this is the point of this article.

Some of these machines are so big that they have virtually destroyed the hedgerows as they move through some of the narrow lanes around our area, the North Yorkshire Dales. It is almost impossible for these great machines to reverse and so any vehicle which meets them has to reverse until it gets into a place where the machine can pass them. This includes walkers, cyclists and motor vehicles. Some of the roads are Sustran tracks. The drivers of these vehicles do not need a driving licence or to be above 16 years old. Once these machines are in the fields there is plenty of room for the drivers to practice and, as I have been given to understand, so long as the roads they are going to drive on are adjacent or within a given distance from the owner's fields, they do not even have to have number plates on.

The whole scenario regarding these machines is a 'grey area' and it appears that anything goes. Who knows who owns a field?

To meet some of these machines - even on a wide road - on a bike is terrifying and how a caravan-towing car would get around meeting one in a country lane is food for thought. Most of these machines have come into existence on our lanes since Sustrans designated their routes. However, it looks as though these monsters are here to stay and I think it would be good to advise the walkers and cyclists of the dangers they could encounter, especially the touring cyclists with full panniers going through hilly areas like ours. Of course, the downhill tacks are the most dangerous.

The most dangerous vehicle for motor cyclists used to be tractors. Now it is AMs. We lose a lot of motor cyclists around our area. Motorbikes have no means of reversing if they are going downhill on a very narrow road!

That is enough for now but if you need any advice on things related to cycling in our area, I will be quite willing to help you as much as possible.

E-mail: davi-son@supanet.com

AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday, 11 May 2005 at the Wrenthorpe Methodist Hall, Wakefield.

The meeting opened at 11.45 a.m. with 25 members present including:

Acting Chairman, Colin Brewin

Acting Secretary, Ken Whitehead

Hon Treasurer, Des Hampshire

Committee Members, Graham Hall, and Roger Walker.

OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked members for attending on such a lovely sunny day. In the period he had been Chairman, he felt the committee had worked together very well and was sure they would continue to do so if re-elected.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

C. Reaburn, A. Winstanley, D. N. Benn, Mr. and Mrs. L. Reason, C. Owens. F. Mumford, E. Goodban, M. P. Payne, R. Bunce, C. Oxyby, K. Dickenson, J. Churchman, A. Miles, B. Ferguson.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The Secretary read the Minutes.

Proposed: H. Shaw.

Accepted unanimously.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

REPORTS

HON SECRETARY

The Secretary thanked all for attending and also all the postal voters, many having expressed their thanks for the work done by the committee. It is only by the members telling the committee what they want that will get the club that they want.

He thanked Clem Oxby for guiding the club through the 2004 AGM when he had to relinquish the Secretary's job. As no one else was willing to act as Secretary, he was asked if he would take the post on again.

At the first meeting it was felt that our prospects of continuing the magazine and the Birthday and Christmas cards were very short term. The result was the open letter in the Spoke Speak to which the response was immediate. The correspondence is ongoing and the Secretary thanked all.

He also thanked all those who donated cycle jumble for the two sales that he, Des and Denise had manned.

He requested that members help the Committee to contact members who are ill, injured or have had bereavement so that cards can be sent and perhaps a call made. Input was needed from the members.

There is news of two members. Harry Wilcock is now home from hospital and hoping to be able to drive again as his legs are still very weak. Bob Trippet has part of his leg amputated and is determined to ride again. Best wishes to both.

HON TREASURER.

The Treasurer read his end-of-year statement.

This was accepted as a true record with all in favour.

AUDITOR.

The Treasurer explained this was similar in content to the previous report. It was also accepted with all in favour.

The meeting unanimously agreed to reappoint Michael Pitt-Payne as Auditor

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

There was no report. (The Membership Secretary phoned and apologized after the meeting.)

MAGAZINE EDITOR.

Roger Walker read John Sole's report to the meeting. The main points were:

Two editions of Spoke Speak were planned for the last session but only the September edition was produced. The January edition failed due to a loss of data during a computer operating system upgrade.

The plan is now to publish Spoke Speak after the AGM to include the AGM reports then one or possibly two more before the next AGM depending on how much material is available.

This year's project is to tidy up the Spoke Speak web site and archive all the Spoke Speak magazine articles (including photographs) that have been published so far.

CARD SECRETARY.

Graham Hall read Brian Wey's report to the meeting. The main points were:

Because of family commitments, he considered relinquishing the office of Birthday and Christmas card coordinator but had decided to continue.

He recorded his appreciation of all donations that have been made and also paid tribute to the vital work carried out by Ken Whitehead in keeping up his personal contact with the elder members who are unable to get out and about as much as they would like. He paid tribute to Eric Walker for his considerable contribution in keeping the membership database up to date.

The latest Card Account receipts and payments show a surplus of £115.48 and there is sufficient stock of cards, envelopes and stamps for the current year.

The existing card design is over a year old but fresh designs and content will be available for use within the next three months. He requested members to try to make donations towards club funds from time to time so that the Birthday and Christmas cards may continue.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The Committee and Officers were proposed en- bloc.

The proposal was accepted unanimously.

(Note: there are still unfilled positions on the Committee. If you are interested, please contact any committee member.)

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

CONSTITUTION.

To accept that the Record Returns Card be deleted from the Constitution and Rules from 2006. (This is now covered by other checks.)

The resolution required two-thirds of votes cast.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

AGM

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

AGM 2006.

N. Hinchcliff proposed that the same venue be used. The proposal was accepted. The Secretary will book the venue.

MEMBERS.

G. Crossfield reported that Jim Bailey was ill. The Secretary will contact him.

P. Wilson reported Bry Ferguson was ill. The Secretary will contact him.

MAGAZINE.

N. Hinchcliff proposed an annual charge to ensure magazine remains viable. The proposal was rejected.

COMMITTEE

M. Oliver proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee. The proposal was accepted.

MEMBERSHIP REQUEST.

Mrs V Crossfield requested her membership be re-instated. The Secretary would attend to this.

CLOSURE

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.35 p.m.

Mary Matthews
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Ceramic Sculptures

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Autumn Tint s Cycling Comrades**Financial Statement for the period from 1st January 2004
to 31st December 2004**

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>PAYMENTS</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
Donations	541.00	568.37	Stationery & Printing	209.47	655.65
Subscriptions	137.00	45.00	Postage	320.33	
Sale of Badges	74.00	29.50	M D Crossfield	0.00	500.00
Dinner Ticket sales	306.00	236.00	Dinner - cost	295.75	224.75
Advertisements	107.50	62.50	Birthday Cards	68.00	112.00
Bank Interest	1.31	1.39	Christmas Cards		40.00
T-Shirts sales	59.00	30.00	Engraving Badges	26.00	27.50
Bike Parts Sale	56.00	<u>0.00</u>	AGM	32.10	21.92
			Treasurer's Expenses	9.00	25.96
			2005 Dinner Deposit	100.00	0.00
Total Receipts	1281.81	972.76	Total Payments	1060.65	1607.78
Loss for the year	0.00	635.02	Profit for the year	221.16	0.00
	<u>£1,281.81</u>	<u>£1,607.78</u>		<u>£1,281.81</u>	<u>£1,607.78</u>

Cash Summary

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
Opening Bank Balance	1267.82	1902.84
Plus Profit for 2004	221.16	0.00
Less Loss for 2003	0.00	635.02

Bank	1474.93
Cash	<u>14.05</u>

Closing Cash Balance **£1,488.98** **£1,267.82**

Stocks of Stamps, T-shirts & Badges at Sales Value

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>		<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
	59	70	T-shirts	£295.00	£420.00
	5	27	Badges	£17.50	£94.50
			Stamps	£8.89	£10.60
Dinner Deposit paid in advance				£100.00	£0.00

I have prepared this statement on the basis of the information presented to me and confirm that I have seen appropriate documentation to support the payments included in it.



M. G. Pitt-Payne FCA

Club News

CLUB NEWS

Compiled by Ken Whitehead
and Eric Walker

Ethel Dorothy Ronald	Liverpool	94
James Ashworth	Colne	95
John Holmes	Halifax	98
Fred Eldershaw	Bolton	96
Bernard Hall	Otley	90
Jack Welbourne	Woodbridge	96
James Nichols	Smethwick	99
J Gilbert Lawton	Huddersfield	95
F E Norris	Stoke-on-Trent	102
Winifred Taylor	Kendal	93
Leslie James Brown	Lockerbie	92
Ken Robinson	Keighley	90
Arthur Sykes	Hipperholme	95
Bernard Rangely	Huddersfield	91
Frederick Ellis	Huddersfield	91
John Reginald Poplewell	Dewsbury	91
John Field	Leeds	90
Archie Steel	Pontefract	100
Edith Rose Surman	Ipswich	94
Alfred Price	Burnley	92
Charles Imeson	Middlesborough	91
Gerald Cecil Jameson-Green	Wakefield	91
Eric Arthur Jowett	Harrogate	92
Frederick Charles Gardiner	Ipswich	91
Joe S Kipling	Leeds	93
Mary Alicia Willcock	Worsley	95
Eunice Richardson	Rotheram	97
Arthur Beecroft	York	93
James Murray	Edinburgh	90
Joseph Laycock	Keighley	95
J W Young	Liverpool	94
S J Dolby	Syston	97
Richard Henry Jones	Manchester	93
Fred Howard	Stockport	92
George Gould	Great	99

Fred Howard	Stockport	91
Frank Mumford	Ormskirk	90

NEW MEMBERS

Jeri Battye	Sheffield
David L. Bisset	Bolton
Patrick P. Brennan	Isle of Wight
Gordon J. Bushell	Isle of Wight
Keith Charlesworth	Huddersfield
Charlie Cramack	Hull
John G. Firth	Halifax
Derrick Fisher	Huddersfield
Trevor Garner	Huddersfield
Stephen Garthwright	Bolton
Paul A. Hackin	Bolton
Joyce Hampshire	Wakefield
Brierley Hellowell	Mytholmroyd
James A. Horrocks	Bolton
John Loy	Bradford
Betty Machin	Horbury
Harry Machin	Horbury
Richard Makin	Huddersfield
Colin Marsland	Wakefield
Cameron McCready	Huddersfield
Joe Naylor	Huddersfield
Michael O'Leary	Halifax
James R. Palmer	Wakefield
David Riley	Doncaster

Derek Smith	Barnsley	
John L. Steggles	Norfolk	
Dave Watson	Oldham	
John W. Whiteley	Halifax	
Millar K. Wright	Larne, Antrim	Co.

SADLY DECEASED

Mary Aughton	Hitchin	98
Harry Brooks	Lincoln	81
Reg Cross	Dewsbury	86
Philip Furniss	Knottingley	
Frieda Hardaker	Bingley	84
Hewie Hews	Canada	92
Herbert Lambert	Huddersfield	89
Joe Marsden	Keighley	69
Amy McLarty	Lancs	67
Offord Miles	Bradford	84
E Nelson	Wigan	92
Frank Ramsden	Halifax	67
Norman Riley	Halifax	90
John Rosbotham	Rochdale	89
John Staynes	North Allerton	74
Patrick Thomas	Keighley	91
John Wood	York	87

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

THE COMMITTEE have recently received a request to reinstate Mrs V Crossfield's membership of the Autumn Tints. Her membership was revoked by a previous committee a few years ago and many of you will recall the circumstances that led to this drastic action.

If you would like to comment on this request, please write to me or telephone me as soon as possible so that I can put your views to the Committee at their next meeting. Time is short so do not delay your response to this request. My address and telephone number is on the back page of this edition of *Spoke Speak*.

Ken Whitehead
Hon Secretary

AUTUMN TINTS NATIONAL DINNER

The National Dinner will be held at

**The Dickensian Restaurant
Smithills Coaching House
Smithills Dean Road
Bolton**

On Saturday, 29 October 2004

At 12 noon for 12.30

**Tickets are priced at a very reasonable
£10 including a free prize draw**

No need to select your meal now from the three course menu; you will be able to do this on arrival. Tickets are available from Fleur Woolley or Ken Whitehead.

Please state how many tickets you require and make your cheque payable to Autumn Tints.

SELLING THE TINTS

By **Bill Houlder (Publicity Officer)**

DO NOT worry we're not quite that short of cash - yet - but in reality that is what my job of Publicity is really about.

To have any future a group like ours has to keep on selling new memberships to replace those removed by natural wastage. So far we have relied upon people wanting to join their friends in the Tints and we've done pretty well out of it. But there has always been plenty of cyclists who do not know about cycling in general and other cyclists in particular. These unfortunates are out there ploughing a lonely furrow and are unaware of the advantages of joining us, because they've never heard of us. Some might call them strangers, but are they really strangers? Many could be long-lost friends who stopped cycling and lost touch. Others might be friends of friends we have lost touch with due to the breaking of that tenuous link between us.

I do not plan to go daft and start an avalanche of new members letters and applications pouring in. While it might improve our short-term finances it would

also boost our outgoings too. Slow and steady is my aim to boost our membership. But I cannot do it without some help from you, yes you, the members of Autumn Tints. My main reference work is the "Writers' and Artists' Yearbook" of which I buy a copy every couple of years. But, it only carries the addresses of newspapers of regional significance. Often the most read paper in many areas is the local weekly. I need the addresses of these papers to get our message across. There may be a useful side effect of my using these papers. They like to feature local people who do interesting or unusual things. Of course we know that cycling and the Tints are not unusual, but a harassed reporter looking for someone different does not. Sorry I cannot promise that you will get into the paper, if I could do that I would be competing with Max Clifford for well-paying clients!

I need the address of your local weekly newspaper (NOT the advert-only freebie), your name, age, address, telephone number and an outline of your cycling career.

BICYCLE CHAINS

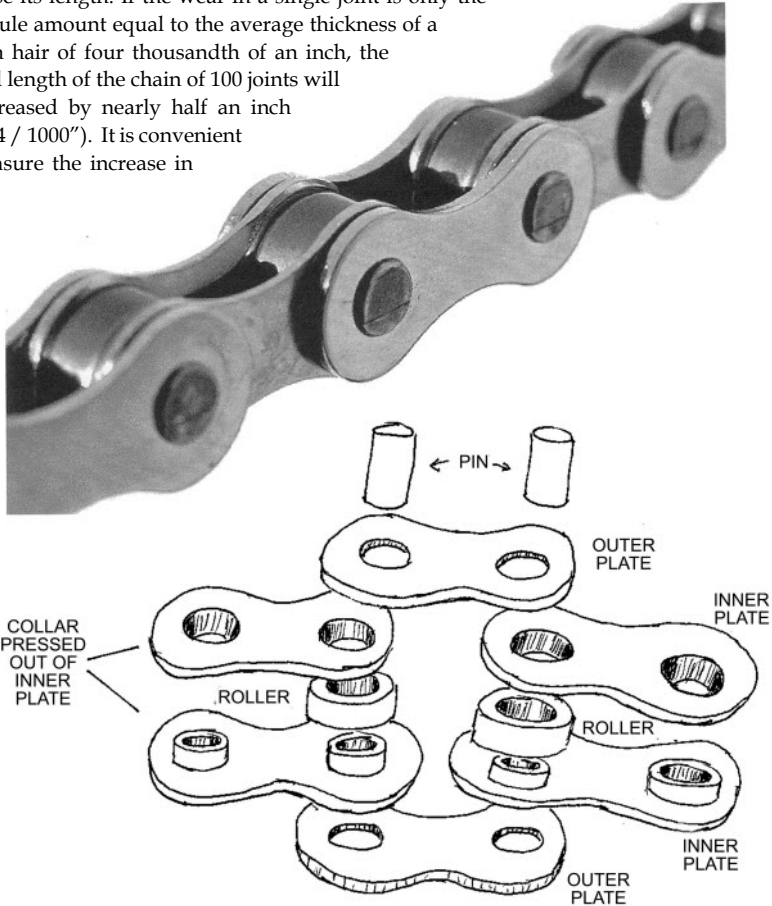
ONE MEMBER'S IDIOSYNCRATIC APPROACH TO THEIR PROBLEMS

by **Clem Oxby**

A BICYCLE chain is made up of about 100 short stubby pins, 100 short cylindrical hollow rollers and 200 flat dumbbell-shaped metal plates. Some plates, the outer ones, have plain holes at their ends, and others, the inner ones, have a small collar pressed around the holes around which the rollers rotate and through which the pins pass from an outer plate on one side of the chain to an outer plate on the other side to hold the joint together since the pins are a very tight fit in the holes of these outer plates - see attached diagram.

Bike Chains

As the chain flexes over the two plastic pulleys forming the gear-changing mechanism, a chainwheel at the cranks, and a cog on the back wheel - with the strain of the cyclist's powerful thrust on the pedals - the inside surface of the holes in the rollers rotate over the outside surface of the collars which are part of the inner plates, and the pins rotate inside the collars. So within each joint in a chain of 100 joints or so there are four surfaces subject to wear, which will increase its length. If the wear in a single joint is only the miniscule amount equal to the average thickness of a human hair of four thousandth of an inch, the overall length of the chain of 100 joints will be increased by nearly half an inch ($100 \times 4 / 1000$). It is convenient to measure the increase in



- 1) The rollers rotate around the outside of the collars
- 2) The inside of the collars rotate around the pins
- 3) The pins are a tight fit in the hole in the outer plates

Bike Chains

length using a steel rule laid alongside the chain while it's on the bike. For a 12" rule a "hair's width" wear in a single joint will lead to an increase in length of about one tenth of an inch. When this length increases to twice this or greater, the chain needs to be replaced.

The expression "chain's stretch" is incorrect: chain length increases are caused by the minuscule amount of wear at each of the joints.

To decrease the amount of wear chain manufacturers coat the chains in a grease as a lubricating agent that also prevents rusting. However, with bicycle chains exposed to weather and road grime, the chain gets caked with the fine grit, which is one of road grime's main ingredients. When the bike's owner becomes aware that the grease is drying up (grease is a mixture of soap and oil) he or she usually applies a liberal amount of oil. The grease, but especially the oil, readily forms the filthy and gritty slime which most cyclists are all only too familiar! The grit is partly composed of fine particles of silica, which in pure form is the engineering abrasive, silicon oxide, caused by the break-up of the stone and concrete of the road's surface, and held in suspension in the oil. This then penetrates, by capillary action, between all the adjoining surfaces of the chain's joints causing the wear described above.

HOW TO CARE FOR A BICYCLE CHAIN

What lubricant to buy.

It follows from above that while we want a substance to apply to the chain to prevent it rusting and to lubricate it; we don't want any substance that will retain any road grime to which the chain is exposed. 'Liquid' substances are therefore undesirable, such as the universally available oil and grease. 'Dry' lubricants are available from a few specialised retailers: the one which is readily available is

a suspension of fine particles of Teflon in a solvent contained in a spray can. The one I use is sold under the label TF2 in tall green cans in many bicycle shops, and the same product is also sold in Halford's Cycle Departments in a grey can entitled 'Cycle Spray', or similar - about £3.50. This product has six times the amount of the active ingredient, Teflon, as has its more readily available competitor GT85 - sold in a red can. So buy the TF2 or Halford's Cycle Spray, not the GT85. (Make sure the can is equipped with its fine plastic applicator tube.) It is an extremely clean product to use and handle and doesn't cause any staining of hands or clothes.

To use the TF2.

First lean the bicycle upright against a wall with a newspaper or equivalent underneath the back wheel and chainwheel, with the chain going over the smallest cog at the back and the largest or middle ring at the front. Place the applicator tube in the hole of the can's cap and then rest its length horizontally pointing forwards along the top surface of the bottom rung of the chain and adjacent to the tyre. Slowly rotate the cranks anti-clockwise to check that you can retain the applicator tube resting in its position while doing so. Then press the can's cap to release the spray towards the bottom of the chainwheel while rotating the cranks anti-clockwise until the chain is thoroughly wetted; stop when drips appear from the chainwheel. It may be helpful to rest the cut-off side of a cereal packet against the wheel nearest to where you are spraying to avoid unwanted lubrication of the rim's braking surfaces. The wet coating will dry overnight, and I usually help it to do so by rotating the cranks occasionally as I pass by.

When to use the TF2.

Either with a new chain or one already in use, wait until the chain goes slightly rusty before

using the TF2 as described. While the chain is not rusty, even if it's bright and shiny because it is dry, no harm is being done since there is little or no abrasive grit to cause wear. Repeat the treatment only, as I've already said, when the chain is going very slightly rusty, that is, after the bike's dried out following a ride in the rain. You'll negate the benefit of this method if you treat the chain more often since this will make it tacky causing it to collect the road grit. There is no need to let the chain dry after treatment before using the bike, but if you use the bike with a 'wet' chain then the risk of marking skin and clothes is greatly increased.

For a really dirty chain, spray as above but while still 'wet' do the following. Wrap a piece of cotton towelling (stolen from wife's linen cupboard) loosely around the chain's bottom rung, hold the rag loosely in one hand while rotating the cranks anti-clockwise - rearranging the towelling to present a fresh

piece as deemed necessary. Leave to dry as before. Repeat the process the next time the chain needs lubricating if it is still dirty. (Chuck mucky towel away before wife sees it.)

BENEFIT OF DRY LUBRICATION

- ♦ Increased chain life
- ♦ Less build up of grime on transmission components
- ♦ Less grimy marks on clothing and skin
- ♦ More convenient to repair transmission breakdowns and rear punctures.
- ♦ Cleaner hands for the repairer, either at the roadside or at home.



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Bike Wheels

TYING AND SOLDERING WHEELS

By Tony Carter

FOR the benefit of our “younger” members, this involves fastening the spokes together with thin wire where they cross. If you want wheels that are responsive and almost bombproof, this is the way to go. Once your wheels are tied and soldered, broken spokes will be a thing of the past.

The practice has gone out of fashion in recent years, one of the reasons being that solder is disinclined to stick to stainless steel spokes. However, it is the tying that does the trick and the solder really only serves to stop the wire unravelling. As long as the solder sticks to the wire, that is all that matters.

You will need:

- A large electric soldering iron. (The job can be done with a 40 watt iron, but you really need one that is twice that size.)
- A brass wire brush and a Scotchbrite scourer.
- A roll of 0.4 mm tinned iron wire. (This is the ideal type of wire and it is supplied by “DT Proline”. It is unfortunately quite expensive. “Maplins” sell 28 swg “Constantan” wire that is much the same at less than half the price.)
- A reel of plumbers’ lead-free solder wire. (Don’t try using cored solder as the flux just makes a mess.)

- A tin of Baker’s soldering fluid and a small paintbrush. (Don’t use plumbers flux as it is intended for use with brass and copper.)

Clean the wheel up as much as possible before you start and, if you are working with a rear wheel, remove the block. Remove every trace of grease from the spokes.

The process probably works best if you place the wheel horizontally on a bucket, but you will quickly get backache. It is easier to work on a bench with the wheel leaning against the wall.

Method

If the job is to be successful, cleanliness is of paramount importance. Use the wire brush to clean the spokes where they cross [nearest crossing to the rim] and then use the scourer to get them as clean as possible.

Apply flux to each crossing using the paintbrush and then leave to dry.

Don’t try using short bits of wire; it is easier to pull the wire tight if you work from the reel. Working away from the hub, push about 5 mm of wire between a pair of spokes and bend it down. Wrap the wire tightly round the spokes, trapping the short end. Six turns should be enough. They should lie side by side and you should push them close together with a screwdriver. Finish by passing the wire between the spokes and then pulling the reel sharply towards the hub to break off the wire.

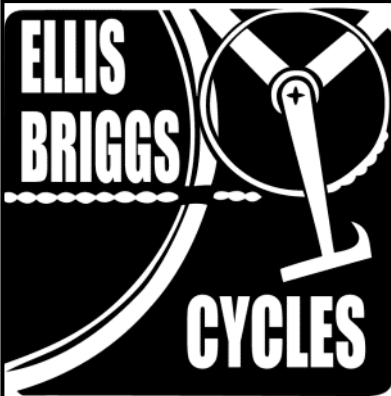
Apply flux to each joint using the paintbrush.

Place the solder onto the joint and then place the hot iron onto the solder. When the solder melts it will quickly run into the

joint. Remove the solder, but keep the iron in place for a short while. Place the iron underneath the joint to encourage the solder to flow through. Remove the iron and immediately tap the spoke with a spanner so that excess solder is knocked

off. You should be able to see the clear outline of the wire.

When all the crossings are tied and soldered, scrub them with detergent and hot water.



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THREE-WHEELING AROUND SCOTLAND.

By Walter Hamilton

IT WAS around ten, when I climbed out of South Queensferry heading for the capital. At Barnton I turned left down to the beautiful little harbour of Cramond, then along the river's south bank to Granton and Cramond. The salt air was strong in my nostrils and truthfully this is the one sense that makes me homesick. With the rapturous applause - and a lot of poetic license - still

ringing in my ears from the slide show that I had presented to my cycling club just before leaving for Fife, my camera was loaded up with transparency film so that I might have a slide-show ready for the Tints on their next visit to Otley clubhouse.

It had been some 20 years since I was last in Edinburgh, so there were many new

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sights to see. Britannia, now moored at Leith docks, was my first port of call. Much had changed in Leith since last I visited and I was greeted with newly built high-rise blocks with hoarding around their base announcing "Sky liner, modern homes for modern living": didn't they try this in the 1960s and then had to blow them up in the 1980s? Britannia was hidden behind a shopping complex: a clone that can be found in any major city. Access onboard to Britannia was through this building but not without handing over very large denominational coins of the realm at the entrance. I sneaked round the back but was thwarted by a very high fence so fitted a telephoto lens to my camera. The sight that flooded into the view-finder was devastating: this once beautiful ship was a shadow of her former self. She was covered from stem to

stern in grim and dust with paintwork dull and peeling. Ok, she no longer has a hundred or so sailors to keep her spick and span, however if this is the best Edinburgh can do, better that she had been given to a ship museum such as the one at Bristol.

Heading through Holyrood Park and the Abbey ruins, the Palace of Holyrood still stood as resplendent as ever. Something that can not, by any stretch of imagination, be said about the new Parliament building. If ever a building was built to dispel the stereotype of the Scotsman as a mean character who throws his money about like a man without arms and is prudent and canny, this is it, and ugly into the bargain. I am told that, allegedly, the architect and consultant engineers are living in tax exile in Monaco.

I headed up onto Princes Street passing the old Parliament buildings where I ran into a procession of bicycles so thought I would join in the fun. I quickly found out that this was a protest 'Vote Yes', a referendum on imposing a tax if you entered Edinburgh with your car. Being a seasoned campaigner and protester, (remember the Ban The Bomb campaigns of the 60s?), I quickly established a defence just in case I was arrested and brought before the beak on Monday. "I was only an innocent bystander, me Lud." Then I would search out the pod of suited American lawyers; "Police Brutality, False Arrest," I'd shout.

The whole thing was a folly; a referendum asking the same drivers who enter Edinburgh every day with their cars, if they wished to pay for the privilege of doing so. Oh yes, they are going to vote "yes" to that, no bother. With the bunch of wasters they have in the new Scottish Parliament, what can one expect. The only way for the minorities to have a say is to vote in a good strong dictatorship just like we had under Maggie Thatcher. Travelling along Princes Street, the TV cameras were rolling and the tricycle stood out like a sore thumb even in the crowd, so when I tuned into the evening news, there I was waving with all my might, "See Mum, I'm doing it myself." "Ay, ah see you son, you're really clever".

Dunfermline is a historic town and when I was at Lauder College, we had to do a guided tour as part of our communication classes. I did a tour of the town and was surprised that I still remembered much of it. With camera at the ready, I performed a circumnavigation from the home of the first king to the 'turn of the century' mill.

Last time I visited Scotland, I went over to Falkirk to see the Falkirk Wheel, a device that took boats from the Union Canal down to the Clyde Canal without the use of numerous locks. I was so impressed with the wheel that I decided to spend a day cycling there to take some photographs to use as part of the slide show. So at around nine o'clock on a beautiful sunny morning, I set off to Falkirk.

It was an easy ride out along the north shore of the Firth of Forth to Kincardine but the next few miles to the Airth Roundabout were a little hairy; I joined a sixty-miles-per-hour train of nose-to-tail cars and lorries that had little patience for a three-wheeled pedalling machine. Then I was back onto the quieter roads to Falkirk.

At the Wheel, I shot off around half a spool of film, hoping that at least a few would show the simple but effective way the lift works. The gondolas are full to the brim with water so that when a boat sailed into the gondola, it displaced its own weight in water, keeping both arms of the wheel in equilibrium. Then the wheel turns, lifting the boat the equivalent height of three double-decked buses.

The weather had been superb: cold but clear and crisp. Still, time and tide, as they say, awaits no man and all too soon, my time had run and I was once more heading down the road for Yorkshire. On my arrival home, I had great difficulty in getting the door of the house open against the deluge of junk mail that lay behind it and to my disappointment no fairies had been so that meant I had to do my own house work. But not today, manyana.

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