

GLOUCESTER CITY CYCLING CLUB



Spokespiece

Autumn 2026



The Newsletter of the Gloucester City Cycling Club



Autumn 2026



EDITORIAL

What a hot and dry summer we have had, a total change from the wet winter and made all the more welcome for the contrast. Although the heat was too much for some most of us enjoyed the opportunities to be free of mudguards and rain jackets, perhaps riding a bit earlier in the day instead. All in all it has been a great season for touring, so no apologies for focusing on that in this issue.

We have contenders for both the McLeod Trophy (best UK tour) and the Prestbury Cancer Centenary (formerly Gouda) Trophy (best overseas tour) and the second part of a story from the Audax archives, featuring the Editor in his younger days.

The TT scene, despite lack of representation here, [The Flèche Vélocio, 1981 part 2](#) 3
has thrived Despite being plagued with road [National Cycle Route 1](#) 6
works forcing many last minute course changes. [A tour of Bordeaux](#) 11
At least it may mean that we have fewer potholes [In Memoriam](#) 17
next year!

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Contributions for the next issue please to Spokespiece@gmail.com

The Flèche Vélocio, 1981 (continued)

Monday marked the start of phase two of our trip - a 'holiday-ride' We headed out via Bédoin and Carpentras for Mount Ventoux, which Malcolm Taylor said did not look very large - from a distance! It took us a further two and a half hours to reach the top but, being April, the air was not hot and the climbing was pleasant. We kept to our own pace up the mountain and regrouped at the memorial to Tommy Simpson where we paid our respects at 1.30p.m. on Easter Monday. There were, I am pleased to say, fresh cut flowers on the memorial stone.



Café-au-lait and a "jambon sandwich" then we put on our

jackets for the 21km descent to Malaucène but, alas, there was one whole kilometre of road being resurfaced and we had to pick our way carefully over the hardcore base. We got to Pont St. Esprit on the Rhone and decided to find an hotel for the night.



Next morning it was raining - the only rain during the whole of our tour - but it had stopped before we left the hotel for the gorge of Ardèche. Here the river has carved its way deeply into the plateau and the valley sides are hundreds of feet high.

At one point there is the "Pont d'Arc" - a natural rock bridge which the river left behind.

We lunched at Vallon after following the river for some 40 kms. Time was pressing and we were falling behind our schedule of 95 miles for the day. We cycled through the Riom defile

where the road is "let into" the mountain side, so that the rock above overhangs it, and got to L'Argentière where we took the quiet D24 for the Col du Meyrand.

A brief look at the map had us thinking that we had a steady ascent of 30kms to the 1371m summit, but after a closer inspection we noticed the crossing of two watersheds before the climb proper. The scenery was really beautiful and Malcolm came to the same conclusion as Les and myself, that the views and graded roads made cycling in this region absolutely superb and well-worth the effort.



A brief look at the map

Reaching the top of the col we watched

a farmer going home to his upland pasture farmhouse in his bullock drawn cart while we waited for Lawrie, who arrived soon after. A short descent and another climb saw us at the



The author takes some refreshment

top of the Col du Pendo (1430m) which is part of the Velay-Viverrais randonnée for 1981. We now had a descent to Lanarce and the main road to follow to Le Puy. But the descent incorporated a sharp climb to catch us out at which Malcolm remarked, "That was the hardest DESCENT I've ever climbed!"

Noticing a hotel in Lanarce we decided to cut short our day's ride and not go on to Le Puy, which turned out to be a wise decision as there were few suitable stopping places thereafter. When we awoke, next day, we looked out to see frost on the roofs of the cars parked outside the hotel, which reminded us that we were 4,500 feet above sea level. By the time we had finished breakfast the frost had gone.

We left Lanarce for Le Puy on the well-surfaced RN102, gazing across the plains in the clear air. On reaching Le Puy in mid-morning, we felt that we should alter our previous plan to cycle to

Vichy and enquired about trains to Paris that would also carry our cycles. We found that the best option was to ride to Clermont-Ferand and take a train from there.

Leaving Le Puy, we marvelled at the volcanic stumps - often having a church at their top - that give the town its name. It was later, on the road to Briouche, that Les Lowe noticed the catastrophic results of his collision with the kerb in Villefranche for the first time. The small dent, first noticed at Pernes, had developed into a crack that broke the down tube.

Lawrie Harrison and I went on ahead to find a hotel near to Clermont, leaving Malcolm to accompany Les at a more sedate pace, seeking a garage for emergency repairs. This comprised fixing two strips of metal to his down-tube with two jubilee clips.



We had a quick stop in Issoire for refreshment and took to the dual carriageway to avoid the hills and villages - a most boring run, but a route chosen to preserve Les' frame. We had arranged to meet Les and Malcolm at the sign for CLERMONT and left a note there for them - which they failed to see - whilst we went into the town to fix-up digs, some 5 kms from the centre-ville. We returned to the sign to find the others waiting there, as had been arranged, and we pedalled off for our evening meal.

We were up early next morning to catch the 7.30 a.m. train for Paris where Les and I left Malcolm and Lawrie to make their way by train and boat to take part in the Dorset Coast 200.

We all had a good time and thoroughly enjoyed the experiences.

Steve Nicholas, Audax U.K. founder member

Some news, and an offer, from former President Ted Tedaldi

Unfortunately Ted has been advised by his Doctor and Physio to retire from cycling, the pain from arthritis being too great. As a result Ted has a fair amount of clothing, especially gold kit, for sale. For more detail please contact him at sandra.ted@talktalk.net.

Ted has won the Clubman of the Year Trophy and the Judd (BAR) Trophy five times each, as well as trophies for the fastest 100, 50, and 25 on multiple occasions. He continues to serve the Club as a Committee Member. It is sad when such a distinguished rider has to hang up his wheels, but that day comes to us all eventually.

We thank him for all he has done for the Club.

National Cycle Route 1 (well, some of it)

Before COVID 19 hit the world I had planned to ride part of NCR 1 with John C, with whom I had done several tours in the past; France, North to South (2004), and LEJOG (2016) being two of our memorable rides. Unfortunately, a month or so before that planned ride, I went down with a nasty infection that resulted in a brief period of hospitalisation and so I was not fit enough to ride. With accommodation all booked John C went ahead on his own but I always had in mind to do the ride and so in 2025 it was resurrected. John and I decided we would include two other good tour mates – Ted M and Mike W so planning went ahead using the experiences of the 2019 excursion.

Routes and other travel arrangements were firmed up but as the date grew closer John had to withdraw and Ted enlisted another to join us – Tom G. I travelled up by train from Gloucester to Edinburgh (6.5 hours direct) for just over £30. Not bad, when you book in advance with a railcard. Ted and Mike travelled up from London and Tom rode across from Carlisle over two days. Arriving in Edinburgh at 17:10 hrs meant I had to negotiate city traffic in order to reach overnight accommodation. However, having visited Edinburgh in January to watch Gloucester Rugby play Edinburgh RFC in a European match meant that the roads were not so strange and I'm used to city traffic.

We had set ourselves 4 ½ days to ride from Edinburgh to York via the northeast coast and North York Moors.

Day One – Edinburgh to Eyemouth

A nippy northerly was blowing with a morning temperature well into single figures, if you include the chill factor! But hey, that meant we had a tailwind! We donned as much clothing as we could to keep warm and dry – there was some light rain in the grey air (dreich as they say up in 'haggis' land). We hoped it would get no worse, for a sharp storm shower would be very inhospitable. Using the cycle route the countryside was very peaceful, and we did see some sun. The last few miles, though, towards Eyemouth was a sprint as we could see over our shoulders a rather nasty heavy rain shower approaching from the North Sea and we certainly did not want



Eyemouth Beach

to get caught. The hotel was reached nice and dry, thankfully. A hearty meal of fish and chips with local beer was eagerly consumed at a local pub – The Contented Sole - and we were very ‘contented souls’ after that nosebag.

54 miles, 2,400 ft elevation

Day Two – Eyemouth to Alnwick

The weather looked more favourable than the day before although there was still a very cold north wind, not quite what I had in mind back in 2025 when planning a May ride but



Crossing the border

it was dry and a helpful tail wind, nonetheless.

We headed inland from Eyemouth for a while before cycling along two major transport routes after Burnmouth – the A1 and the northeast main train line - where we crossed over into England past a famous battle site and on to Berwick-upon-Tweed. The siege of Berwick in 1333 lasted four months and resulted in the Scottish town of Berwick-upon-Tweed being captured by the English army commanded by King Edward III (r. 1327–1377).

An interesting fact is that Berwick Rangers Football Club are famous as the English club that plays in the Scottish League. It enjoys a place in history with their 1967 Scottish Cup victory over Glasgow Rangers, still widely renowned as one of the greatest ever cup shocks!

After a warming coffee and cake we cycled over the narrow bridge to Tweedmouth and



The Tweed bridge



Causeway to Lindisfarne

thereafter to stop at Holy Island. Sadly, the high tide was advancing well and with water ingress into bike and / or footwear not being desirable, we admired the island from a distance.

The next highlight was Bamburgh Castle, but NCR 1 did not get close to it, so we contented ourselves with a view from afar. Note to self – return for a much closer look. This section of the ride did suffer from the one and only puncture and that did warrant a change of outer later in the ride. The rider (not me) is not a fan of tubeless! Alnwick – The White Swan Inn - was reached in the sunshine where we imbibed local beers and a large tasty Turkish meal; we were hungry bike tourers after all. Alnwick is a Northumberland town known for its rich history, tourist attractions and its strong links to the Harry Potter franchise and is often mispronounced by tourists (we used ‘Annick’).

The market town is known for its stunning castle and gardens, but it was one of the world’s most successful film franchises that brought it global fame. Alnwick's Castle was immortalised as the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the first two Harry Potter films - most prominently featured in the scene where eponymous hero Harry learns how to ride a broom for the first time. Dubbed as the "Windsor of the North," Alnwick has also been named among the UK’s best places to live in 2026.



Alnwick Castle

54 miles, 3,022 ft

Day Three - Alnwick to Roker

We left Alnwick in the sunshine although we did take some time to view the castle, which did not open until 1000 hours (another note to self) and headed out to Alnmouth to pick up the excellent coastal NCR 1. Unbeknown to me, there was another magnificent castle to view – Warkworth – which commands the picturesque River Coquet.

The river has been used as a source of power, as several mills were constructed along its length. One of the earliest was on Hepden Burn, a tributary in the upper reaches, which was mentioned in the early 13th century. The river flows into the North Sea at Amble.

The ride took us by Druridge Bay, part of the Northumberland Heritage Coast, onto and through Blyth to Tynemouth to catch the ferry



Warkworth Castle

from North Shields to South Shields.

NCR 1 is very near the coast here, and the wind was making the sea pound the coastline rather spectacularly in places. Although I enjoy a dip in the sea, I had no intention of being drenched by very cold saltwater crashing over! We almost cycled past our next stop - The Roker Hotel – because we were distracted by the great sea views to our left. More local beverages were taken on board along with an in-house tasty meal. One thing I like about touring, you need not worry about your waistline so fastidiously, and local delicacies can be tasted.

51 miles, 1,870 ft

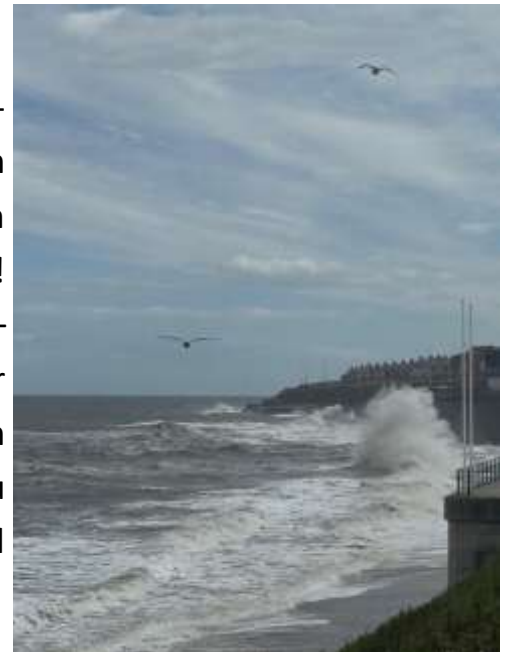
Day Four – Roker to Wombledon

Our route now meant that we had to leave the coast and turn inland to the North York Moors but before hitting those heights we left Roker along Dame Dorothy Street, which took its name from Dame Dorothy Williamson. She was married to the second Baronet Sir Thomas Williamson of East Markham in Nottinghamshire. Upon her death in 1699, she bequeathed a yearly sum to charities for the poor of the town, which is still distributed every Maundy Thursday to elderly people in the city.

We crossed the Wear using Wearmouth Bridge, which was traffic free that Sunday for a half marathon. Once we got out of the built-up area we cycled for a fair distance on a repurposed railway track – the Hart to Haswell Walkway, passing Shotton Colliery - with a particularly good flat surface. The only drawback was that the hedges either side hid good views of the countryside. But it was traffic free, and the weather was kind. A refreshment



Entering the North York Moors



stop was the now repurposed Thorpe Thewles railway station. At one point, we were directed over a slag heap – an extremely hard flattish black mound of coal mining waste. I have not encountered that before and it is something by which I will remember this excursion.

More refreshment was then taken at the aptly named Rusty Bike café at Swainby before we entered the North York Moors – hill climbing country! The first climb up was certainly a

lung buster – thank goodness for a triple chainset (26/34). We all took our own time on that one! We turned left before Cod Beck Reservoir, which resulted in a group split with Mike and I deciding to take the planned, but very hilly route. Our first hill was heavy gravel and steep, the only time we had to walk. The other two decided to take a flatter but more circuitous route. Well, we two were well rewarded with the views and a tailwind. The sun was out and I even took off my arm warmers. We cycled through some picturesque dales with challenging climbs, but splendid views. A brief stop in Helmsley (another note to self) was used to check the whereabouts of the “lightweights” before heading to our stop at Wombleton, a noticeably quiet village, just a few miles east. Now, the pub was closing at 2000 hrs and did not do food on Sunday’s, so during the evening before at Roker we had preplanned to order a takeout from Kirkbymoorside (good adoption of the six P’s axiom). That was placed by phone, so just enough time to nip up t’pub for a local pint of Timothy Taylor’s. The last day follows next...

67 miles, 4,350 ft

Day four point five – Wombleton to York

This was a much shorter day as it allowed the four of us to catch a train home without another overnight stay. The route did have one reasonable climb, but we had a tailwind again. A “Road Closed” sign was ignored and, luckily, we were able to get through. We did have a road closure earlier in the tour on NCR 1 but specific cyclist diversionary signs had been erected, which were most helpful. In general, more thought is needed for road closures as not all folks have machine power. We arrived in the delightful city of York in plenty of time to have a very tasty brunch and a change of clothes for travelling before the journey home. Luckily, I got on with my seat reserved and empty. It later transpired that the seat reservation system wasn’t working and someone at a later stop had somehow booked the same seat; earlier rightful possession ensured I didn’t have to stand!

22.5 miles, 1,030 ft

A great tour. We used Komoot, which had details of every turn, which allowed us to concentrate on our surroundings without hesitation or deviation and so to maximise the enjoyment of bike touring.

I can highly recommend the route.

Ed Spurway



We came, we cycled, we drank wine. A tour of Bordeaux.



For Christmas someone bought me 'The World Atlas of Wine' and it inspired us to explore the countryside and coast around Bordeaux. The plan was train to Portsmouth, then a ferry to Ouistreham, then trains from Caen to Bordeaux via Paris.

I had arranged the route to Caen to follow the lovely canal and then take us on a brief tour of the old town of Caen.

We took the train to Cosham for a nicer ride to the ferry that passes this charming mural.

We were so engrossed in the sightseeing that time got away from us rather, and we had a somewhat undignified dash across town to the station, then a rather stressful scramble to get the big bikes into a small lift and across to the very crowded platform for the train to Paris.

I'd planned a scenic route through Paris too, as we couldn't pass up the opportunity to cycle past the Eiffel Tower. It was an amazing experience, mad traffic, world famous landmarks, but we made incredibly slow progress and were very tight for time when we reached Montparnasse. We didn't manage to get lunch before boarding the train. Triss was not happy.



Sightseeing on the way to catch trains is now strictly forbidden, and I had to book a table at a

Caen features impressive castle walls and a beautiful town hall.

very upmarket restaurant in Bordeaux that evening as compensation.

The route out of Bordeaux next day was a real mixture. It had some beautiful sections by the river with wildflowers and trees, a nice section of 'velo express', which was followed by a rather ugly slog through the industrial estates and factories.



We eventually came out into a pleasant suburban area with impressive cycle infrastructure.



The cycling was nice, a few showers but not too heavy, a few hills but not too steep.

We crossed the Dordogne by Gustave Eiffel's bridge and were soon dawdling through the first vineyards to Libourne and then St-Emilion. St Emilion itself is a very special town, with beautiful stone buildings clustered around a steep sided valley.

After St. Emilion we rolled along lovely flat farm roads to Castillon-La-Bataille, named after the last battle of the 100 years war in 1453. Like us, I guess you've never heard of the

Battle of Castillon – that's because the French won.

Castillon is a very different town to St Emilion. It's a little run down and very quiet, even on a Saturday morning. We crossed the Dordogne and headed south into the Entre-Deux-Mers region, literally 'between the two seas' but actually between two rivers, the Dordogne and the Garonne.

Our first stop was Rauzan and its splendid C13 castle, commissioned by King John (or Jean-Sans-Terre as he's known over here). The trouble with castles is they build them at the top of the highest hills. Triss did very well to



Very pretty, but a bit of a nightmare to navigate on a heavily laden touring bike

get up this one without walking any of it, and I'm beginning to regret buying souvenir bottles of wine so early in the trip.

The landscape was now a mix of vineyards and grassland, gently undulating, and very pretty. There were a few villages scattered about, but only a handful of houses in each and no shops, bars, or cafes.

After the pretty little town of Cadillac we crossed the Garonne and so changed wine regions from Entre-Deux-Mers to Sauternes and Graves. There are plenty of vineyards still, but the hills are less steep. This is good



Rauzan's splendid C13 castle



*Between Rauzan and Soulingac (about 12 miles)
we saw more Hoopoes than cars.*

news for Triss's legs, and for the panniers, which are straining under the weight of yet another souvenir bottle of wine.

The weather wasn't cold, but there were heavy showers and we didn't manage to dodge them all.

We arrived at Chateau Lafaurie-Peyraguey for lunch on the terrace, looking like a pair of

drowned rats. The staff were wonderful and coped amazingly, and the food was spectacularly good.

Lafaurie-Peyraguey is a Sauternes chateau. The very particular microclimate here encourages the growth of a fungus that produces the characteristic sweet wine.

We continued south and west, slowly leaving the vineyards behind and moving into flatter forested landscapes.





The best Sauternes tasted great, but I wouldn't pay over €70 for a bottle.



Another day, another chateau:

This one is Villandraut, it was closed so we walked to the town centre in search of coffee.

A local lady was extremely keen to help and pointed out a boulangerie that had a capsule coffee maker, so we went in and stocked up with croissants for second breakfast, filled our baguettes for lunch, and coffee for instant pedal power.

We were soon on an old railway line cycle path, part of Eurovelo 3. It's very easy riding, flat, perfectly tarmaced, and traffic free.

It's miles of straight path, it could have been monotonous but it's wide enough to ride side by side and we enjoyed chatting as we cycled, listening to the birds. It's mixed woodland here with bands of oaks to break up the pines. We diverted into Salles, an attractive little town of wide tree lined avenues. There were plenty of bakeries to choose from so we sat in the shade with coffee and pastries. Yes, I did say in the shade, it had finally warmed up enough for the sunglasses to make an appearance.

From Arcachon our next stop was along the coast at Lacanau. As you all know by now, we love a ferry trip, especially if it cuts out some tedious cycling. We could either cycle all around the bay through some not very interesting towns, or jump a boat to Cap Ferret, and cycle north along the wild Atlantic coast.



These goats were about as close to a traffic hazard as we saw in two days.



It made a change to get to the coast. Arcachon is attractive and boasts many good seafood restaurants.

The weather changed so dramatically while we were in Arcachon it was as if we were setting off on a different holiday. A few days previously it had been clouds, showers, long sleeved tops, with rain jackets handy just in case. Today it's forecast to be 34°. The leg warmers, base layers, and spare jumpers are buried at the bottom of a pannier, and the factor 50 sun block was worth carrying all that way after all.



Our route for the whole day is a coastal cycle path that weaves through the pine trees that have made the dunes their home. The trees here are not commercially planted in regimented lines, and the path is seldom straight or flat for more than a few yards, twisting, rising and falling gently as it follows the contours of the dunes.

The quality of the surface varied considerably through the day. Most of it is pretty good but I guess the unstable sand and creeping tree roots eventually take their toll. Some sections were so bad they could have been in the care of Herefordshire County Council.

The last ten miles or so were hard work. Less shade, more hills, and according to the Met Office it was 34°C but 'feels like' a whopping 38°C.

Lacanau Océan is a laidback modern resort town, popular with surfers. From Lacanau we turned east and started back towards Bordeaux, crossing the coastal dunes and returning to forest and then eventually vineyards. We passed a lake that looked so tempting we were lured into having a quick swim – fully dressed – to cool down. It was so hot everything was dry within twenty minutes.



*Lacanau's fun, lots of people of all ages,
with a lovely lively atmosphere.*

By this point Triss had had enough. She had valiantly cycled through several days of heatwave, but quite wisely decided that since the forecast was for 35+°C and there is a perfectly good train service from Margaux to Bordeaux, we should skip the last day's ride and use it.

Bordeaux is fun, especially if you enjoy a glass of wine. The 'Cité du Vin' is worth a visit, and there are countless restaurants and wine bars.

The return trip via Paris and Caen, and Portsmouth was uneventful (well, as close to uneventful as cycling through Paris can get) and only cancelled trains in the UK (apparently due to the heatwave) caused any delay. We had a memorable couple of weeks, and we've still got all that wine to enjoy.

Simon Pollington



*Yes, we're back in wine country. Margaux is in the Médoc region,
and we were looking forward to a glass or two that evening.*

The bicycle is mechanical perfection. When man invented the bicycle he reached the peak of his attainments. Here was a machine of precision and balance for the convenience of man. Unlike subsequent inventions for man's convenience the more he used it, the fitter his body became. Here, for once, was a product of man's brain that was entirely beneficial to those who used it, and of no harm or irritation to others.

Progress should have stopped when man invented the bicycle.

Quoted from Hovel in the Hills by Elizabeth West, published 1977

In Memoriam

ANTHONY E W GOULDING (1937-2026)

Anthony, known to all as Tony was born in Uley Gloucestershire 1937.

Upon leaving school he served in the Army, mainly abroad. Cycling had always been in his blood. Tony was always meticulous as regards planning. In camp he would spend many hours plotting cycling weekends and holidays.

Tony held various jobs before settling into civil engineering after studying and qualifying as a Chartered Civil Engineer. Tony was the resident engineer, design and construction, for the roundabout's at either end of the Golden Valley bypass. Little did he realise that for three years these roundabouts would be the turns for the fastest 10mile TT course in the country. Tony was also responsible for our Club ride along the M50 from the Ross on Wye end to the edge of the unfinished bridge over the Severn.

On Boxing Day in 1962 the snow started to fall and just never let up. The office guys had nothing to do and so were seconded to areas that were snowed in. Tony, with others, was seconded to digging Lower Slaughter back into the real world. He spotted a young girl in the office who was controlling the drivers of snow ploughs. Eyes met and two years later Tony and Lynn tied the knot. They have two sons and two granddaughters.

Tony has held the Club 24 hour record since 1962 with a distance of 442.3 miles. He finished 5th just 20 miles behind the winner. He promoted a few time trials for the Club and one year, I believe, a 25mile national championship. He also promoted a reliability trial for three years, starting at St Oswald's or, as it was known then, the cattle market. It was usually held in February, going into Wales and around the Black Mountains. On the back roads it was a killer; ups and downs all the way. On one memorable the year it snowed over the border.

HEATHER DANCEY

Heather Dancey, a septuagenarian, the wife of our long standing member Vernon Dancey passed away early in the year. Heather's maiden name was Shubert, her father Frank being famous for setting long distance cycling records. This rubbed off on Heather as she enjoyed long distant cycle racing and touring.

Heather was a member of the Cheltenham and County Cycling Club and joined Gloucester CCC to accompany Vernon. Together they enjoyed long distance cycle touring. They had a pair of girls and boys. We should remember Heather for her forward thinking and great bubbly laughter.

Ted Tedaldi