



The Cyclist's Touring Club

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Its Aims, Objects, and Activities.

A large number of our readers are probably unaware of the facilities for cycling enthusiasts offered by membership of the Cyclists' Touring Club. The following article contributed to the "Independent" (May 1923) by Mr B.Clowes, the assiduous Hon. Secretary of the Northampton District Association will therefore, come as a revelation of the activities of the live branch of the Club. All interested as to membership, etc, are invited to communicate with Mr Clowes, at 5 Castilian Street, Northampton, who will be pleased to forward full particulars, etc.

The Cyclist' Touring Club popularly known as the C.T.C was formed as far back as 1878, and in those early days of cycling laid the foundation of those rights and privileges which cyclists enjoy to-day.

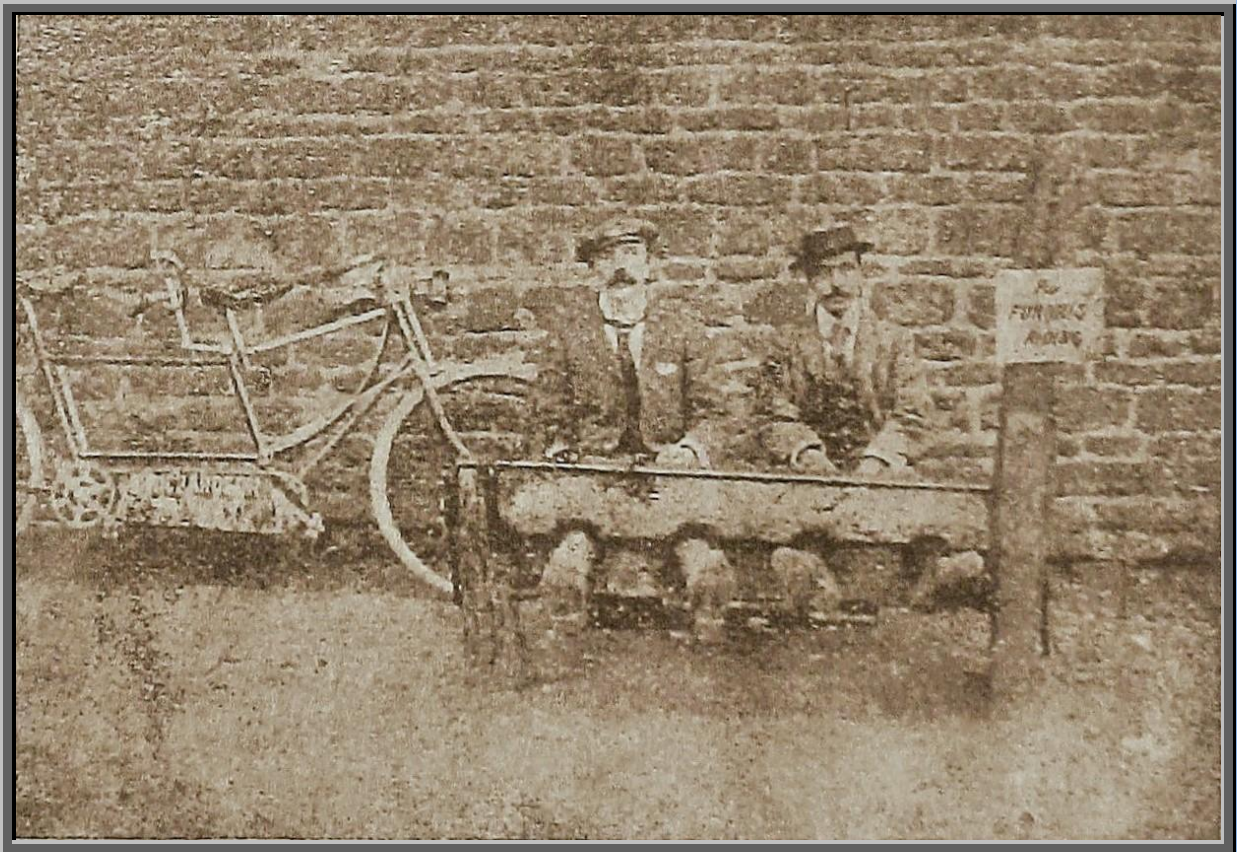
Amongst the objects of the Club are the defence of cyclists' rights, provision of special touring facilities, promotion of legislation inimical to cyclists, publication of road books and maps, scheduling of hotels and refreshment houses (with tariffs), appointment of official repairers, insurance of machines and riders, and supply of cycling information.

The Club has a paid secretary and office staff located in Euston Road, London. Here there is a reference library and touring bureau, from which members who apply are supplied with routes and the latest information regarding the district in which they propose to tour. The Club has in various parts of the country local representatives, or consuls, as they are called, who are always ready to assist and advise all cycling and touring members generally. So far as continental travel is concerned, the Club has reciprocal arrangements with the Continental Touring Clubs.

Amongst other things the Club gives legal assistance to cyclists, issues a very fine illustrated monthly gazette (worth the subscription alone) and publishes an annual handbook.

For fostering local interest amongst members there are a large number of district associations which are in themselves complete social cycling clubs.

The Northants District Association is one of the youngest and is now forging ahead. It is managed by a local committee, who are at all times willing to give careful consideration to matters appertaining to cycling brought to their notice by members. Club runs are arranged for Thursdays, Saturdays, and at holiday times tours are arranged. During the time the Association has been in being, runs have been held to many places of interest in this and neighbouring counties, and many pleasant hours have been spent at joint runs with other Associations. Ladies are eligible for membership, and we have several regular lady riders. We have no hard and fast rules, the runs being “free and easy”, and there is an air of sociability and good fellowship throughout.



TWO LOCAL CYCLING VETERANS.

Mr F. Swindell and Mr A. Richardson in the old stocks at Little Houghton. Note: their antiquated tandem in the background, and the “charge sheet” on the post. “*NO FURIOUS RIDING*”

There are those who say cycling is hard work, but these are the people, one imagines who never tried anything but a “dreadnought” and perhaps even then never gave their bicycle a chance to make the acquaintance of an oil can. With a light machine, kept in proper trim and a reasonably low gear, one can comfortably cover a century a day. We have met on some of our joint runs members who were doing considerably more.

We are an all-the-year round cycling club. The bicycle has enabled us to get about this delightful county of ours (which is not so flat as some people think) in all seasons. We have revelled in her Summer and Autumn glory, and we have enjoyed the ‘sombre’ beauty of the Winter. We have found one hundred and one beauty spots in this and neighbouring counties, and have drunk of their beauty to the full. We have enjoyed the expansive views of the Cotswolds. We have meandered along the pretty lanes in the Thames Valley. We have seen the gorgeous scenery of the Wye, and some of us have ridden to the majestic scenery of North Wales. We have a host of delightful memories of this country of ours.

All these pleasures and many more are open to the cyclist, and to belong to an organisation such as ours means congenial companionship in addition.

There are numerous beauty spots in and around the outskirts of the town with which a large number of cyclists and other lovers of the open road are totally unfamiliar. Here, for instance, is an exceptionally enjoyable run quite near at hand of which many of our cycling readers will doubtless avail themselves. Leaving Northampton by the Houghton Road we cross the river at the “Paper Mills” – where bank note paper was formerly manufactured – and soon pass Great Houghton with its church built in an Italian style. Proceeding uphill we reach Little Houghton: near the church are the moat and foundations of an ancient mansion of the Louches. A pleasant run takes us to Brafield-on-the Green, and then to Denton, where there is a tortuous twist round the church. We now enter the picturesque country of Yardley Chase, the old forest which bounds the county to the southeast. The village of Yardley Hastings takes its name from the de Hastings, lords of the village in the 13th and 14th centuries. Edward Lye, the famous scholar, is buried in the Church of St. Andrew, which derived its dedication probably through the connection of the manor with the Royal line of Scotland. Two miles further on, at Warrington cross roads, we turn to the left and proceed to Bozeat, and from there to the pretty village of Easton Maudit. The church with its graceful spire should be visited. Restored by the Marquis of Northampton in 1860, it contains a number of inscriptions to ancient families. At Easton Maudit dwelt Thomas Percy, author of the “Relique,” who entertained many famous literary men at the vicarage, including Goldsmith, Johnson and Shenston. Dr Johnson spent several weeks here in 1764. We now go to Grendon to explore the beauties of Castle Ashby park and village; then return to Northampton through Cogenhoe.

LOCAL RAMBLES AWHEEL.

County Beauty Spots for Cycling Runs.

Beauty Spots for Cycling Runs.



AROUND PICTURESQUE CASTLE ASHBY.

All of the above pretty scenes can be easily reached by reference to the small map in the lower right-hand corner, with the aid of which a pleasant circular tour can be arranged.

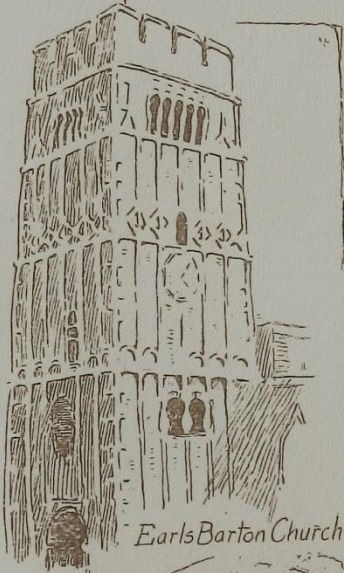
Another Attractive Tour.



Steepy Hollow near Mears Ashby



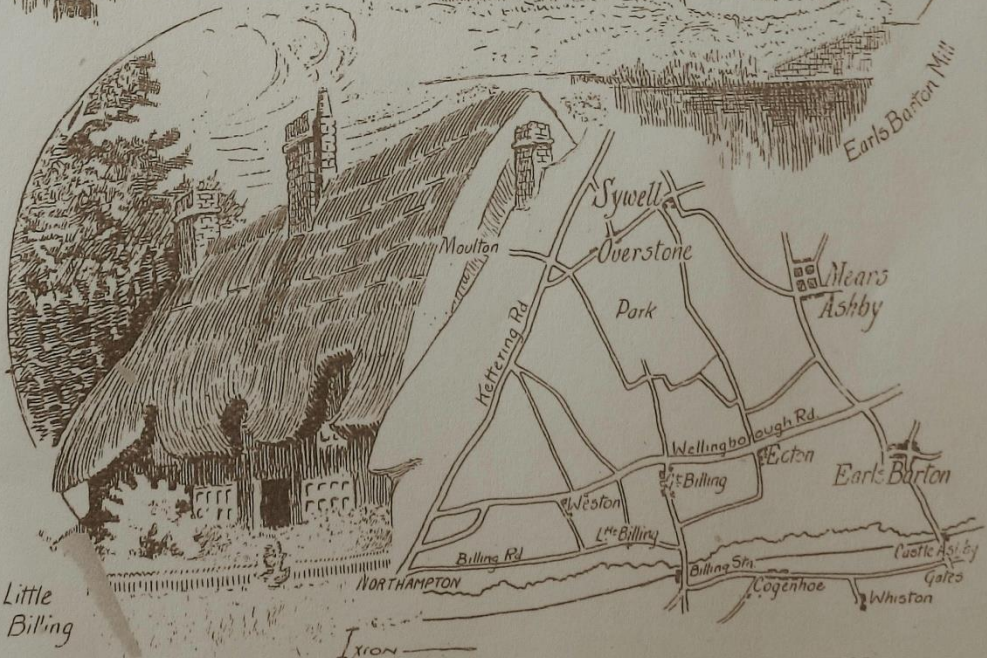
Shady Lane Whiston



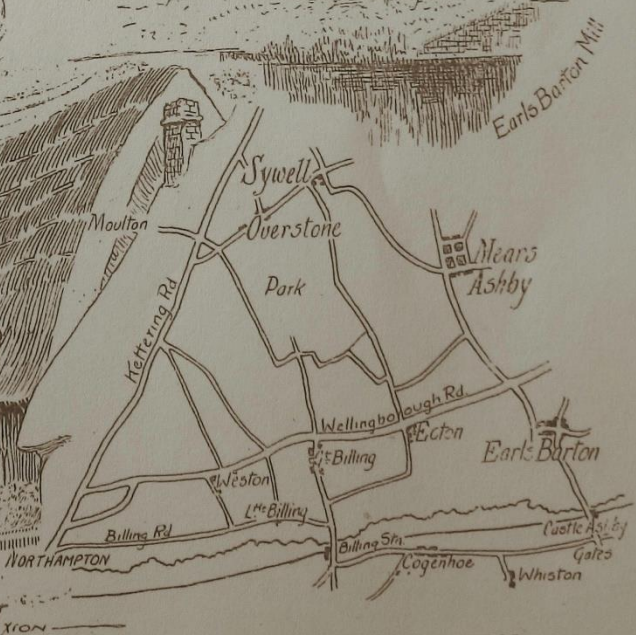
Earls Barton Church



Earls Barton Mill



Little Billing



IRON

AROUND MEARS ASHBY AND EARLS BARTON.

Another good journey for the cyclist and a pleasant spin for the motorist is to be enjoyed in the Mears Ashby and Earls Barton districts shown on the map. Leaving by the Billing Road, we pass on the left Abington Rectory, where Sir Douglas Haig used to visit as a boy when his uncle was rector, and soon reach Little Billing. Here are picturesque cottages, a church with a Saxon front, and the remains of a 14th century Manor House. Billing Bridge – said to have been the scene of a fight in the Civil Wars – is crossed, and a climb takes us to Cogenhoe. The origin of this name is Gucken, to spy and hoe a hill.

Further on Whiston, a very pretty village, is worth visiting. At Castle Ashby gates turn to the left and cross the railway line and river. Earls Barton tower is the next landmark. The “most characteristic piece of Saxon work in the land,” it is 1000 years old. Cross the Wellingborough Road and proceed through pretty lanes to Mears and Sywell. In Sywell Woods, Captain Thompson, a Leveller mutineer who broke open Northampton Gaol in 1649 and robbed the public coffers, was rounded up and after a bitter resistance, killed.

We pass through Overstone and return on Kettering Road. It is said that from a hill between Overstone and Great Billing 45 churches can be seen. The panorama is certainly superb. Those who desire a pretty walk should take the bus to Ecton, walk across the fields to Cogenhoe, and return by train from Billing station.