



## **Y600044 David Bayes Cycle Tour log 1949**

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### **Cycle Tour from Rushden to Scotland and back August 6-15, 1949.**

This was done when I was 16 years of age, with a boy named David Fiddler, who at the time lived at 67, Eastfield Road, Wellingborough. His parents went to Mill Road Baptist Church. That is about all I remember concerning my cycling companion. In 1949 petrol rationing for private cars was still in operation and there were no motorways and only a few dual carriage roads. Traffic was very light and conditions then bear no comparison to those of today. Food rationing was still in force for many sorts of food and there was much austerity in the early post-war years.

There was no such thing as mobile phones, satnav, the internet and any other form of technology. If one wanted to communicate with someone else whilst out riding, the only thing was to stop at the first phone box and ring them, assuming they had access to a telephone. Not many did have any access in 1949.

The details and description of this tour are **exactly** as I recorded them in a school exercise book which I still have in my possession after the 67 years since it was written. The only things changed in this document from what I actually wrote in the original exercise book are a few spelling and grammatical errors made at the time.

*Anything in italics is for explanation or clarity.*

#### **KIT TAKEN.**

One spare shirt.

One spare pair of socks.

One towel.

One lightweight 'approved' sheet sleeping bag.

One pair of blue knicks.

One pair of plimsolls.

One short-sleeved jumper and one pullover.

A toilet bag containing toothbrush, toothpaste, Flannel, soap, small bottle of brylcream.

One polish brush and small tin of black polish.

Two spare handkerchiefs.

Puncture outfit with two spanners and a screwdriver.

Itineraries, bookings, maps etc.

Knife, fork and two spoons in white holder.

Spare rag for cycle cleaning.

#### Foodstuffs.

One canister of grease (butter and margarine)

One canister of sugar. *These items like many others were still on ration and required 'points' coupons for being able to buy them).*

Soups and bacon.

Padlock, key and chain.

No 8 Battery torch.

Postage stamps (2s6d book).

Cape, leggings and souwester.

*Few, if any crash helmets were ever worn by cyclists in those days and I never owned one or wore one.*

**The cycle that I rode** was a Dawes lightweight tourer with dropped handlebars which I had bought earlier in 1949 from a Mr Cyril Howes who kept a Cycle Shop in Knox Road, Wellingborough. It cost £18-2s-8d. The bike had no variable gears but the rear wheel had a 16tooth fixed wheel sprocket on one side and an 18tooth freewheel sprocket on the other. I used the freewheel sprocket throughout the tour.

## **THE TOUR.**

### **Saturday August 6, 1949.**

Got up about twenty to six and found the sky to be very dull. As I had packed my things up the night before I had little to do. At about five minutes to seven it started to rain heavily and considerably dampened my spirits. Hopes were raised again however, when it left off raining at about twenty to eight.

After having a corned-beef breakfast I eventually managed to get away at about a quarter past eight. I had to call round the bake-house to say goodbye to my father (*He was a baker who started work before four o'clock on Saturday mornings*) and eventually I passed Rushden Church at twenty past eight.

What little wind there was, was coming from a south-westerly direction, but there was practically none at all. Although still very dull and overcast I started out in a happy mood. On reaching Finedon I was surprised, and indeed amused, to see a small ginger cat apparently stranded on a house roof, looking quite innocent. At Wicksteed Park, there were quite a lot of men engaged in the arduous job of picking up bits of paper, left by the previous day's visitors, but as then, none appeared to have arrived for the day. When on the Stamford Road (A43) at Kettering, the wind was more or less behind, having got up quite a bit since early morning. Continuing on through Weekley, Geddington and Weldon, I arrived at Bulwick. This village is set on a hill slope and the main road curves and twists through the village and goes over a narrow bridge at the bottom of the hill.

Just out of the village I nearly ran over a weasel, a small animal that kills all it eats and kills more besides. Continuing on past many old mansions and houses, I arrived at Duddington, a very old stone village on the slopes of the Welland valley. One curious thing that I noticed was a thatched cottage roof with some lattice-work borders, formed by putting staples in the thatch. At Collyweston, famous for its slates, I was greatly amused by Collyweston Post Office, which consisted of a wooden hut with a corrugated iron roof. The size of the building was such that it would just house a small car. Another curious thing was the number of wells stuck under peoples' front windows. After a long drop down into Stamford, I passed by three very old almshouses with Latin inscriptions on their tall chimneys.

On turning left, I came on to the Great North Road (the A1), which runs straight, or shall I say twistingly, through the middle of Stamford, which is a very old town and consists of very old stone houses. Much heavy traffic makes it a very busy place.

Continuing on the Great North Road I caught up with a chap from Cleethorpes, who was cycling from London to Cleethorpes in one day. He had left London at two o'clock in the morning and had already cycled about 100 miles. I got off the bike at Colsterworth and ate half a bar of chocolate. Whence back on the A1 the going was fairly easy but very monotonous, all the way to Grantham, owing to the large amount of traffic, all of which was, or appeared to be, trying to outpace the other.

Grantham was even more busy than Stamford and I was not very impressed with the place. At the far end of Grantham, I turned right on the A607 towards Lincoln, this being a much quieter road, with little or no traffic. I stopped to eat my sandwiches at Honington, after doing 58.5 miles. From here to Lincoln it was a quiet, pretty and unsophisticated road, with gentle gradients and a chain of small villages. The road being fairly high up, I had some wonderful views across the Witham valley, particularly near Navenby. The final descent into Lincoln was down a 1 in 9 hill.

As the castle is at the northern end of Lincoln, I had to go right through it and pushed my cycle up a 1 in 3 cobbled lane to the castle where I met David Fiddler. (*He had been visiting relatives and we had arranged to meet up at Lincoln*). It was just 3.30pm, the arranged time, when I got there. We went round the castle, which was very interesting. In Lincoln we bought the following items:- one box of sweetened cocoa, one lettuce, half a large loaf, half a pound of tomatoes, one pot of strawberry jam. We cooked our supper at Lincoln Youth Hostel at about 5.45pm and it consisted of:- 2 rashers each of Home-cured bacon. (*my father used to keep a pig during and shortly after the war*), one fried egg, some fried bread, half a lettuce and a tomato and bread, one mug of cocoa which was not particularly fascinating. We washed up for our evening duty and afterwards went out for a look round and each bought 3d of chips. At 9.45pm we had a mug of cocoa and a cake (price 4d) which was provided by the warden. We eventually turned in at about 10.15pm. I slept on the bottom bunk and DF on the top. I had a very good night's sleep and only woke once, just as it was getting light. We eventually got up, or were awakened, by the warden sticking his head in the door to say "Good-morning" It was 7.35am so we got up. We had porridge, bacon, toast and fried potatoes, and bread and marmalade with a mug of tea.



*Lincoln youth hostel*

### **Sunday.**

We eventually left the hostel at 9am and went through the centre of Lincoln and climbed, or in other words, forced our way up a long 1 in 8 hill. Whence out of Lincoln the road was dead straight practically all the way to Brigg, although it was up and down all the way. Whilst on the Lincoln-Brigg (A15) road we passed at least five aerodromes, only two of which were in service with planes on the airfield. After going through Brigg the road remains flat for about four miles, then climbs steeply up a 1 in 10 hill to the ridge of the Lincolnshire Wolds. It remained mostly up and down all the way to New Holland. We got there at about ten to twelve, and as the ferry left at 12.35pm we went to see DF's great uncle and aunt who lived close-by. We had a cup of tea and a biscuit here, and went to the ferry about twenty past twelve. The ferry was late, however, so we were forced to wait. The boat itself was fairly big, and there were only about seven or eight cars on it. As the Humber crossing took nearly half an hour we ate our sandwiches on the boat. Two boys who came over on the ferry directed us through Hull, a very large place much damaged in the war. The road to Beverley was very bumpy for about four miles through Hull, as it consisted of small cobbles. At Beverley we took the Bridlington road. The going was rather flat and monotonous but the miles soon slipped by. The sky began to get overcast and about ten miles from Bridlington it started to drizzle. We stopped to put on our capes, and by the time we reached Bridlington at about ten to four, it had developed into a steady rain. We went down to see the sea and then came back and took the Scarborough road. By now it was raining steadily and heavily and it continued to do so all the way to the Scarborough Youth Hostel. The road to Scarborough is very pretty, and more so hilly, but we did not seem to appreciate this as we were doing our best to keep dry.

We passed by Butlins Holiday Camp at Filey, and I thought what a dead place it looked through the pouring rain. From here to Scarborough it was extremely hilly, but we rode up all the hills so as not to get any wetter. We went straight through Scarborough to the hostel and arrived there about six o'clock.

During the day's ride, which was 90 miles in duration, I only walked up part of a 1 in 10 hill, and we had to ask the way numerous times. One queer, or curious thing that I noticed was the rounded tops of the East Yorkshire double-decker buses. Instead of being flat, they were the shape of a hemisphere.

The warden at Scarborough was very funny and I derived a lot of amusement from him. He had a very monotonous voice and he simply loved to give orders. The peak, or zenith, was when he rang the bell for supper. He had two bells and rang them continuously for quite a few minutes. When he noticed there was some-one missing he kept on ringing for a few more minutes. By this time everyone was smiling and trying not to laugh, but the warden took little or no notice. For supper we had tomato soup, salad, meat and potatoes, jam roll and tea. This all contributed to an excellent supper. Our duty consisted of laying the tables for breakfast (for about 30 people). For breakfast we had corn flakes with milk, fried fish cake and other fried matter, with bread and marmalade to finish off, and, of course, tea.

### **Monday.**

We left Scarborough about 9am, but didn't get far before we were forced to dismount. The wind was blowing at gale-force strength and it was as much as we could do to hold our cycles down. The twenty miles from Scarborough to Whitby were the hilliest

and hardest I have ever ridden. About four miles from Whitby the road turned, so that instead of a side-to-head wind, it was behind us. We got up such a pace free-wheeling that we overtook a car (an Austin 12hp) going at 30mph (*DF had a speedometer on his bike*). Just after this, however, fate took our hand, for as we were free-wheeling down a hill, DF went over a bump and burst his tube and tyre. Fortunately he had a spare tube so we put it in and patched the tyre up with canvas. This mishap cost us about 40 minutes of precious time. At Whitby he bought a new tyre and tied it on the back of his bike, as the other one appeared to be holding.

We took the Guisborough road out of Whitby and were forced, partly by the gale-force wind and partly by the steepness of the hill, to walk. When right out of Whitby the road continued to rise, but we managed to walk a little and ride a little. Whilst having a breather we were lucky to get a lift in a YNRAEC van (*Yorkshire North Riding Agricultural Executive Committee*). Although this took us only about six miles, it must have saved us the best part of an hour, as the road was hilly beyond words all the way to Guisborough. We ate our sandwiches just before Guisborough and eventually reached there about 2.45pm. Here we bought a tinned date pudding and a large loaf.

From here, all the way to Wolsingham it was reasonably easy going. By this I mean it was more hilly than Rushden and vicinity, but to us, although in a tired condition, it seemed dead easy compared with the moors of Yorkshire. At Stockton-on-Tees and the suburbs of Middlesbrough we noticed a very curious thing about the bus stop signs. Instead of reading 'bus stop' it read 'bustop', one word with only one 's' in it. From the hills above the Tees, we had an unexcelled view of the industrial aspect of Middlesbrough and Stockton, with its miles of dock-side cranes and large ugly-looking buildings. When we passed the Stockton Race Course, we saw a police car have a Jowett van up for speeding. At Stockton, a very large smelly industrial city, we were rather troubled by isolated cobblestones. Another strange thing about this place is the way in which a street market is held in the middle of the main street.

When we got to Sedgfield, I saw a coal mine for the first time, and between here and Wolsingham I saw quite a few of them. Between Bishop Auckland and Wolsingham we travelled along the most tiring (because we were a bit tired) and slowest (I mean the miles seemed to linger) road as yet. After walking up a very steep hill into Witton-le-Wear we eventually reached Wolsingham where the Youth Hostel was. Our journey was not over, however, because the hostel was situated about 2½ miles out in the country on the edge of the moors. After walking up a 1 in 6 hill for about a mile we had a freewheel down for the next mile. The hostel was up a long drive off the road and we finally arrived about 8.15pm in a rather disgruntled mood.

To top it all, there was only one other chap there, a Londoner, and he was very pleased to see us. We were cooking our own supper, so after making our beds in daylight (because they only had paraffin lamps), we went and put our supper on.

For supper we cooked an excellent meal, which considerably brightened us up, and which consisted of the following ingredients:- A large tin of meat soup to which we added some oxo cubes, with bread; a large tin of beans and a tinned date pudding. Besides livening us up, the beans contrived to liven the atmosphere up proportionately. After we finally got to bed at about 10.15pm we were soon aroused

by a tearing noise. This turned out to be what appeared to be myriads of mice running about the floor.



*Wolsingham youth hostel*

### **Tuesday.**

On awakening about 7.30am, we were informed by the other occupant that the mice had gnawed half a bar of Kit-Kat which was in his saddlebag, and as proof we were shown the remaining mutilated portion. I might add that we were sleeping on the top floor of the Hostel. For breakfast we had fried egg and a bit of brown bread, corn flakes and 4 pieces of bread and jam. After tidying up generally, it was 9.45am by the time we had reached Wolsingham Post Office. The previous day I might add we had done 80 miles which excluded the lift we had in the van. Leaving Wolsingham Post Office, where DF posted a clothes parcel home, we had to walk up a very steep hill out of the town. The other London chap rode with us as far Castleside where he left us for Newcastle. The road to Hexham was ride-able for most of the way, although a strong Westerly wind was very troublesome. At Hexham we stopped for dinner and as all the cafes were full we were forced to wait. We got rather fed up waiting, but at last we got a dinner which was made up of fish and chips with peas, followed by rice pudding, at a cost of 2s 2d each.

From Hexham we took a second class road which brought us on to the main A68 road which runs from Newcastle to Jedburgh, over the Carter Bar, this being the English-Scottish border situated in the Cheviot Hills. Although being a main 1st class road, the A68 had little or no traffic on it. For about 20 odd miles we rode, and walked, along a switch-back road, which just consisted of ups and downs. Round about 4.30pm it began to rain, so we were forced to cape-up and whilst in this process we were caught up by another cyclist. He caped up also and as we rode along with him, it turned out that he lived in Coventry, and that he was riding from Leeds to Kelso, a matter of 150 miles or more. He had left Leeds at 7am that morning. We were travelling much faster now, as he was bucking us up, and we had difficulty keeping up with him. I might also add at this point that one mile up that way is easily equivalent to 2 miles around Rushden. As time progressed and the rain got heavier, he kept up such a fast pace that we got left behind.

The run up to Carter Bar, which is at least 4 miles steady climbing, was the worst climb I have ever known. There was a very strong cross to head wind and after passing the Newcastle and Gateshead Reservoir on our left, we had to walk, then try and ride, and so on in this fashion, until we eventually reached the top, where the border of England and Scotland was well defined. After leaving the Bar it left off

raining, and we had a comparatively easy ride along a very rough road, (considering it was an A-road), to Hawick. After about another 6 miles we reached Snoot Youth Hostel after riding over cobbles at Hawick, and found it was 9pm. During the last 4 miles we called at 3 farms for milk but were unlucky. The first had just started milking and the other two we couldn't make anyone hear.

Snoot hostel is an old converted chapel by the side of Borthwick Water, a swiftly running brook, with the warden's cottage next to it. After making our beds we set about trying to cook our supper, as all small Scottish hostels are for self-cookers only. The facilities for cooking were vastly inadequate, and we had to cook on the communal stove, which had little or no heat at all. After peeling 1½lbs of spuds, and put them on the stove and waited for about a quarter of an hour to see how they would do. Nothing appeared to have happened, so we soon heated up some meat soup and added a couple of oxo's. We then had this with as much bread in it as it would take. As Scottish Hostels do not provide plates, mugs and knife-fork-spoon, and all we had was a knife, fork and spoon, we both ate straight out of the saucepan. In doing this we attained perfect rhythm, due to the fact that whilst one had his spoon in his mouth the other dibbed into the saucepan. For the next course, someone kindly lent us 2 plates, and it consisted of 2 weetabix each with a tin of strained apple on it. This was quite good but as our hunger was not yet appeased we ate a few rounds of bread and jam. Another chap gave us half a pint of half-on-the-turn milk, which we drank out of the jug, and we finished up with a large bottle of pop which the warden sold to us. We eventually went to bed about 10.45pm.



*Snoot (Scottish YH)*

### **Wednesday.**

Following a very sound sleep we got up about 7.30am. As the stove was not very warm, it took us quite a while to cook our breakfasts, but at last we managed to fry the potatoes which we had peeled the night before. We then had weetabix with milk (we had managed to get a pint) and finished up with bread. After tidying up we got away at 9.45am and went back into Hawick where we got some postcards before setting off on the A7 for Carlisle. This is a very good road, quite interesting, and with no really steep hills. Sheltering under a tree for a few moments while it came a sudden shower, we thought we would have to cape up, but fortunately it soon left off, enabling us to get started.

When once in the Cheviot Hills the road became very pretty with the high grassy slopes rising each side of the road and sheep wandering aimlessly in every direction.

After a mile or so of this country, the road began to rise, and we began the long dragging ascent to the Mossypaul Pass 800ft. We rode it quite comfortably at about 8m.p.h. We stopped at Langholm, Dumfriesshire for our dinner at an NCU (National Cyclists Union) café. The dinner consisted of bread in soup, potatoes with mixed vegetables and cold tongue, rice pudding with jam on it, plus a mug of tea, this meal costing us 2s6d each. In the café I heard another chap telling someone that he was from Bedford, so I made my presence felt and told him I came from Rushden. Beyond Langholm the road smoothed itself out and during the last 6 miles into Carlisle we went along at a terrific rate. In Carlisle we bought some provisions as follows:- Tin of Heinz strained tomato soup and a tinned apricot pudding. Whilst in Carlisle it began to rain and as it looked like keeping on we caped up. We rode all the way to Penrith (18miles) and although there were quite a few steep hills we didn't get off our bikes until we reached Penrith. We arrived at the Hostel about 5.45pm.

As were cooking our own supper, we soon went into the members' kitchen to get done before the Hostel meal finished about 8.15pm. It was here that we met the most interesting and amusing character we had ever met before. He had been camping and roughing it for about 6 weeks in Scotland, and he was on his way home to Worcester. Instead of having a rucksack he had one of the Commando coats that can now be bought for about 5s0d. These carry more than a rucksack, and the weight is more evenly distributed. He carried his own tent but no tent poles (if he could not cut any he just used to sleep in his sleeping bag on the floor), fishing tackle to catch his own food, rabbit snares and much other miscellaneous equipment.

For our supper we cooked a mixture of tomato soup and meat soup (this being bought from the warden) with liberal quantities of bread and a large potato each, the potatoes being given to us by the Worcester chap who had cooked too many for himself. This was followed by a tin of apricot pudding, bread and butter and jam. We hadn't got anything to drink, and here we were taught a thing or two by him. After the hostel meal was finished he went round and collected no less than 3 large bottles of tea and a pint of milk. This enabled us to have 2 mugs of tea for nothing. We kept the rest to warm up next morning on a small stove that he carried with him. For breakfast (hostel provided) we had 2 helpings of porridge, some weird fried concoction with tomato, bread and marmalade and tea.

For my duty I had to do my worst duty as yet. It had been raining heavily for most of the night and I had to rake a soaking wet lawn of leaves and twigs for 15 minutes. As breakfast had been at 8am we got away fairly early – about 9.15am.



No. 913

"NANDANA" YOUTH HOSTEL, PENRITH

J. L. Tappin Productions

*Penrith youth hostel*



**Thursday.**

We took the direct route to Keswick. This proved to be quite a pretty road, although fairly hilly. We had 2 very good free-wheels and enjoyed ourselves on this road. After a quick look at some of the principal streets of Keswick we took the Cockermouth Road. After crossing over the River Derwent we turned left on to the road to Grange. This road is very pretty and goes up and down and in and out, along the west side of Derwent Water. Between Keswick and Grange we visited the Lodore Falls, situated behind the Lodore Hotel. At Grange we went over the very old two-arched bridge spanning the River Derwent and carried on to have a look at the Bowder Stone. This is a huge stone which rests on a very small portion of its surface and looks very unbalanced, although in actual fact it is as firm as a rock. After climbing up the ladder to the top we signed our names in the visitors' book.

We then went back to Keswick and had our lunch at a cafeteria place. We had fish and chips with peas, four bread rolls and four fancy cakes for a total of 3s 3d each. We then took the road to Ambleside, but instead of going along the main road, we took the small road that took us around the west bank of Thirlmere, away from the traffic. This road, besides being more pretty than the main Keswick – Ambleside road, had a gentle slope down-hill in our favour. Thirlmere itself being the only artificial lake in the lake district belongs to the Manchester Corporation as part of its water supply. After regaining the main road at the far end of Thirlmere, we had a long free-wheel down into Grasmere. As the wind was prevailing north westerly and in our favour, we got up to a speed of 44mph (according to F's speedometer) during the long 2 mile freewheel.

We had a look around Grasmere, and bought a tin of beans and an ice-cream, then we went and had a look around Dove Cottage, the home of William Wordsworth, admission 6d. This proved very interesting, but the woman guide was too gabbly and quick. Continuing on the main road, we passed Rydal Water on our right. At the end of the lake on the other side of the road, we just saw the end of the Rydal Sheep Dog Trials.

After Ambleside we went along by the bank of Lake Windermere, and then turned Left at Troutbeck Bridge to the Troutbeck Youth Hostel. This is a very recent building, built in the shape of a castle and painted up to look like one. It was quite a good hostel and we had a small dormitory with only 4 beds in it. Besides us there were two lads from Preston. For supper I had soup (2 helpings), potatoes, greens and fishcakes (2 helpings) and tea. Later that night we made ourselves some all-milk cocoa, with milk acquired on the quiet out of the milk jugs left over from the tea. For breakfast I had 2 helpings of porridge, sausage and toast with tomato, (one helping, all I could get), and as much bread and marmalade as I could eat, plus some of our own jam on hostel bread, and tea. For our duty we cleaned out the men's washroom and got away from the hostel about 9.15a.m.

**Friday.**

During the previous day's ride, we had easily the best day for sun and weather in general.

From Troutbeck hostel we got on the main road and went to Windermere. We had a look round and then got DF's (emergency) rations and a small loaf. As DF did not like cheese, he let me have it, his week's ration coming to 2d. From here we went straight to Kendal. On this road we completely left the Lakes behind.

The next place we went to was Kirby Lonsdale. This town is off the main road, so we left the road to have a look at it. We tried several shops in the hope of getting some sausages for supper, but we couldn't get any. When we got out of Kirby Lonsdale we found a comfortable place by the side of the road and ate the little loaf. With my half of the loaf (new bread) I had F's cheese ration with it, and enjoyed it very much. After this we continued on the road to Settle, past Ingleborough Hill, 2373 feet, on our left. About 4 miles from Settle the road started to climb for about a mile or so and then we had a long run down into Settle. We stopped at a café here and had a cup of tea and a couple of cakes and after this bought a small loaf for our supper. We then bought some supplies at a grocers, which consisted of a tin of treacle pudding and a box of 'Pom' mashed potatoes.

Out of Settle a drizzle set in so we caped up but the drizzle didn't keep on for very long. We kept our capes on, however, as this often seems to prevent it raining again. The going was much easier now and continued like it all the way to Jerusalem Farm Youth Hostel. At Gisburne we turned left and took the road to Barnoldswick. Just before reaching this town we stopped to have a look at a memorial to Harry someone or other, the local cyclists' friend. It consisted of a stone wall, all cleaned up and looking very smart and posh, built in the shape of a half square, with a seat in it. It bore a short rhyme and was erected in 1948 by members of the local Clarion Cycling Club. At Barnoldswick, a small industrial town, we were very fortunate in procuring half a pound of sausages from a butcher's shop, and, to quote the butcher's words they were "the last half pound I've got."

As the hostel is situated outside the town of Colne, the postal address being Blacklane Ends, near Colne, we began to ask the way and I must have had to ask at least five or six times. Eventually we managed to find the hostel, and we had to go uphill for about a mile on to the moors to get to it. We then had to wheel our cycles up a rather steepish track and through a field to get to the actual hostel. The hostel is a long, but rather narrow farmhouse, (now a farm no longer) and is painted white. Over the hostel entrance is a round sign, like an inn sign, with a picture of a biblical type Jerusalem house and an Arabic sign underneath.

The time of arrival was somewhere in the vicinity of six o'clock, but we didn't know the time for sure because neither of us carried a watch. The warden was a very cheery, friendly sort of chap and he amused us very much by the fact that he had a beard, resembling in character that of the people of the Middle East. After we had made our beds, DF had to go for the warden and fetch the milk from a neighbouring farm. He then let us have almost a pint each which cost us 4d each. We then got down to the more important question of supper, so, after getting a match from the warden to light the calor gas, (we never had a match that we didn't cadge, all the while we were away from home), and start to cook the tinned treacle pudding.

To cook this, you half submerge it in a pot or saucepan of water, and after punching the top it should be left boiling for one hour on a low gas. In actual fact, however, as

we discovered, they are done just right if they are boiled for about half an hour on a high gas. The next thing we did was to get the sausages in the frying pan. As DF had some cooking fat with him, I left the sausages for him to do. Whilst he was frying them, I mixed a packet of Symington's soup, ox-tail flavour (tuppence halfpenny packet) with enough water for the two of us, and put this on to boil. By this time we had three gas rings on the go, but it didn't matter as we were the only people cooking.

When the soup was boiling I took it off the gas and put a lid on the saucepan to keep it hot. When the sausages were nearly done, I then set about making the pom potatoes. First of all I took a good one and a half cups of water, added about one half teaspoon of salt and put it on to boil. When this was boiling, the sausages were done, so after putting them on our plates I quickly made up the Pom potatoes. Taking the boiling water off the gas, I added two thirds cup of cold milk and to this about the same amount of Pom. After whisking with a fork the potatoes were then ready. We then had a good dinner of sausage and mash with tasty soup in liberal portions followed by the pudding with jam on it. To round off, we had a weetabix with milk on, and a cup of hostel tea, procured out of the hostel teapot after everyone had finished. After washing up our dirty pots and plates we went into the common room. This was a very good one. It had good and very comfortable car seats set all the way round the room, with a stove at one corner and such amenities as a dart board, ping-pong table and cards. It also had a piano but this was rather out of tune with an absence of a note here and there. For a little while we sat and drank a bottle of spruce, bought off the warden, and at about 9.20pm we went and made some all milk cocoa for ourselves. Altogether we had a very enjoyable time here and we finally went to bed at about 11pm. I got up at 7.15am the next morning and we all had breakfast at 8.30am. For breakfast, to which about 20 people sat, we had porridge (two helpings), fried potatoes, sausages and tomato, with plenty of bread and marmalade.

After breakfast we enquired what our duty was, and we were duly presented with a large bowl of onions which required peeling and slicing up. This rather stumped us for a moment as neither of us had got onions ready before. However we soon got the idea and although we had to keep leaving them for a moment or so because of the smell, they evidently didn't like us and so they made us cry. Although, according to YHA rules, everyone is supposed to be away from the hostel by 10am, we found ourselves playing table tennis at 10.15am and it was about 10.20am by the time we got away. Whilst our happy stay at this hostel was in progress, we noticed that the



electricity was made by the warden himself and generated by a small petrol motor in an outhouse. As he had as much power as he wanted, he seemed to have lights everywhere including several which were in the front yard acting as floodlights. Another curious thing at the hostel was a large windmill with a figure fixed to it, so that it appeared as though the figure was turning the windmill. The figure was a perfect replica of Winston Churchill, complete with top hat and cigar.

*Jerusalem Farm youth hostel*

### **Saturday.**

As we left the hostel there was a moderate breeze coming from the west and a slight ground mist. It was also rather cold at the start. We went straight into Colne, and after DF bought a newspaper we continued slowly through this rather industrial town. After going down a steepish hill we came next to Nelson, a long sprawling town of considerably greater size than its neighbour Colne. Here we met up with our greatest enemy – cobblestones. These forced us to go very slow, as we had such a lot of stuff strapped to our bicycles. At a small sub-post office I bought a Daily Mirror whilst DF wrote a card home. At Nelson we noticed that there were quite a number of people lining the streets. We soon saw why when we caught up and overtook a person in running shorts and vest. Although he was walking we soon found out that it was a race, for when we got to what we took to be the finishing line, the paths were thronged with people. We were assailed by questions such as “Ow many have you passed?” and “was he red?”.

We passed on, however, and took the main road for Burnley. We managed to by-pass the main part of the town, but we soon found ourselves on the dreaded cobbles again in the suburbs of this large town. Once again we were reduced to a snails pace and after passing what I took to be the Burnley Football Ground, we had to negotiate a very stiff climb (still cobbles) out of the town and passed by an old, and apparently disused, coalmine. At the top of the hill the cobbles ended and we had a comparatively easy ride through a rather steepish and very dingy and ugly-looking valley to the industrial town of Todmorden. This is a long sprawling place with small side streets ending abruptly at the bottom of the steep hill slopes. Of all places that we passed through, this place I disliked the most, chiefly because of its ugly nature and seemingly garden-less and even yard-less small dingy houses.

We carried on to the next town, Littleborough, where we had anticipated having dinner, but when we got there we found that all the eating houses had closed. Bumping and jolting over the cobbles we decided to try the next place for dinner, so we took the very small B-road to Milnrow. This road runs level with the canal and as there is only some frail-looking railings separating the road from the canal, we thought that it must be very dangerous at night. At Milnrow we met with more cobbles (as usual) and so carried on over yet more cobbles through the town. As all eating houses were now closed, it being about two o'clock, we decided to eat a large loaf that we had purchased at Todmorden.

After Newby (more cobbles) it was a very long hill out of the place but we rode up as best we could. About half way up we stopped by the side of the road and sat up on a high bank and had our now much over-due loaf for our dinner. We had a stop here of about half to three quarters of an hour and then got on our bikes again and had a hard and prolonged ascent to the Moorcot Inn, a solitary pub set right on top of the Moors. From here we had a grand run down into Denshaw, a small village situated at the junction of five roads. We carried straight on over this road junction to Delph. Here we found more cobbles and had the best (or worst) hill to go up. We got off to walk for a little way until the road joined the main Oldham-Huddersfield road.

After pushing and panting for about 2 miles over more cobbles we reached the summit of the hill at Standedge. About two thirds way up this hill we passed a rather modern public house by the strange name of ‘The Floating Light’. At Standedge, a

kind of pass through the top of the hills, the road improved and we measured out that we had a free-wheel of exactly 3 miles down into Marsden. This was the longest free-wheel I have ever experienced. At Marsden we tried to get a large loaf, but found out that all the shops in this area close on Saturday afternoons. Although we had intended to take the road through the Wessendale Valley, which supplies Huddersfield with water, we decided we would go the quicker way through Meltham.

Whilst mentioning Huddersfield, I might add that the Huddersfield Corporation buses come out as far as Marsden, a distance of very nearly 10 miles from the city centre. At Meltham we were very fortunate in getting a large loaf from a café, so in celebration of this we both had an ice-cream. As Holmfirth Youth Hostel is 2½ miles from the town, (uphill at that) we took a short cut to the hostel so that we missed Holmfirth altogether. To compensate this, however, we had to walk up a very steep hill from Meltham, that went right to the top of the Moors. We arrived at the hostel about six o'clock after doing 47 miles for the day. Although this doesn't sound much, in actual fact it seemed more like a hundred and forty seven miles, in spite of a side to following wind. Out of the 47 miles we ascertained that between 15 and 20 miles was over cobblestones.

The hostel was a house built in suburban style, although all out on the moors on its own and surrounded by trees. The place itself did not impress me much. For supper we had soup, potatoes, greens and something in the meat line (I can't remember what), rice pudding and tea. The only thing it was possible to have two helpings of was the tea. We helped wash up for our duty with a man and woman from Halton, Leeds (where Aunt Het lives). As breakfast was at 8am the rising bell was 7.30am, and for breakfast (which was the poorest of the whole tour) we had porridge, which was very poor; it seemed that the oats and milk were still separate. Many people couldn't, or wouldn't eat it – I ate mine. Also we had a kipper and bread and marmalade with tea, as usual.



*Holmfirth youth hostel*

### **Sunday.**

We got away from the hostel about 9.15am and the first place we made for was Holmbridge. To get to this place (we were going to pick up the main road here) we had a very steep and twisty, somewhat dangerous, descent to the village and we went along a street that ran parallel with the main road. As this street was so much higher than the main road, all that could be seen of the houses by the side of the main road was the chimneys just showing above the level of the street.

After joining the main Woodhead road we had rather a long climb up out of Holme. Halfway up the hill DF suddenly realised that his front tyre was flat. This evidently was a puncture (we thought) but we tried his front valve first to see if it was leaking, which it wasn't. We turned the bike upside down and got the tube out. We found nothing sharp sticking up in his tyre and we failed to detect the cause of the deflation. As there were a couple of houses opposite, I went and borrowed a bucket of water to help to find the puncture. As the bucket leaked rather badly we put a move on but after going round the tube twice we could still find no sign of a leak. I told him we couldn't do anything else, but it was with reluctance that he allowed me to assist him to put the tube back in the tyre. After taking the bucket back we continued on the hilly road towards Holme.

Just out of Holme we had to walk up a very steep hill of 1 in 7 for just over 1½ miles and we thought it must be about 1500 feet at the top. Going down the hill the other side, it became very cold and the wind fairly blew through me. At the bottom was a very sharp bend and we had to slow up almost to a standstill. Shortly afterwards we had to turn left off the main road and pass over the Longdendale Valley, a succession of large reservoirs owned by the Manchester Corporation. After we had done a few more miles we arrived at Glossop, an industrial town situated in a dip in the hills.

Here we encountered more cobblestones (bothering), but these were the only we saw during the day. As it was 12 o'clock we decided to make for a CTC place at Hayfield for dinner. After a very hilly ride (all hills out this way seem about a mile long) we arrived at Hayfield and managed to find the café. On enquiring we found out they did not supply hot dinners, so instead we had egg on toast, three bits of bread and jam, three cakes and three cups of tea each (a pot full) for the sum of two shillings each. After a hilly ride, and also very pretty, we arrived at Buxton after passing through Chapel-en-le-frith.

Here we saw the factory and works of the Ferodo Company, manufacturers of the famous brake linings. On arriving at Buxton we realised we had plenty of time to spare, so we made for the St. Annes Well where the famous spa water is to be found. The building containing this well is directly opposite the well-known, crescent-shaped building, known as the Medical Clinic. After paying 3d admission, we were given a ticket entitling us to have a glass of spa water. The well itself is below the level of the floor, and the glasses are stuck in the end of a long rod and dipped into the well, filled, and handed up to the person above. By this method the glasses and water are untouched before reaching the person having the water. The water itself was not a lot different to ordinary water, but it had a noticeable twang and smell with it. We sat down at one of the posh varnished tables in posh padded seats and drank the water. We both drank it up, but I didn't thirst for more. On being invited by one of the stewards, we went into a small room where the iron water was. DF decided he would like some, so he filled his glass, out of a tap this time, and found out that the water had a very unpleasant smell. I had a sip of it, but it tasted horrible to me, although DF went on and drank all of it. Later on in the day, however, we regretted having the water because of its gastric effects.

After we left the St Anne's Well, we went on to the well-known cave known as Pooles Cavern, on the outskirts of the town. We had to pay one shilling admission which allowed us to look through the museum as well as the cavern. We went into the

museum first and became very interested in some of the exhibits which consisted of, besides many other things, bones found in the cavern, old china, old antique furniture, ornamental articles, stuffed animals and birds and old coins etc. The exhibit that interested me most was a very good collection of birds' eggs. It was complete from the smallest to the largest and arranged in attractive order. After looking round the museum we were taken round the cavern by a guide. As the day was sunny and warm, on entering the cavern we found it very cold as the temperature in it is always 52F. We had a very interesting time. Of particular note were the stalactites and stalagmites. The cavern, which was quite long (see official guide) was lit by gas lighting which was laid in 1864.

As the time was getting on we made straight for Ilam via the Ashbourne road. We made all haste through pleasant country, (spoilt by a cement works) and left the main road at Alsop-en-the-dale, for Ilam. A very steep 1 in 8 hill goes down into Ilam and we went to Ilam Hall Youth Hostel (lent to the YHA by the National Trust.) It is a very large hostel which accommodates 140 people and is not nearly as old as it looks, having been copied from the old style of buildings. We self-cooked at this hostel and for supper we had a large tin of beans, pom potato with symington's soup on them and a tinned date pudding which we bought from the warden. The warden also let us have ½ pint of milk for supper and another ½ pint for breakfast. There were only about 25 people there and we slept in a dormitory on our own. By doing this it enabled us to get up early, so as not to disturb the others. Just before we went to bed we had a mug of cocoa and three biscuits provided by the warden. After having had a good night's sleep we got up somewhere about 6.45am (neither of us had a watch). For breakfast we fried a plate of bacon each, (mum had sent it on to the hostel by post) and finished off with bread and jam and cocoa. For our duty we cleaned up the members' kitchen and eventually left the hostel at 9.30am.

### **Monday.**

We made for Ashbourne, had a look around and then carried on to Derby where we had a look around Woolworths. The reason why I managed to cycle up the steep hill out of Ashbourne was because I passed a church at the bottom of the hill with a text outside which read – "A weary man may go a long way after he is tired - Don't give up." We then carried on to Loughborough and as this was a very good one-way road with a grass verge in the middle, we got along fairly quickly. I bought a small loaf at Loughborough and we ate it just outside Loughborough, together with some of the contents of an RAF pack which we had purchased from the hostel.

At Leicester we found the traffic and trams very troublesome but got through it alright. By the time we reached Market Harborough we were parched as the sun was very hot and the wind, which was slight, was behind. We went into Woolworths and bought 2 bottles of grapefruit and a 3d ice-cream. It was plain sailing from now and after leaving DF at Kettering (he lives in Wellingborough) I arrived home in Rushden at 5.15pm after doing 82 miles. According to my cyclometer I ascertained that I had done 700 miles since leaving home.

## ROUTE.

Saturday. Rushden – Kettering – Stamford – Grantham – Leadenham – Lincoln YH.  
Total 80 miles.

Sunday. Lincoln – Brigg – New Holland – Ferry to Hull – Beverley – Leven – Barmston – Bridlington – Scarborough YH.  
Total 91 miles.

Monday. Scarborough – Flask Inn – Whitby – Guisborough – Ormesby – Middlesborough suburbs – Stockton-on-Tees – Sedgefield – Bishop Auckland – Witton-le-Wear – Wolsingham YH.  
Total 80 miles.

Tuesday. Wolsingham – Castleside – Corbridge – Hexham – Chollerford – Ridsdale – Rochester – Carter Bar – Hawick – Snoot YH.  
Total 80 miles.

Wednesday. Snoot – Hawick – Teviothead – Longholme – Kingstown – Carlisle – Penrith YH.  
Total 68 miles.

Thursday. Penrith – Greystoke – Threlkeld – Keswick – Round Derwent Water to Grange and back to Keswick – Rydal – Ambleside – Troutbeck YH.  
Total 53½ miles.

Friday. Troutbeck – Windermere – Stavely – Kendal – Kirby Lonsdale – Ingleton – Settle – Gisburn – Barnoldswick – Colne – Jerusalem Farm YH.  
Total 64 miles.

Saturday. Jerusalem Farm – Colne – Nelson – Burnley – Todmorden – Littleborough – Milnrow – Newbey – Denshaw – Marsden – Meltham – Holmfirth YH.  
Total 47 miles.

Sunday. Holmfirth YH – Holmbridge – Holme – Glossop – Hayfield – Chapel-en-le-frith – Buxton – Alsop-en-le-dale stat – Milldale – Ilam Hall YH.  
Total 52 miles.

Monday. Ilam – Ashbourne – Brailsford – Derby – Loughborough – Leicester – Market Harborough – Kettering – Rushden.  
Total 82 miles.

Total mileage. Approx 700 miles in the 10 days.

## COSTS.

During this tour I kept a strict record of how much we spent. In order to give some idea of how expenses related to income, my income for a 16year old junior clerk working at the time for Wellingborough Urban District Council was £135 per annum.

This equates to £11 5s 0d per month. **(£11.25p)**

The yearly membership charge for a 16years old person in 1949 would have cost 5s 0d **(25p)**

The cost for staying 1 night at a hostel was 1s – 6d **(7½p)**, Breakfast was 1s 3d or 1s 6d **(6p or 7½p)** , Supper was 1s 6d **(7½p)** and a packed lunch was 6d **(2½p)**

## CYCLE TOUR EXPENDITURE.

The Hostel charges for beds, meals and packed lunches would all have been booked and paid for in advance. Allowing for some nights when we did our own self cooking and days when we didn't have packed lunches I would estimate very closely that I would have paid out at most, approximately £1 10s 0d **(£1.50p)** for all Hostel Charges.



In addition I started off with a lump cash sum of £6 5s 3d (**£6.27p**) as recorded in my exercise book, which then lists below every item of cash that I spent over the whole of the tour.

#### SATURDAY.

Daily Mirror in Higham Ferrers. 1d (**½p**), Admission to Lincoln Castle 3d (**1p**), Programme guide for Lincoln Castle 6d (**2½p**), ½lb of tomatoes and 1 lettuce 9d at Lincoln (**4p**), Strawberry Jam at Lincoln 9d (**4p**), Cocoa at Lincoln 5d (**2p**). Portion of chips at Lincoln 3d (**1p**), Cake and cocoa at Lincoln Youth Hostel 4d (**2p**), Lettercard of Lincoln 7½d (**3½p**).

Total for day. 3s 11½d (**20½p**)

#### SUNDAY.

Ferry charge Holland to Hull 1s 8½d (**9p**), Postcard of Bridlington 7½ (**3½p**), 2 Postcards of Hostel 6d (**2½p**), Hostel Map 9d (**4p**).

Total for day 3s 7d (**18p**)

#### MONDAY.

Daily Mirror in Whitby 1d (**½p**), Lettercard of Whitby 7½ (**3½p**), Large loaf and tinned date pudding (half shared cost) 10½d (**4½p**)

Total for day. 1s 7d (**8p**)

#### TUESDAY.

Daily Mirror in Wolsingham. 1d (**½p**), Fish and chips and rice pudding in café in Hexham 2s - 2d (**11p**), Half cost of supplies at Ridsdale – Weetabix (small box), Potatoes – tin of ready-to-eat apples (**5½p**), Half cost of bottle of mineral and large loaf from warden at Snoot Youth Hostel 5d (**2p**)

Total for day. 3s 9d (**19p**)

#### WEDNESDAY.

Half cost of pint of milk 2d (**1p**), Post cards of Hawick 1s 2d (**6p**), Dinner at Langholme 2s 6d (**12½p**), 3 x 2d stamps at Langholme 6d (**2½p**)

Letter card of Carlisle 6½d (**3p**) Supplies half cost Tinned Apricot pudding and Heinz strained tomato broth 1s 10½d (**9p**) Packet of crisps at Youth Hostel 3½d (**1½p**)

Total for day. 7s 0d (**35p**)

#### THURSDAY.

Daily Mirror in Penrith 1d (**½p**) Lettercards and various postcards 3s 8½ (**18½p**), lunch in Keswick 3s 3d (**16p**), 2 x 6d ices (very nice) at Grasmere 1s 0d (**5p**), Admission to Wordsworth's Cottage, Grasmere 6d (**2½p**)

Total for day. 8s 6½d (**43p**)

#### FRIDAY.

Daily Mirror in Windermere. 1d (**½p**) Lettercards 1s 3d (**6p**)

Fiddler's cheese ration in Windermere 2d (**1p**) 1 small loaf at Settle 2½d (**1p**)

Half cost ½lb of sausages, tinned treacle pudding, pom potatoes 1s 8½d (**8½p**)

Half cost 2 pints of milk at hostel 4d (**2p**) Spruce and cake at hostel 8d (**3½p**)

Total for day. 4s 5d (**22p**)

### SATURDAY.

Daily Mirror in Nelson 1d ( $\frac{1}{2}$ p) Half cost Large loaf, Symington soup powder at Todmorden  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ p) Half cost of large loaf at Meltham  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d (**1p**) 6d wafer and 4d cornet at Meltham (**4p**)

Total for day. 1s  $5\frac{1}{2}$ d (**7p**)

### SUNDAY.

Half cost of Sunday Graphic in Glossop 1d ( $\frac{1}{2}$ p) Postcard of Holmfirth Youth Hostel 6d ( **$2\frac{1}{2}$ p**) Egg on toast, 3 cups of tea, 3 bits of bread and jam, 3 cakes at Hayfield 2s 0d (**10p**) Ice cream at Buxton 10d (**4p**) Admission to St Annes Well Buxton 3d ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ p) Admission to Pooles Cavern Buxton 1s 0d (**5p**) Guide to Pooles Cavern 9d (**4p**) Half cost tinned date pudding and  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint milk at Ilam Youth Hostel 9d (**4p**) Postcard of hostel 3d (**1p**) Bottle of pop and RAF pack 1s 4d (**7p**) Cocoa and biscuits 7d (**3p**)

Total for day. 8s 4d ( **$41\frac{1}{2}$ p**)

MONDAY. Half cost of  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of milk and small loaf at Loughborough  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d (**1p**) 2 bottles of mineral and ice cream at Market Harborough 11d ( **$4\frac{1}{2}$ p**)

Total for day. 1s  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d (**6p**)

Total expenditure less hostel charges £2 4s  $9\frac{1}{2}$ d (**£2.24p**)

*Note. The exchange rate between old pence and new pence can never be exact.*

The maximum hostel charges for nights stay, evening meal and breakfast and packed lunches would have been about £1 10s 0d (**£1.50p**)

Overall the cost of this Tour to Hawick and back would have been near enough £3 15s 0d in old money or **£3.75** in present day decimal currency.

David Bayes *looking back to his youth but now aged 83*, Northampton.

*Photographs of long-closed hostels from the YHA Archive.*

### Post scriptum

Since sending his log to the YHA Archive, David has added:

*It is amazing to me that the original account written in an old exercise book of browning utility paper has sparked such a lot of interest. We emigrated to Australia as £10 "poms" in 1963, sailing to Brisbane via the Suez Canal and later returned to England at the end of 1967 sailing back via the Panama Canal so that the exercise book is well-travelled but still intact.*