

FIFE WHEELS

ISSUE 42

SUMMER 2004



Working for cycling

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIFE AND KINROSS D.A.



We have had some lovely weather so far this year for runs out on the bike, whether its just a few miles or a few hundred. Hopefully many of you will take full advantage of the DA runs planned for the rest of the year. With the warmer weather comes the opportunity to shed a few layers of clothes but for a group in Edinburgh recently they went one step further by shedding everything. It was one of over 30 events planned world wide under the title of "World Naked Bike Ride Day", a protest ride against climate change and the world dependency on oil. Even before the event the good folk of Edinburgh were up in arms at the thought of naked cyclists in their midst, calling the whole thing obscene. "The bear cheeked face of it!". The Lothians constabulary said the protest could go ahead but if there were any complaints, arrests might have to be made. Around 70 cyclists took part but our "Fife Wheels" reporters have been unable to ascertain as to any Fife & Kinross or Lothians CTC involvement in the protest. On the day most of the cyclists decided to wear the minimal of clothing, there were a few who went topless and a few who shed everything. There were even a couple of naked skateboarders tagging along. Despite some protest over the spectacle no complaints were received or arrests made and the whole thing passed off peacefully. The cyclists made their way to St Mark's Park at Powderhall where they held a small rally. Bowlers playing at Powderhall Bowling Club were left agog.

One by-stander said: "There were a few completely naked, a few topless. The Saturday afternoon bowlers certainly got a shock."

I must admit that my thoughts on hearing of the event were mainly about the breaking in & softening of a Brooks saddle, as described a few issues ago by George White. Maybe that's why many of the riders chose some clothing!!!

Maybe we should introduce a naked Saturday run. I wonder if Fife & Kinross is ready for that?

A buzzard is another creature that has also been taking advantage of the good weather recently. At Holsworthy in Devon a buzzard has recently been attacking cyclists riding along the A3072. Linda Johnston of the Devon DA was struck on the head as she cycled the road. When reporters and a few local cyclists turned up at the road the buzzard duly obliged for the cameras and left a nasty gash in Mr Paul Dixons head. The road is also used for a local time trial and several Audax rides also pass the spot but in both cases no incidents have been reported. An RSPB expert thinks the buzzard may be protecting a nest nearby. Many runners and walkers also use the area but so far the buzzard appears to have stayed away from them. Its preference so far seems to be for things on 2 wheels rather than on two legs.

Have birds in this area attacked any one? Fife Wheels would be interested to hear from you.

I hope you enjoy this issue of your Fife Wheels newsletter. There are some entertaining and amusing items this time around. If you get up to any thing interesting on or off the bike this summer let Fife Wheels know about it so we can share your experiences in a later edition.

Until next time, happy cycling this summer

Trevor Keer (editor)

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributor, or for the editorial, the Editor's. These do not necessarily reflect the views of the Fife & Kinross D.A. Committee or the policies of the C.T.C.

<http://www.total-cycling.co.uk> The Fife & Kinross D.A.s Website

David Eves Rides a Bike Through Middlesbrough

I am not aware of any previously suggested link between cycling and one of the oldest professions so I thought I would have a go! Maybe I am wrong in this assumption and in fact there is an entire industry catering to the needs of the pedalling curb crawler. Any further information would be gratefully received!

A while ago I decided to take the train to York, fill myself up with GNER butties and pedal my way home using the Sustran trails. I planned it would take four days at a reasonable pace. The butties were fine and once I had figured out the signs I found getting out of York relatively easy. The day started well with warm sunshine at Inverkeithing but at York the rain began to fall and this was shortly after I had decided to pack the raingear at the bottom of the pannier. The day was lovely despite heavy showers and my new rainwear felt comfortable, cool and even kept me dry. Yorkshire by bike is a lovely experience in good and bad weather.

I have since been told that Sustran routes are submitted for local acceptance and I didn't think twice when the signs suggested I needed to leave a relatively flat stretch which was to take me through a small village. Instead the path led me up a near vertical path over a reservoir, down, up, down, up, further up and finally back down not far from where I had left the flat stretch only the other side of the small village. At a nearby café I was told this was because the locals didn't want cyclists messing up their village so I decided to read around the map more carefully in the future. By 6pm I was leaving the countryside and entering Teeside and then Middlesbrough. Sustran routes appear keen to show off the good, bad and ugly of all towns but for Middlesbrough 'good' is unavailable. Occasionally cycling, more often carrying the bike over broken glass, beer cans, faeces of dubious source and drunken locals it became apparent that most lads acquire a particular scowl and a keenness to act like small yappy dogs when

they see a cyclist while the girls all appear pregnant but have the same scowl. In a park near to the city centre I came across a group of lads beating up a larger group of boys half their age. I had no choice but to cycle past them so I decided to put my head down and hopefully get past using the elements of surprise and speed. Once past them I guessed anything thrown would be likely to cause less damage than a frontal assault. With 100 yards to go the older boys decided to flee as they had just managed to push one child into a pond and another was holding his head after being hit with a stone. Their retreat would lead them to pass me and more worryingly they weren't particularly looking where they were going. I considering shouting but thought this may be considered a form of attack so decided to put my head further down and pedal even faster. My subsequent collision was probably quite spectacular, him running at full speed, head turned back until the last moment, me in bright yellow, red, black, arm held out hoping to avoid any damage on impact. In truth my outstretched hand was clenched so resembled more a fist. The boy went down like a bag of cement and his pals looked on in amazement and I managed to keep on the bike and pedal just a little faster still. The younger boys looked equally amazed and the one holding his head gave me a look suggesting he thought I was Arne. Without a moment to lose the younger boys regrouped and charged without mercy and my last view was the older boys considering their options of saving their fallen pal who appeared unconscious after our collision or leaving him in an act of self-preservation.

Moments later I discovered I had a puncture and by the time I had found the road out of Middlesbrough I needed to repair a second. However I was alive! I had 15 miles to go and it was getting dark. I stopped by the side of the road and considered the map hoping there would be a direct alternative route. I noticed a woman waving in my direction so assumed there was someone behind me. Nobody there so the next option was – no surely not! I'm on a bicycle! She crossed the road and without hesitation asked me the magic words – was I looking for business? Being male rarely does an hour (OK a few minutes) pass without thinking of sex but not on this day. I hadn't considered sex at all and my current priority was getting to the B&B that I had mistakenly prepaid. She seemed taken aback when I began laughing as the notion seems preposterous. It would have taken me 10 minutes to find the cash and probably an hour to remove the layers of clothing. Would this be included in the price? Furthermore where would I park the bike? I tried to explain that I was on a bike trip and thanks for the kind offer but I'd best be on my way – did she know a quick way to Stockton-on-Tees? This had no effect on her at all; in fact she seemed keen to rise to the challenge. We chatted for some distance, her slowly reducing her prices and me wondering how long she could hold out. She ignored my inane chat preferring to tell me her areas of expertise that were considerable. In fact I can't eat bananas in the same dismissive way anymore. By the time I had reached the ring road she seemed to be getting the message and running out of puff. She asked one more time and gave up. Stockton-on-Tees, home of the friction match, didn't seem much by comparison.

I reached the B&B too late to eat and left early in the hope that I would get better rest that night in Alnmouth. By the time I reached Sunderland the next day I had given up on the Sustran routes and had picked up speed on the main roads. Sunderland was lovely and the ferry to North Tyneside was delightful. Alnmouth was picturesque though would have been better if I had arrived earlier but at least I was well fed and slept so well I woke up almost too

Continued on page 3 ...



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late for breakfast. Next day the wind was up and the route to Berwick was hard work so I didn't arrive until 4pm with half the journey to go. Furthermore once moving inland I knew any escape route by train was out of the question. I sat by the railway station and considered my options - hop on the train and be home in a few hours or head due west and reach St Boswells by midnight? Actually there wasn't an option in reality and I let the train take the strain and it dumped me back in Inverkeithing. I even managed to buy a copy of Viz at Berwick station so giggled all the way home. The ride between Inverkeithing and Dunfermline is never easy and that evening was no exception.

Like Shackleton I had failed in my adventure but learnt some useful skills on the way that I could use for the future. Sustran routes are fine on the map but at the time the ground was boggy after a wet summer so reduced my average speed to around 5mph. In the future I will probably stick with quiet direct roads rather than off road tracks. I need to figure out a definitive response next time I encounter a prostitute whilst out cycling. Moreover I have learnt that if I plan to apply ibuprofen gel to my bottom and to pop in contact lenses there is a sensible and hygienic order for these to be done and not the one I followed one morning. Not only did I increase the likelihood of an eye infection I can confirm that ibuprofen gel does odd things to your eyeball.

Ferrari 0 - Trike 1

Graypaul is the Ferrari shop in Loughborough. Here the gentle folks of the United Kingdom may come if they find they have disposable funds amounting to rather more than the price of my house, and they may buy a shiny red automobile capable of seating a remarkably small number of people for the horsepower available, and they may subsequently drive it at no more than seventy miles per hour notwithstanding its potential speed which, I gather, is rather more than double that permitted on the highways in this fair land.

I, unwilling or unable to spend monies on a Ferrari, was conveying myself and sundry items of shopping out of Loughborough yesterday morning on my rather less costly recumbent tricycle, and dawdling along the cycle lane happened to be going outwards against the flow of traffic coming into Loughborough, this inward flow being very slow, nose-to-tail, because the worthy citizens of this region all simultaneously choose to effect their weekly purchases of a Saturday morning. Amongst these motorists were two salesmen from Graypaul in a Ferrari.

Recumbent tricycles, even such crude and hideous vehicles as are built by mine own fair but barely competent hand, are exceedingly interesting to look at, and so it proved. Both the salesmen inside the Ferrari turned to stare as I pedalled gently by.

Presently, as Shakespeare had it, or immediately as I would say, there was the most enormously loud bang for a collision of not much more than about five miles an hour, and I chanced to glance in my mirror to see large shards of the front end of a Ferrari and smaller shards of the back end of some other vehicle fly through the air. Abruptly all the traffic stopped and motorists clambered out amid clouds of dust, and there was much furious tyre-smoke as, puzzlingly, the Ferrari driver whacked his exquisite - well, formerly exquisite - machine into reverse gear as if to backpedal through time and thus undo the crash.

Naturally I stopped for a moment to survey what must have been, oh, many thousands of pounds worth of damage, and then full of remorse as you can well imagine, I pedalled hastily home so as not to incur any share of the blame.

HOT SOCKS

Winter is an absolute "pain in the feet" for me and I suspect many other cyclists as well. Cursed with poor circulation to the extremities I find cycling diverts what blood flow I have to the exercising muscles leaving little or nothing for my little piggies. In cold weather the effect is numb feet which proves uncomfortable and then absolute agony when they finally thaw out. However help might be at hand for all us cold feet.

A "smart wool" that can be heated has been developed by a New Zealand-based company, Canesis Network, in conjunction with an Australian wool growers' company, Australian Wool Innovation. It works by using a conductive fibre which is blended with ordinary wool. When the "smart" woollen yarn is knitted together, it creates a bed of interconnected fibres with enough resistance to be heated, while retaining all the properties of wool.

The socks are warmed by a small battery, similar to those used in mobile phones. The batteries would either be attached directly to the sock, or if it was being used for sports such as skiing, the battery might be in the boot. No mention of cycling from the manufacturers, but how about a dynamo driven sock?

Linking this pad of smart wool in the socks to a battery will be a highly conductive thread.

The socks would be heated for about three to four hours. The low voltage battery means that the socks would be perfectly safe even if they become damp. The only downside from wet feet may be a drop in the socks' heating power.

The first product, socks that can be heated, should be on the UK market by early next year. So keep your eyes peeled for these socks to hit the shops.



Special conductive fibres in the sock provide a safe, gentle heat

Hpv 1 - Drivers 0

This is an interesting phenomenon, car drivers see a bike and *have* to pass it. On one of the routes into my home town I play an amusing game with this behaviour. The Oxford to Thame road as it approaches the town is wide, reasonably paved, slightly downhill and usually has a tailwind. Under these conditions most sporty type riders could easily ride at the speed limit of 30mph. Car driver approaches from rear on nice wide road, sees bike (or trike) and brain assumes slow moving. Accelerates to overtake around the slight left hand bend and.... Flash... gets caught by the speed camera. 3 licence points and a fine. Oh how I chuckle...

In a similar fashion, I like to play speed bump games. Thame high street has a series of about 6 fairly severe speed bumps. On my MTB I can hit these at 20mph with little discomfort. Again, car approaches from rear, sees bike and overtakes. Always a laugh to see drivers head hit the roof.

Thanks to Marc Prowe of Kirkcaldy for these articles

NATIONAL CTC AGM AND DINNER 2004

The CTC's national AGM, Awards Presentation and Dinner was held in Edinburgh this year on the 24th. April, and a few of our DA members attended.

May I say a few words on a personal basis about our day during April, when five of us from the D.A. attended this the last event of the CTC's 125th year.

The day started warm and sunny for our train journey to Waverley, that's Charlie, Lorraine and myself "by the way". We had some lunch in the Mile, giving ourselves plenty of time to make the 2 o'clock start of the A.G.M. When we arrived in the foyer of the hotel, we found Willie N and John E sitting very comfortably in one of the low deep settee's. After a refreshing drink or two we all made our way to the Conference room and signed in.

The meeting was very well attended and with Phil Liggett our President keeping things in order, it all went very smoothly.

The main items that concerned us all was the rise to our annual subscriptions, plus giving the council powers to raise money in different ways, i.e. giving people different degrees of membership to encourage more people to come on board in the hope that we get a greater voice in the right places. (Please read the report in the Mag).

After the meeting we gathered in the foyer and a few of us decided to go out for a walk as it was a beautiful afternoon, this left the majority catching up with old friends

The hotel is right next to the new Parliament buildings and opposite Dynamic Earth. It was the first time that I had seen either, before going out onto the Queens Drive, which runs around the edge of the Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat. On reaching the Holyrood Palace we spotted an Ice Cream wagon at the top end of the car park, but like any good beast it ran off with not 40 yds to go, so we had to wait until we got into the Cannongate, in which we were successful in putting down a Magnum or two. On returning to the hotel we found a seat once more with lots of familiar faces to chat to. While this was going on I was surprised to find a well dressed gentleman with a pony-tail playing a grand piano. Nothing unusual I hear you say but it was the style of his music that got my attention, you see he was playing improvised jazz. Now I am a lifetime fan of modern jazz, so I walked over and had a word. After this he set off in the style of Errol Garner, Roy Budd and Oscar Peterson. I think he appreciated the fact that at least one or two of us were listening.

Well time went by rather quickly and it was soon time to make our way upstairs for the 7.30 p.m. start of the National Dinner. Drinks were on offer while we gathered and made sure we all knew where to sit. Then to our great surprise and shock, the fire alarms let rip their ear piercing sound just as the MC was asking us all to make our way through to the dining room, so down and outside we all trooped and assembled on the opposite side of the Holyrood Road. Then we were all entertained as 4 fire engines turned up and went through their routine. After 15 to 20 minutes the all clear was given by the door janitors. So by the time we all returned to the dining room the delay must have been almost 30 minutes in total and we never did discover the reason for the alarms going off! Well that's in the past now.

Kevin Mayne, CTC Director, was the MC for the evening and got things going by introducing Councilor Sheila Gilmore, who welcomed the CTC, its Council and members to Edinburgh. Then the grace was given by Brian Curtis, Chairman of Cycling Scotland.

At this point I must spare a thought for the kitchen staff., as the delay must have caused chaos behind the scenes.

The meal itself was very nice and during this time the usual order for cross toasting was given and as with tradition it turned out somewhat very lively. The very first toast I shall never forget that was directed at the hotel. "Quote - I see that we are all to have charred vegetables as a starter." This brought the house down I can tell you. "was it the kitchen that caused the alarm !"The actual starter was Salad of Mediterranean charred vegetables with basil oil and Parmesan cheese.

After the coffee and mints the speeches got under way. The toast to guests and award winners was given by Andy Cook, Chairman of the Council. Toast to the CTC given by Phil Liggett, toast to Cycling given by David Begg, Chairman of the committee for Integrated Transport in London. Very interesting speech it was to, as he has close links with the L.C.C. and he also cycles.

So. this left the presentation of the awards. the main event for any annual gathering and the Guest of Honour this year was Yvonne Mcgregor, Former World Champion and Olympic medallist on track and road. But sadly for us who did let the train take the strain ! and because of the delay to the start of the meal, we had to take our leave of the proceedings and make our way to Waverley for the last train a.s.a.p. as it was almost 11 o'clock, Willie and John got a taxi.

We all got to the station OK but had to stand shoulder to shoulder on the scheduled train, then after about 8 minutes delay we were all told to get to platform 14 to stand shoulder to shoulder once again on a train that seemed to have one extra carriage, eventually we got under way, about 25 minutes late. It was not a pleasant finish to our day, we waved our goodbyes to John and Willie who went on to Aberdour, as we walked off at Inverkeithing to the car.

A memorable day for us all in very pleasant company, also its my 50^h year in Club cycling.

Bunny Austin

A Fun Day Out (Cars can be useful sometimes)

A very sunny Sunday had all the usual suspects stumbling about in the Huntingtower car park in Perth, extracting bikes from cars and abusing the latecomers, with the prospect of a Charlie/Lorraine mystery tour somewhere to the North.

The very staggered mass start had us all over the place out of the car park and turning right off the main road and down some seriously leafy lanes onto supposed cycle paths. Those with skinny tyres were cursing for a bit when a traffic warden (oops sorry it was Lorraine) directed us back onto a real road and we were off towards Pitcairn Green. The weather was superb as we meandered to the first picnic stop at the ford in Little Glen Shee. The way there was marred slightly when, on a particularly wiggly and narrow bit, a Jaguar, very closely, overtook us and two or three bends later came face to face with a local who was not for backing up without comment. The local backed up to just short of a wide bit at a gate and, still blocking the road, stopped to have a few words with the Jag driver; as we were not involved we passed merrily around the offending vehicles and left the participants to get on with it.

We met up with the Jag again at the ford where the occupants were getting ready for a walk in the scenery; it was somehow appropriate that they were unable to navigate out of the car park and resorted to asking George Shepherd for directions (fat chance). They finally disappeared and we can only hope they found their way to somewhere.

After crossing the ford, no-one fell in, we meandered onwards on roads that were more like farm accesses than one of her Majesty's highways and on to Bankfoot where some paused for a reviving ice cream; it was decidedly warm.

The group split a bit here and also further on when playing with the traffic trying to cross the A9 at Birnam, but we all made it to Dunkeld eventually.

Lunch was partaken, in the sunshine, on the grass, by the river, amongst the tourists and the ducks. Some went paddling and fish poisoning whilst George White did his best to lower the tone by insisting the ladies looked at his pop-up pump, something to do with a biker's dream apparently. Unfortunately it eventually proved to be only a type of tyre inflator (sadness all round). A compulsory pause at the toilets (free ones in the bus park to the North) and we were off again to the Loch of the Lowes and even more seriously scenic bits of countryside.

Much wiggling about via Caputh, Murthly and Stanley and against an unexpected headwind we passed through Luncarty and onwards via the cycle path back to the car park in Perth and the café. Unfortunately, against the wind, muggins here got a bit ahead, went a bend to far and missed the turn off and after waiting aimlessly for the rest had a VERY lonely return by Pitcairn Green – AAAAH. Two extra miles and a hill though.

A great day was had by all, with excellent planning and marshalling by Charlie & Lorraine; many thanks for that and we're looking forward to the next one.

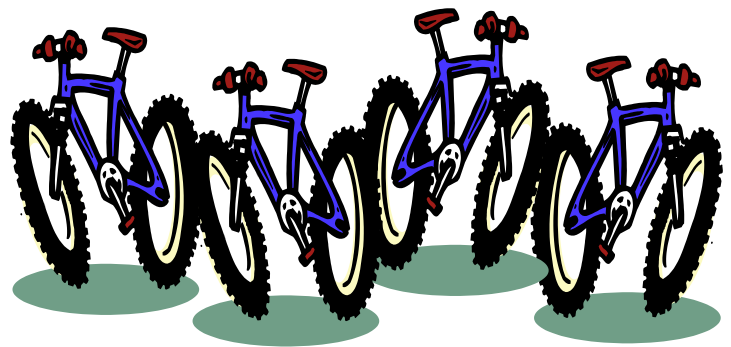
Douglas Allan

SUMMER AND AUTUMN OUTINGS

Outings are planned for the Summer (18th July) and Autumn (19th September)

For the Summer the ride will start from the car park at Fife end of the Tay Bridge at 10 O'clock for a ride across the bridge and along to the Braes and Carse of Gowrie.

The Autumn ride will start from Coupar Angus again at 10am, and head for the Macarthurs house in Glen Isla. See you there.



Wheels

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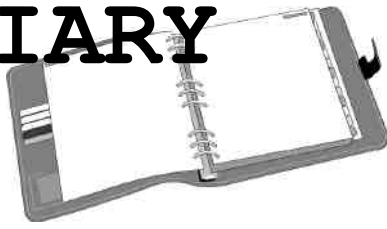
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DA DIARY



Key Dates for Your diary.....

- Sunday 18th July - Tay Bridge for 10 am.
- Saturday 18th Sept - BBQ. The Patersons, Kinross
- Sunday 19th Sept. - Coupar Angus to Glen Isla
- Saturday 20th. Nov. - AGM at Freuchie Hall
- Saturday 18th. Dec. - Decorated Bikes - Aberdour
- Saturday 15th. Jan05 - Annual lunch - Kingseat

Full details in the runs list

"One man in New York is taking Wi-Fi to the streets with his 'Magicbike'"

For most of you connecting to the Internet will probably mean through your phone line using a modem or if you are lucky a high speed broad band connection (again through the wires of your telephone line. Many places throughout the country are now offering wireless Internet and network access (Wi Fi) for those with suitably equipped lap top or hand held / PDA computers. More home computers are being networked using a wireless system to avoid the hassle of running cables through walls and under carpets and if you get yourself near enough to their house you too could share their Internet connection (for free!!) Now I hear from ZD Net, an IT. News and resource website, of an American who has turned his bicycle into a roving wireless network.

Yury Gitman, a self-described "wireless and emerging-media artist" in New York, has outfitted his bicycle with an iBook laptop and Wi-Fi antennas so that everywhere he goes, a cloud of free, high-speed wireless Internet access follows him.

The last copy date for inclusion in the Autumn Newsletter is 24th. September 2004

Please send any articles for publishing to:

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SPRING SLIDE SHOW

Our DA Spring Slide Show was held in Freuchie Hall on Saturday 27th. March.

George Berwick kept the audience captivated with a very entertaining photographic record of many of his exploits, and his "long suffering wife" Margaret (well it looked like it from some of the slides). A slight technical hitch half way through threatened to disrupt proceedings but the rouge slide that had jammed the projector was soon extracted and the show continued. Its always amazing the places George and Margaret get to and their adventures when they are there. Ruined bothys, caves and cycling through snow drifts all feature quite often and Georges slides are always a pleasure to see. A George Berwick slide slow is well worth attending and if you didn't make it to this one look out for another some time in the future.

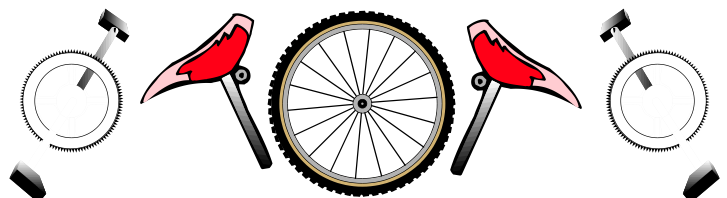
It was good to see some old friends from as far a field as Angus and the Lothians and also many of our Fife & Kinross associates. Also many, many thanks to Margaret Lauder for her excellent vote of thanks at the end of the show.

Why a bicyclist would want Internet activity is a question Gitman called "a very fun proposition to think about." Navigation help and communication with other bicyclists -- "bike-to-bike communication," in Magicbike parlance -- are two possibilities, he said.

Gitman, who earned his master's degree at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program, built a prototype for his Magicbike a year later and has been refining it since then. He'd like to see it mass-produced with solid-state components rather than with klunky and fragile laptop computer components, but he doesn't exactly see a mass market for Magicbike.

Curiously enough, networked bicycles are not a new idea -- but they've only recently begun spreading Internet access.

Gitman keeps careful track of other instances and says his data show that the trend is picking up rapidly. According to his research, one networked bike was built in 1983, two in the mid-1990s, seven in 2003 and 12 in 2004.



MATTERS ARISING

If anyone has anything they would like to bring to the attention of the committee please contact your DA. Secretary.

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