



At Christmas all roads lead home

Issue 585

December 2022

# Cranks Volume 49

The magazine of  
**Deeside Thistle Cycling  
Club**

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**Current Membership 584 (613)  
SCU Membership 299 (307)**

## Editorial:

It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas! Well, the white fields and icy roads certainly make it so.

I'd meant to go for a wee run, a couple of weeks back, just as the weather turned, so that intention got thwarted and it's been too risky since. It also means that any target for the year, not yet achieved, will have to go on the back boiler.

Away back when I'd be out in all weathers but in today's climate, and I don't mean the weather, I feel it is more prudent to think carefully of the risks involved when riding on our roads in icy conditions.

Steadfastly I try to avoid highlighting any political issue, in these pages. However, with things as they are it may be wise to point out that with ambulance crews and nurses taking industrial action, support in the event of any mishap might take a little longer than expected to get to you.

Take care if you do go out. In addition to making sure you ride safely, wrap up well and wear a red flashing light to the rear. Put mudguards on.

## PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

**A lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a thunderstorm, and we all go through it together**

*Garrison Keillor*

Do you have a view on life? Why not submit your favourite few words of wisdom for public consumption in this exclusive corner of your magazine. Send now to Sandy Lindsay, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ or email [knockies@deeside.org](mailto:knockies@deeside.org)

## Youth and Junior Update

Round 7 of the SCX series saw 7 DTCC youths make the journey to a sunny Bo'ness to tackle the circuit on Kinneil Estate grounds. There were great performances from all racing. Riders from Team Green achieving the following podium places:

Hope Thomson	2nd U16 Girl
Olivia Poole	1st U14 Girl
Zara Main	3rd U14 Girl

The last round of Scottish CX Series was held at Fife College and the series positions were decided. In U14 Girls Olivia Poole won the series while Zara Main was second. Hope Thomson was U16 Girls series winner.

The Scottish Cycling Youth and Junior Track Champs took place at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome with some great results for current, and former, DTCC Youths and Juniors. Podium results for those racing in DTCC colours are:

Saturday:

Junior Men's Sprint - Isaac Small - 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Youth A Girl's 500 TT - Millie Thomson - 2nd Youth A Girl's 15k points race - Melanie Rowe - 2nd

Sunday:

Junior Men's Kilo - Isaac Small - 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Youth A Girl's Sprint - Thea Aitken - 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Junior Men's Kierin - Isaac Small - 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Youth A Girl's 2k IP - Millie Thomson - 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Youth A Girl's 2k IP - Melanie Rowe - 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Youth A Girl's 10k scratch - Millie Thomson - 2nd

An impressive selection of medals for the young riders. Perhaps even more so due to the time and commitment it takes from the riders, and their families, for them to be able to spend time at the velodrome. They are definitely at a disadvantage to those who have easier access to this impressive facility.

Also, on this weekend was Round 5 of the National Trophy CX Series. The penultimate race of the series was held on a new course in Barnoldswick in Lancs. Challenging conditions and a formidable course made for tough rides for those racing. Arabella Blackburn placed 2nd in U16 Girls, Olivia Poole was 6th in U14 Girls and Zara Main was 10th.

Elliot Rowe won Junior Individual Pursuit, Youth A Scratch and Points and second in Junior Scratch. Although currently racing for Anexo Racing he's developed through the DTCC Youth system.

It was also great to see Simon Stromberg there this weekend coaching Glasgow Riderz now that he's moved south. He still took time to support our DTCC Youth/Juniors and was proud to have helped them along the way over the years.





Sadly, the races at the Champs had small fields as a result of the Covid years. However, there was some good racing and great to see our riders trying new events and tactics. Being a long way from the track isn't ideal but the club roller sessions have helped the riders to prepare.

*Lyndsay Aitken*

## Club Kit Order

The most recent Pactimo kit order is now available to collect from Tierney Strachan, 12 Greenbank Place, East Tullos, AB12 3BT. Normal office hours apply.

Please ring the bell at our Goods-In door and announce that you are here to collect Deeside Kit with your name.

If the small roller shutter door is closed - please ring the office number 01224 295000. If the main gates are closed, we are closed, simples.

If you are in any doubt about the sizes you have ordered, let me know and possibly we can do a swap or refund.

I can post out to those that want it. Let me know and I can arrange. You can easily buy postage online and send it to me; I need to give you weights and dimensions if you want to do this. *Jon Strachan* [jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk](mailto:jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk)

## Deeside Thistle CC - AGM & Social Friday 20 January 2023

Our Annual General Meeting takes place on Friday 20 January 2023. Venue is Echt Hall

This time we'll be able to meet face to face. Doors open from 6.30pm with the meeting starting at 7.00pm.

After the AGM business is complete, refreshments will be provided.

To give us some idea how many to cater for, please indicate if you will be in attendance. *Sandy Lindsay (Secretary)*

### Total Endurance Winter Talks

We are pleased to be able to restart our Free winter training Talks

Click [here](#) for more information on each of the topics and to book your place

All talks are on a Monday evening from 19:00 - 20:00

We will be announcing dates for our 1/2-day swim and run workshops very soon so keep an eye out for dates

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## Welfare and Protection Officer

It is very important that our club has Welfare and Protection Officers (WPOs) in place. This is to safeguard the many youngsters we have and, if necessary, any vulnerable adults. Ian Wilson and Anna Liversidge both look after things at the moment, but they feel, now that their youngsters are less young and less involved, it is time to move on.

The size of our club makes it important that we have two WPOs in place, preferably one female and one male, though this is not prescriptive.

Tasks involved include ensuring that those working with young members have the correct credentials in place, and, maintaining an overview of how members are treated by members.

This is a good opportunity for any member to expand their commitment to our sport and further afield. Ian and Anna are able to provide advice on what is required to fulfil the role and they will assist with any transition into the post.

If you have an interest and would like further information please contact [info@deeside.org](mailto:info@deeside.org).

## Commissaire Opportunity

Ready to start the journey to become a commissaire? Events don't run without them. Want to be part of the wider biking community.

Find out more about becoming a commissaire and the training you undergo here. [Trainee Commissaire course \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](https://www.britishcycling.org.uk).

If anyone's interested please contact [volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk)

## New Members

The following new or returning members have joined in recent weeks

3079	Victoria Sell	Alford	42
3080	Matt Sell	Alford	45
3081	Molly Sell	Alford	9
3082	Sinead Collins	Inverurie	43
3083	Isabelle Collins	Inverurie	12
3084	Isaac Collins	Inverurie	10
3085	Ollie Collins	Inverurie	8
3086	Jamie Chree	Aberdeen	23

Any friend, family member, work colleague, who is interested in cycling but not involved with a club, should be dropped the hint to look at [www.deeside.org/members](http://www.deeside.org/members) or to email [members@deeside.org](mailto:members@deeside.org) asking for information.





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## Trainee Commissaire Courses in 2022

British Cycling have released a number of online Trainee Commissaire Courses in 2022, Courses include BMX x 3 courses

Circuit	x 3 courses
MTB XC	x 2 courses
MTB Gravity	x 1 course
Road	x 3 courses
Track	x 1 course

Currently no Cyclocross, Cycle Speedway or Time Trial courses are scheduled, but if you, or someone you know is interested please get in touch.

If anyone is interested, they should get in touch with Colin Esslemont (SC Regional Commissaire Coordinator) on [montysbicycleworks@btinternet.com](mailto:montysbicycleworks@btinternet.com) & Ashley Ryan (SC Event Workforce officer) [events@scottishcycling.org.uk](mailto:events@scottishcycling.org.uk) and we can arrange for them to link up with an active official to chat more about the role and send on sign up links.

*Colin Esslemont*

## SCNEG AGM

Thanks to everyone who came along to the AGM last week, we have a strong committee to take things forward in the next year.

We had some great discussions with the SC reps about their plans for the region and it's great to hear they will work with us to develop the strategy for sport cycling in Grampian.

One area we are still short of on the committee is someone to help us develop woman's cycle sport. If you are passionate about woman's cycling and cycle sport and feel you could help us then please get in touch. Contact me on [colinallanach@aol.com](mailto:colinallanach@aol.com)

*Colin Allanach*

## Spond Guide Update - Group Codes

If you are already registered in Spond and in one DTCC group you can join another with these links (or use the "Enter Code" option in the App).

<b>DonsideBunch</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ">https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ</a>
<b>Banchory</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/TYLWP">https://group.spond.com/TYLWP</a>
<b>DTCC MTB</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/MRFCH">https://group.spond.com/MRFCH</a>
<b>LeggartTerrace</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/AGTNP">https://group.spond.com/AGTNP</a>

Click on the group(s) you want to be member of, and the ride admin will accept you.

Link to PDF Spond guide: [http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC\\_Spond\\_and\\_Ride\\_Leader\\_Guide.pdf](http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC_Spond_and_Ride_Leader_Guide.pdf)

Link to PPT Spond guide: [http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC\\_Spond\\_and\\_Ride\\_Leader\\_Guide.pptx](http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC_Spond_and_Ride_Leader_Guide.pptx)

*Peter Smart*

## Winter Rides

Donside Bunch Winter Rides take place Sundays from Kintore. Plans for this winter are two groups:

Steady (15/16mph) - 2.5hrs

Faster (17mph+) - 3hrs

Pitch yourself into the correct group and it'll be a no drop ride.

Usual rules - mudguards preferred, and front and back flashers strongly recommended. Rides will be managed through [SPOND](#). If not already registered on SPOND go [here](#)

## Saturday Morning Group Rides - Leggart Tee

Over autumn and into winter, the Saturday morning group rides from Leggart Terrace will start at the later time of 09:00. Alan Campbell will take a steady group on the ride while Steve Brechin will lead a slightly brisker group if numbers allow.

The 54mile/87km route, known within the club as The Chairman's Classic, takes in some of the best climbs in the local area. You can view the route here: [The Chairman's Classic | 86.7 km Cycling Route on Strava](#).

It's a no drop ride and all are welcome. Email Steve Brechin on [DTCC-Banchory.Saturday@outlook.com](mailto:DTCC-Banchory.Saturday@outlook.com) or look for us on [Spond](#).

Please consider the use of mud guards on your bike until we get into the better weather again

## Sunday Banchory Rides

The rides will start 10:00 am (sharp) from Banchory Townhall (carpark opposite town hall). The rides will be published on SPOND, and we would ask you to sign up for the ride via SPOND, so we know who is riding and we have your emergency contact details.

You can download SPOND on your smart phone or access any computer or tablet via: <https://spond.com/welcome>.

To join the Banchory Rides group please sign up via: <https://group.spond.com/TYLWP>

There are other rides through the week and sometimes adhoc meetups, so it is worth joining.

The route will be published on SPOND and will always include a coffee stop. Distance is around 50 miles.

We will try and run two groups. Espresso and Latte. Espresso will be a ride aiming for 18 to 20 mph average. Latte will be no drop ride riding at the pace of the slowest rider, but hopefully around 16 mph, or slower if needed. Espresso will set off first, anyone dropped from Espresso can drop back to Latte. If we do not have enough for two groups it will be a no drop ride. All levels of rider welcome





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## Coaching Courses

Those members keen to get involved with coaching can find details of upcoming courses and funding opportunities on the SC web site. Go here:

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/coaching>

## Youth & Junior Vacancies

DTCC Youth and Junior offers Coaching sessions for riders aged 6-18 years, covering road and off-road disciplines. Following COVID19 we have a number of spaces in our groups and are looking for new riders. If interested please contact [youth@deeside.org](mailto:youth@deeside.org) to register your rider, advising date of birth and current riding capability

## Welfare Officers

Club Welfare Officers are Ian Wilson and Anna Liversidge. They can be contacted by telephone on 07919 280656. The email address to use is [welfare@deeside.org](mailto:welfare@deeside.org)

## KNOCKBURN LOCH MANAGEMENT

John Huston Knockburn Site Manager, Knockburn Loch, Strachan, AB31 6LL [info@knockburn.co.uk](mailto:info@knockburn.co.uk), 01330 822234 / 07741314999 [www.knockburn.co.uk](http://www.knockburn.co.uk). You can like us on [FaceBook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#)

### Big Bobble Hats

Big bobble hats have a large number of Deeside Thistle hats available to order. Contact them direct to get your cosiest hat for winter - <https://www.bigbobblehats.co.uk/>

### For Sale

Moda mini kids road bike - £40

Moda Mini kids bike suitable for under 10s. Has brakes on the bars as well as the hoods to make it easier for smaller hands! Pictures available if needed

Email [colinjwallace@hotmail.com](mailto:colinjwallace@hotmail.com)



### Britain's National Cyclists' Association

Working for all Cyclists

Newcomers are welcome particularly on the

Morning/Slower Full Day runs.

Medium and Faster Full Day runs are for the more experienced

For more information visit our website:

<http://www.ctcgrampian.org.uk>

Chairman	John B	01224 571984
Secretary	Sheila	01224 639012
Runs Co-ordinator	John S	01224 790269
Social Secretary	Heather	01224 699399
Treasurer	John C	
Membership	John T	01224 639012

### Right to Ride Representative

North Aberdeenshire	Rod	01467 623317
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### Runs Co-ordinators

Try Cycling Rides	Moira D	
Morning Runs	Cindy	01224 310719
Slower Full Day Runs	Heather	01224 699399
Medium Full Day Runs	Sheila	01224 63901
Faster Full Day Runs	John S	01224 790269

Following guidance from our Covid 19 Officer, Rod Adams, the following has been agreed to ensure that our runs will operate in a Covid secure fashion.

Our risk assessment has been uploaded to the CTC Grampian website: <http://www.ctcgrampian.org.uk/> and participation in club rides will be subject to all participants having familiarised themselves with, and agreed to comply with, the terms of the risk assessment.

To be Track and Trace compliant, we are asking all participants to arrive with a small (business card size) paper with their name and contact details. These papers will be collected by the Ride Leader at the start of the run in a plastic bag and held securely for 21 days, before being destroyed. This requirement will be incorporated into the risk assessment and displayed on the Runs list page of the club website. **"No ticket, no ride"!**

In addition, all riders continue to be required to carry a Next of Kin card in the event of an accident. These are available from the Ride Leader and/or Secretary.

Newcomers: We welcome newcomers, particularly on the 'Try Cycling' and 'Morning' runs. You do not need to be a member of the Cycling UK to join our runs, but after 3 runs you would be expected to join Cycling UK.







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Runs start promptly at the time stated. Distances are calculated from the meeting place. Bring spare inner tube, puncture repair kit, tools, wet weather gear, some food, drink, and LIGHTS where relevant. It is recommended that all cyclists carry a First Aid kit.

Try Cycling: rides are intended for those who have not been on the saddle for a while and for those who want a quiet ride around Aberdeen. These are easy rides followed or interrupted by a coffee stop, families are welcome.

Morning Runs: These runs are at a relatively slow pace and are usually about 25–30 miles long. A coffee or picnic stop will usually be made.

Full Day Runs: These are all-day runs intended for experienced cyclists. A coffee stop and lunch/picnic stop will be made. Distances and speeds vary as outlined below:

Slower Full Day Runs: Slowish pace. Distance normally 30-45 miles.

Medium Full Day Runs: Moderate pace. Distance normally 45-60 mls.

Faster Full Day Runs: Fast pace. Distance normally 60-75 miles (\* runs are longer).

Pub Runs: Start prompt at the time stated, to reach the pub by 21:00. LIGHTS

### Runs

The full calendar of runs is available here: <https://ctcgrampian.org.uk/runs-list/>

## Ride Etiquette Document

You are reminded that a paper detailing the etiquette to follow when on club/training runs has been prepared and is [here](#) for your interest. The document is posted on the club's website and links will start to appear on club publications so that you can refer to it. It will also be highlighted to new members.

## Zwift Sunday Club Endurance Ride

Created by Simon Stromberg

We now have a Sunday Club Endurance Ride on Zwift, with different groups at a different pace. Details [here](#). This is run in partnership with ZwiftScotland group.



[ZWIFT.COM](http://ZWIFT.COM)

## Youth Free Membership

Deeside Thistle Cycling Club is delighted to offer free membership to new youth riders for their first year. If you would like to take advantage of this offer, please see: <http://www.deeside.org/membership.html>

## 25 Years Ago

### DANIEL RITCHIE'S THOUGHTS

A new recruit to the official side of your Club is Daniel Ritchie. Already he is making his presence felt.

Daniel has taken a survey of Members opinions and has suggested a number of points, which need to be addressed:

- a) Provide advance support for teams travelling to big events – perhaps this could be 100% funding
- b) Recognise elite teams within the Club
- c) Provide mid-season coaching/training sessions to help develop race tactics etc
- d) Supply information/demonstrations on things wheel building and BB maintenance
- e) Arrange advantageous deals with equipment suppliers
- f) Have a rider per month and profile him/her in Cranks
- g) Gain more publicity
- h) Have more social events (film shows, barbecue at Evening League, etc)
- i) Establish links with other clubs (in England contacts could help with accommodation at big events, etc)
- j) Rewrite Rule book and remove extraneous rulings
- k) Make clothing more readily available to top riders

Not only has he identified shortcomings, he has also identified reasons and offered solutions. Over the winter months his points will be examined carefully and acted on if possible.

If you wish to get something off your chest, have any comments, recommendations, or you wish to offer support feel free to get in contact with the Daniel.

## For Sale

The Alba team bikes used this season are now for sale. We have eight Trek Emonda SLR7's (eTap), ranging from size 47 to 56. If anyone is interested or wants any more information they can contact Bob Lyons on [bob@alba-rt.com](mailto:bob@alba-rt.com)





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### Club Mountain Bike Rides

There's long been a need to hold regular mountain bike rides for club members, but the question was how to achieve this. As with everything there will be a wide range of abilities, bikes, fitness, and locality within the club so one ride group won't satisfy everyone, every week.

With all that in mind can you comment if you are interested with the following:

- a) What level/type of rider are you?
- b) What kind of rides would you like to see the club put on?
- c) Where are you located and where do you predominately ride?
- d) Do you have any qualifications?
- e) Would you be interested in leading a ride?

You can register here <https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ> and comments, please, to Neil on [mtb@deeside.org](mailto:mtb@deeside.org)

### Deeside Thistle Annual Subscriptions

Please go here to renew your membership:

<http://deeside.org/join/>

- or do a Bank Transfer to TSB Sort Code 30 10 01, Account No 00802182
- you can telephone 07867 857221 when a card payment can be taken over the phone
- you may also pay your fees by cheque (made out to Deeside Thistle Cycling Club) and sent to Sandy Lindsay, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ

You may have children and spouse/partner listed as members so don't forget to include them when renewing - or if they are not already listed now's your chance to get them on the club register

Fees are as follows:

Over 18	£23
16 – 18	£12
Under 16	£ 7
Spouse/partner of existing member	£ 2
Each child (under 12) of existing mem	£ 2
Associate member	£ 7

## Ian Grant

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01467 621861

This small area has been reserved to persuade each member who has read this far, to invite anyone showing an interest in cycling to apply for membership of Britain's biggest cycling club

#### Membership Application

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Phone Number: .....

Email: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Please complete and return to Sandy Lindsay, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ Telephone 07867 857221 or email: <mailto:info@deeside.org>





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## Historical Reminiscences

### (Part 51)

Time was spreading itself on the wrong side of 5.00pm and we still had some distance to travel to the next hostel, so we decided to buy the evening meal in Hawick. While there we all had our usual drink of Fanta, Coke, Thirst, Slake, Fresh, Fresco, 7-Up, Calorie Free, Lilt, Sparkler and with the usual reminder of “No Litter” we all settled down around the steps of Hawick’s bike shop.

Meanwhile, scorning the delights of flavoured gassy water Neil Bannerman turned his Samaritan inclinations to helping someone move into house.

He offered his help to shift a six-foot chest of drawers through a narrow door and up an even narrower, very steep staircase with only four feet of clearance. Of course, everything jammed up. Whoever was being helped was inside the building cramped up against the corner of the stairwell, gasping and struggling to manoeuvre the impossibly large lump of oak chest into the impossibly small space. Neil seeing the situation as hopeless left the pointless task.

Time before 5pm had all disappeared and the bikes, cans and bottles had also all disappeared. It was closing time for the bike shop. The keeper came out to board up the windows and taking her “No Parking” signs in, a great cascade of cans and bottles rattled across the pavement. One sure fire method to give cycling a bad name is to leave litter lying.

Ferniehurst YH, standing close to Jedburgh, is a castle dating back 100s of years and though small and simple its simplicity makes it very impressive. The sprightly warden turned out to be a youthful 73 years old. He complained bitterly about the SYHA treatment of him and his hostel, having asked more than once for more furniture and upgrading.

Stuart MacPherson’s wheel had seized and on the Monday morning we all headed to the same bike shop to make repairs. From there it was a short hop to Meadowbank Stadium to have Angus Fraser let us on the track. Everyone who tried made it and the higher they went the prouder they got until Angus told them that all the serious racing took place on the blue line, inches up from the bottom.

The final day dawned. We discussed the route and decided the Devil’s Elbow would be the run in. This, now familiar country, and probably somewhat of an anti-climax but the weather was still good, and a little excitement was added to the climb over Glenshee when Neil Bannerman broke his chain for the second time this tour and at the ski-tows a hang glider making use of the lift to the mountain top to follow his own sport. Down the Dee valley a small shower of rain was the first we’d experienced.

I loved youth-hostelling but didn’t necessarily love the youth hostellers. When cooking food, the important rule to follow involved making sure all your pans were cleaned before you sat down to eat.

It appalled me to be faced with a mountain of dirty pots in the kitchen sink which I had to scrape clean before I could start preparing my own food. And the culprits, oblivious to, or at best, ignoring, the mess they’d left behind.

Then, in the morning, when given the obligatory duty before hitting the road, finding the sinks you’d been asked to clean had a tide mark which the last user hadn’t bothered to rinse away.

Alastair and I had come off the Nyika plateau. It’s a high-level wilderness in Malawi frequented by Birchall’s Zebra, Roan Antelope, the occasional hyena and porcupine.

We’d hired bikes to navigate the terrain. My one had two right hand pedals; the bush mechanic having forced one into the left-hand side against the thread. It eventually gave up and I spent much of the time fighting to keep my foot from slipping off the end of the crank.

Descending to Phoka we were welcomed with a feast of meats, vegetables, Coca Cola and Fanta. The village, though providing the food, couldn’t stretch to the drinks.

In addition to the meal, we’d the glorious pleasure of a cold shower and after abluting I stood awhile under the cascade. Throwing caution to the wet curtain I cleaned my teeth in the stream of water. And that is probably where the problem started.

It took a couple of days but gradually the desire for food waned.

Once out of Africa and back home I sat for days, in despair with head on hands, and put Mozart’s [Clarinet Concerto 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement](#) on repeat. The music soothed, didn’t cure, but the fact it is something I like and is also part of the soundtrack for [Out of Africa](#) is a bit ironic.

Suffering to extreme conjured all sorts of fears that whatever had gone wrong might be incurable, at worst, prove fatal. Eventually I gave in and went for a professional opinion.

Testing the samples took a few days. Then the result returned [Campylobacter](#), simply food poisoning with associated diarrhoea. I’d survive.

Again, a bit of irony here, for I’d travelled thousands of miles to pick up a bacterial infection that is the most common form of food poisoning in the north-east of Scotland. I should have stayed at home!

Jeff Smith, Colin Sim and brothers Bruce and Graeme Petrie arrived at Ballater during the afternoon of Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1978. The weather was fine, sunny, but with a





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headwind that slowed them a little as they headed up the Dee valley. If they'd known the sun wasn't to be seen again for a week they might have turned about and spent the rest of the afternoon in a pleasant wind assisted run back to Aberdeen.

This was the start of Deeside's annual tour, a regular jaunt on bikes through some of Scotland's incomparable grandeur. Glens would be gone through, storming some of the toughest passes, visiting Skye, doing part of the West coast, staying in hostels, reasonable, simple and simpler.

As tour leader I'd the responsibility to ensure things ran smoothly. So, after riding the local 100, set off in pursuit of the other four, dead beat. Along the way I picked up Mike Robertson.

Though not crowded the hostel was busy and a young Canadian, on holiday, based at Aberdeen, repeatedly told us how to hostel, how to make our beds, how to cook, what to wear, when to wash – all because his aunt had showed him.

Morning dawned with all keen to go; all restlessly longing for the trip to Glen Feshie, but this exuberance was soon dampened when examining the weather prospect. It rained and would continue all day. The wearing of cumbersome capes was necessary.

Mike took one look at the weather and decided against the 20 odd miles of roughstuff. Instead, he'd go via Cockbridge and the Lecht Road to meet with the others in Kingussie, the next hostel stop.

But that was not to be! The cold and wet drove Mike to seek respite in the heated swimming pool at Aviemore. He couldn't bring himself to continue the dismal journey a few miles further to Kingussie and instead secured himself a bed in Aviemore YH from where, on the following day, he took the train home.

Heading through Glen Feshie we gained a landrover track, bulldozed well into the hill. Hairy descents took us out of the glen. On one of the descents Graeme fell on his handlebars and broke them.

An attempt to repair with a stub of wood failed. He was left to ride 10 miles or so, uncomfortably holding onto a tangle of brake levers, cables and bent aluminium.

Loch Ossian hostel has no running water, but it does have gaslight. Water is got by throwing buckets attached to ropes into the loch. This has, of course, to be boiled before use. A very, very simple hostel, sooty, smelly, that had no connection with the outside world until recently when roads were made from Lagganside right into Loch Ossian.

The Perth-Inverness railway passes within a mile of the hostel, and it was there at Corroul Station on the following morning that we just made the train.

It had been planned to go for Ratagan YH but this being fully booked Glen Affric was now the target. It was known that to reach Affric some roughstuff needed to be done but it was only a short distance from the Cluanie Inn. However, because we'd been told there was no track Cluanie to Glen Affric we elected to continue up Loch Ness to Drumnadrochit and join Glen Affric via Cannich. This was duly done and in warm sunshine we ascended through beautiful woodlands and along the shores of spectacular loch Beneveian.

Tarmacadam abruptly ended and in a further half mile so had the certainty of where we were going.

Choosing the forest track on the south side of Loch Affric due deference was made to the time available and to the obviously more difficult one along the north shore. When the loch ended so did the track and we were spilled onto a path that took us switch-backing ever closer to the massive of Beinn Fhada.

On reaching the hostel a note was found pinned to the door: "*Lindsay party, gone to post a letter, be back soon. Make yourself at home.*" To post that letter, the warden, an English student on vacation, had an eighteen-mile round trip. That was nothing! Cooking by gas meant the cylinders had to be manhandled in! Officially no store, he keeps a few emergency rations for weary climbers. He also keeps a motorbike and a stock of beer! A place like that surely can't be expected to maintain the usual rigid rules of the normal hostel.

In order to preserve the sacred toilet roll and to avoid filling the Elsan too quickly male hostellers were requested to use natural resources. But below the bridge please.

A footbridge across a stream beside the hostel was the line of demarcation. Above it was taken drinking water, below it washing was allowed. In that stream, milk, carried in from Drumnadrochit, was kept fresh overnight.

All night long strong winds battled at the corrugated iron walls.

Heading on the next day we passed Canban bothy and out of Affric now, heading into Glen Licht and the banks of the Croe River.

With Shiel Bridge crossed and time flying fast the climb over Mam Ratagan to a spectacular 1200 feet in little over a mile was undertaken. Sweat poured freely with this drying to caked salt on the longer descent to Glenelg and the ferry at Bernera. The decision was then made that Raasay was out of the question and the hostel at Broadford should be stayed at that night.

Crossing to Skye another demanding climb from Kylerhea took us to one of the most beautiful viewpoints in Scotland looking over the Sound of Sleat to the mainland.

*Roughstuffer*

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