

Issue 593

August 2023

Cranks
Golden Jubilee
Volume 50
The magazine of
Deeside Thistle Cycling Club
Sponsored by:

MPH
McIntosh Plant Hire

Tierney Strachan
PROCESS CONTROL ENGINEERING

Current Membership 551 (578)
SCU Membership 292 (302)
Scottish Cycling's Largest Club

Editorial:

Friday 13 July 1967 is always on my mind. The 13th stage of that year's Tour de France was underway when tragedy struck. Those of a certain age will recall the heart-rending news of the death of Tommy Simpson on the slopes of Mont Ventoux.

A visit to the memorial, erected where he died, has been a frustrated wish. The need to pay my respects to one of the world's greatest cyclists, at the top of his class when I first got my introduction to cycle competition, has yet to be fulfilled.

But it now looks, more than half a century on, I'm going to get the chance.

Robert is taking me on a pilgrimage, with bikes, at the start of September, to Marseille. From there we'll tackle some of the roads, including the ascent of Mont Ventoux, that Tommy rode, that fateful day, all those years ago.

Little doubt there's apprehension about my ability to make it to the top and the online stories paint a scary picture. Yet, I'm determined and hopefully that doggedness will see me through – even if time stretches to several hours.

PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing - *George Bernard Shaw*

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

Youth and Junior Update

Monday 24 July - Olivia Poole has claimed two national jerseys for mountain biking.

She took first place in the British Championships short track event on Friday and went on to also claim the top spot in the main XCO championships on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Junior rider Millie Thomson, raced in the Galloway Hillbillies Road Race. One of the youngest in the race and up against some strong women, Millie was pleased to take 6th place. She now heads to Wales to compete in the National Track Championships in Newport before going out to Trinidad to represent Scotland in the Youth Commonwealth Games.

Former DTCC Youth riders, Elliot Rowe and Evie White, are also part of the squad for the Youth Commonwealth Games.

And Youth A rider, Arabella Blackburn, was in action in Maribor for the European Youth Olympic Festival. Arabella will ride in the TT and the road race. The TT is up first on Tuesday followed by the road race later in the week.

Monday 31 July - Millie Thomson and Isaac Small were at the British Cycling Junior Track Champs in Newport. Millie got a silver medal in the points race and finished 4th in the scratch, 500m TT and 2km IP events. Isaac took the bronze medal in the junior men's keirin.

DTCC alumni Evie White and Elliot Rowe were also at the track champs. Evie won the national jersey in the points race.

Monday 07 August - Millie is now in Trinidad and Tobago for the Youth Commonwealth Games. She rode in the TT on Saturday and finished 4th.

Evie and Elliot are also at the Youth Commonwealth Games. Elliot placed second in the TT and got Team Scotland's first medal of the games. The trio will all compete again on the road and at the track over the next few days.

Monday 14 August - It's been a bit of a week! First off some of our youths were competing in the Race The Worlds rounds at the World Champs. It was a fantastic experience for the riders to take on the UCI courses.

Olivia Poole competed in the Worlds XC race last Sunday, winning her category with a sizeable lead. Melanie Rowe topped off her experience by taking first place in U14 girls.

Junior rider Millie Thomson was in Trinidad and Tobago for the 2023 Youth Commonwealth Games. Millie joined former DTCC riders Evie White and Elliot Rowe in representing Scotland.

Millie comes home with three medals - bronze in the points and IP races and silver in the scratch. Millie also finished 4th in the road TT and 6th in the 500m TT. Elliot won a silver medal in the road TT.



Headlines from Trinidad:

First event of [Trinbago2023](#) is complete and it was a strong start for Team Scotland with Millie Thomson taking 4th and Evie White 9th in the Cycling Time Trial!

SILVER! Team Scotland's first medal of [Trinbago2023](#) for Elliot Rowe with a phenomenal ride in the Men's Time Trial! 🇨🇦 🇬🇧

Lyndsay Aitken

Gran Fondo World Masters

On Friday, 04 August a number of members from north-east clubs took part in the World Masters Championships.

Results from the age categories include:

40-44	106 th Brian Duncan
45-49	28 th Mark Walker
	39 th David Ogden
	76 th Alastair Cameron
50 – 54	52 nd Robert Lindsay
55-59	58 th Richard Harris
	84 th Victor Allan
	92 nd John Leal
	93 rd Keith Stewart
	102 nd Steve Shand
65-69	56 th Robert Cowie

Well done to them all.

Falling Leaves Stage Race

Chris Williamson is the main organiser of the Falling Leaves Stage race and I'm helping him. The race is going ahead after a few years off. In memory of Peter Clark. It takes place on 2nd and 3rd Sep.

Sat Stage 1 Prologue
Stage 2 Jolibar Trophy

Sun Stage 3 followed by prize giving and Grampian series finally

Anyone willing to offer help Sat and/or Sunday please drop me a note on mark.walker@woodplc.com *Mark Walker*

Evening League 2023

Our league came to a successful completion at the start of August. It will take a little time to compile and verify the results.

If you are keen to check on the current state of play go to <http://deeside.org/evening-league-2/evening-league-results/>

Invitation to the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Music Hall, Aberdeen!

Have a night out – adventure style! This is an invitation you to the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour, bringing a new collection of inspirational films to The Music Hall, Aberdeen, on the 13 September (Red Films).

The Banff Mountain Film Festival stars the world's top adventure filmmakers and thrill-seekers as they climb, ski, paddle and ride into remote corners of the planet. Expect extreme journeys and spectacular cinematography – plus there are free prize draws too. A great social night out for your group.

The show starts at 7:30pm, and there are discounts on tickets for groups of six and more.

You can check out more details and watch the trailer on our website: www.banff-uk.com.

It would be wonderful to see you there!

Lauren Bridges - Tour Coordinator

Total Endurance

We have a Bike Demo Day on the 26th & 27th of August

Join us at Total Endurance for our BMC/ENVE Test Event

Test ride on a range of BMC Bikes. Giving you the opportunity to experience the Swiss Brands race-winning bikes whether for road or gravel

We will also have a limited number of ENVE road bikes and gravel bikes to test

<https://shop.total-endurance.com/pages/bike-demo-day-26-27th-of-august-bmc-enve>

Calum McIntyre



SCNEG Update

Provisional Calendar for Scottish events in 2023 is [here](#).
Dates may change and events be added.

1/ Time trial group

A new whatsapp group has been set up to promote, organise and coordinate resources for time trials. This will mirror the one set up a few years ago for road race development. If you want to be included in this discussion group, please get in touch.

2/ Women's development

We are still looking for someone who will come on to the SCNEG development group to help us look at women's cycle sport and racing (in all disciplines) to see how we can develop that over the next few years. Again, if you are interested in helping out with this development please get in touch. *Colin Allanach - colinallanach@aol.com*

New Kit Bag

I have been working with the Montrose Bag Company to come up with a new and improved Deeside Thistle Kit Bag. The version 2.0 bag incorporates improvements fed back from youth riders and new products that the Montrose Bag Company offer.

The last kit bag made for the club was in 2015, with a good number of these still being used to date. It gives an example of the robustness of the bags made by the Montrose Bag Company. I personally have used a Montrose Bag Company bag for the last 12 years of offshore travels and despite a few scuffs from un-friendly helideck personnel, it is still waterproof and as strong as the day I got it.

The new bag is based on the original design but with some improvements. The original bag size of 66cm x 30cm x 30cm remains, there are 2 end pockets that are 10cm wide and a central pocket of 46cm wide giving the following capacity of 9L + 41.5L +9L. Please see pictures [here](#)

The new bag will be in the same waterproof material however in a turquoise green colour with white Logo patches. There will be a netted pocket inside the lid of the central compartment, and it will have a double rucksack strap (see pic of orange bag). As per the picture of the turquoise green bag, it will have a side pocket and a clear card holder.

Each bag can have an individual rider's name printed beneath the club's wings logo on the end panel. The full club logo would be on the side panel opposite the pocket. This bag will cost £88 per bag based on an order quantity of 20-50 pieces and the current lead time is 6 weeks from the point of order. I appreciate that this is not an insignificant amount to spend on a bag. However, from my experience with the bags from the Montrose Bag Company they are very hard wearing and should last a long time. If you are interested in getting a bag please comment [here](#) *Russell Macnamara*

KNOCKBURN LOCH MANAGEMENT

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

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 \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](http://TraineeCommissairecourse(britishcycling.org.uk)).

If anyone's interested, please contact volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk

New Members

The following new or returning members have joined in recent weeks.

1989	Mike Johnston	Banchory	59
3112	Logan Carey-Miller	Alford	16
3113	Sean Phillips	Westhill	38
3114	Jason Paterson	Inverurie	35
3115	Gerrit Hetherington	Westhill	33
3116	Adam Robertson	Banchory	12
3117	Greig Stopper	Banchory	9
3118	Andrew Hutchinson	Banchory	57
3119	Sue McIntyre	Banchory	56

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 or to email members@deeside.org asking for information.

Zwift Sunday Club Endurance Ride

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



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).

DonsideBunch <https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ>
Banchory <https://group.spond.com/TYLWP>
DTCC MTB <https://group.spond.com/MRFCH>
LeggartTerrace <https://group.spond.com/AGTNP>

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

Link to PPT Spond guide: http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC_Spond_and_Ride_Leader_Guide.pptx

Peter Smart

Donside Bunch Rides

Mostly starting from Kintore, these will vary in length (and sometimes start time). Make up of groups will depend on who attends on a week by week basis.

For those who are venturing outside for the first time or returning after a break/injury etc, there will be a shorter/steadier (sub 3hr) ride posted every Sunday. Can't guarantee a leader for that ride but will attempt to get a volunteer on a weekly basis.

All rides will be posted on [SPOND](#). The more people that sign up for the steadier ride, the more chance of it being a success.

Donside Bunch - Recovery/Social Mondays

We are trying a recovery ride on a Monday evening. Leaving from the Kintore Primary School at 1830 hours, we will be riding at a leisurely pace (no efforts!) for ~45km [Monday Recovery - Anti Clock | 46.4 km Cycling Route on Strava](#). Suitable for all and we will ride at the pace of the slowest rider. Please sign up on [SPOND](#) if you would like to join us

Wednesday / Friday Banchory Rides

Town Hall at 1000. Check on [SPOND](#) if you are able to. Rides on Friday are to Ballater. Best to book table at Brown Sugar via FB Messenger. Rides on Wednesday are to 'somewhere else', usually about 80km/50mi.

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

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 or look for us on [Spond](#).

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

Live Life Aberdeenshire - Cycle Aberdeenshire

Live Life Outdoors are the new online hosts for "Cycle Aberdeenshire", our umbrella brand for all cycling activity within Live Life Aberdeenshire. Follow:

Our plans to support and develop cycling activity across Aberdeenshire

Our cycling World Champion and Cycle Aberdeenshire Women's and Girls Cycling Ambassador Neah Evans / Race updates from the Alba Development Race Team, who are supported by Cycle Aberdeenshire / News and opportunities in relation to training to support cycling activity and updates from our partners across the authority and nationally / Follow today at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057145702496> and start your Cycle Aberdeenshire journey with our latest "Diary of a World Champion" from Neah Evans as she continues her build up ahead of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Glasgow and across Scotland

<https://www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/sport-and-physical-activity/cycle-aberdeenshire/>





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
---------------------	-----	--------------

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.

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/>

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>

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

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>



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.

Club Kit Arrival

The latest 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.

Best Regards, Jon Strachan
(jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk)

25 Years Ago

CLUB MEETING NIGHT

Our official Club Meeting night is now a Tuesday – that is until the end of the Evening League when we revert to Wednesday evenings.

However things are not all they could be. On Tuesday 4 August the Bowlers have a meeting, albeit in the small hall, and they will need parking space. This brings up the second problem.

The first Tuesday night at Garlogie Hall didn't go as planned. There must have been some misunderstanding for Wilma, the caretaker, didn't put in an appearance and the hall remained locked. Also the number of cars that turned up exceeded the number of spaces available and quite a number ended up double-parked.

Though blocking our own transport may be acceptable up to a point there are some things which are not. We must remain vigilant. Parking on grass is not acceptable nor is parking on the road from the main road downhill to the hall entrance. A number of residential properties have this road as an access.

If the area around the hall does become too congested there is no reason why the picnic lay-by is not also used. This may be a little divisive but better than causing friction with the folk who live close at hand.

Historical Reminiscences

(Part 59)

It's a scary thought to revert to a life where you could exist as a hunter gatherer. The conclusion from [Into The Wild](#) will put you off. Chris McCandless didn't survive. Non-the-less it is intriguing to find wild, palatable vegetation.

Science might tell you that the blueberries bought from the supermarket are an important supplement to any healthy diet. They are high in vitamins C and K, are an antioxidant, help prevent heart disease, and it goes on. That may be so, but compared with one of my favourite foods, they are bland and uninspiring.

In late July and into August I love the expedition onto moorland where a faint purple hue covers everything with calluna vulgaris just starting to flower.

Hidden among the heathery plants is another small shrub, a close relative to, but significantly more inspiring, than the blueberry. This is the blaeberry and for a few short weeks it produces a fruit, small round berries, little more than 5mm in diameter, covered in yeast, a deep dusty purply blue and bursting with taste. There's no doubt the health benefits equal the blueberries plus you'll get the exercise searching.

Summer into autumn is the time for wild fruit. On the banks of the Dee near Kirkton of Durris is a crab apple tree which I'd visit as a child. Crunching on the walnut sized fruits wouldn't appeal to everyone as they sucked your mouth dry.

Then there's the avenue of geans leading into Crathes Castle. The wild cherry, though much smaller than the farmed variety, is much sweeter.

Wild raspberries would grace any cranachan while heading into September there's the joy of eating brambles.

There are loads of herbs grow wild, dandelion and nettle to name a couple, but my favourite is sourex, the common sorrel. Its swallow-tailed, arrow shaped leaves are unmistakable. As is the tangy, tart taste. Another leaf that is a joy to eat is from the beech tree. Picked before they harden and darken in colour the flavour is citrus.

Birch water, the sap of the silver birch, tapped fresh from the tree in springtime, is superior to any of the commercial flavoured waters or diluting juices.

Look for the colourful, red and white pom-poms of the clover flower. Pop one in your mouth and suck to get a rush of the nectar beloved by the bees.

Returning to school after the long summer break our teacher would provide us with net bags, a couple of feet long. These we had to fill with red rose hips, and they'd be shipped off to make rosehip syrup. It was an earner as we



were paid in wooden thrupenny bits. It's hard to recall if that was per pound or bag, The story went around not to eat the hips as, when raw, they were poisonous. I'd peel the red flesh off to reveal the hairy seeds. The flesh I'd eat and the seeds went down the back of school pals. Though not toxic, the hairy seeds irritated nerve endings.

Not expecting too much, nevertheless things do look a little brighter than first thing this morning. Tonight, for this would be the last night in Kathmandu for some time, Darbar Square would be visited.

Clothes were washed in preparation for our departure and strung on lines around the hotel room. Then we were off to do our tourist bit.

Leaving the hotel something very formal was obviously taking place. A red carpet had been rolled out from the entrance and a khaki-clad guard stood by it. People came and went like normal which, to me, seemed odd as the event appeared to be important and at home there would be problems if anyone intruded on the formalities. Here, the guard made vain attempts to prevent folk stepping on the carpet. Whenever anyone did, a maroon jacketed bell-boy rushed forward to wipe off the dust.

Important looking cars rolled up to disgorge important looking people. A huge limousine, bedecked with American flags, rolled up to the door. Could this be it? Our excitement mounted as we expected the President of the United States to step out. But, not to be, instead the American Ambassador disembarked. He was not allowed to step on the carpet. Nor was the British Ambassador who arrived shortly afterwards. A small crowd collected behind us and the buzz suggested that a major presence was about to arrive. So it did, too. Eventually an official car of the Nepal Royal Household eased to a gentle stop at the entrance to the hotel and the Queen of Nepal stepped regally onto the carpet.

Darbar Square is entirely different. Very narrow streets are crammed with shops, all the wares spilling onto the pavement or festooning the doorways, selling everything from Primus Stoves to Tibetan carpets, Khukris to bicycle bells. A supermarket turned out to be a shopping mall and here the shops were more like at home, photographic, jeweller, TV shop, etc.

Being in a courageous mood we visited the Sun Kosi Restaurant. Once more the problem in my stomach department built up but determined to sample the lifestyle in all it had to offer I ordered a Nepali meal. A nutty mixture was supplied as a starter. Tasty, it was eaten with the fingers. This was followed by plain boiled rice topped with crisp fried onions, served with dishes of dahl and lamb curry. A side salad of potatoes with pickle was also served. For a sweet, rice came topped with coconut and raisins.

There had been many warnings not to eat meat unless it could be of absolutely guaranteed origin. Two days running we'd risked it. The Soaltee Oberoi must be above board. Here, too, we reckoned it must be all right. However, not prepared to risk drinking water, Eagle Star Beer, which tasted like our lager, slaked our thirst.

This should have been departure day but luck completely deserted us. Rising at 7.30am we breakfasted before our Thanka Treasure friend arrived. By the end of the meal the uneasy feeling in my stomach manifested itself. In India it's called Delhi Belly. Here, I fondly titled it Kathmandu Kraps.

Thanka Man arrived and he would take us on a guided tour.

First, he escorted us to the north end of the city where we visited a Stupa with giant eyes and hundreds of prayer wheels built into the walls. Beggars were everywhere and shops selling touristy junk were similar to those in Darbar Square. The guided tour led us along a sewer, under repair; to a huge square building, which Thanka Man told us, was a Hindu temple. Yes, we could go inside but he made no move to guide us there. Passing by we soon reached the countryside. Now very warm, with a bright blue sky, the gentle breeze, swaying the stalks of rice, could not cool us.

Taking us through a village, Thanka Man allowed us the chance to see country life at first hand. Some of the houses were thatched; others had woven matting on their rooves. Most were blackened with smoke from fires without chimneys; all had dark interiors.

The village people were very active, apparently much more so than in Kathmandu city. They were washing themselves at a standpipe, washing clothes; some were spinning wool on primitive hand-held Jennies. Others were weaving the strands of wool into bolts of cloth. They were cleaning rice; other unseen, but heard tasks were being performed inside the buildings.

Thanka Man continued to lead us north, through fields, along a stream and eventually up a steep hill. This took us past a school where children immediately deserted their lessons to turn and stare. Some left their tables to come to the door of their classrooms to peer at us. At the top of the hill stands a Buddhist temple. Here everything was quiet, a living peace. Our first close encounter with Buddhists left us appreciating Thanka Man's claims that they were particularly gentle. Removing our shoes we entered a virtual sanctuary. A lone monk sat praying in a corner.

On the descent from the temple, school was out. Enquiries brought the information from the children, who all spoke reasonable English, that school started at 6.00am and lasted for 4 hours. This, to allow them home in plenty of time to undertake chores in the fields and elsewhere, while daylight continued.



For us the morning had been successful. We'd learned more than we could have expected had we toured alone.

Back at the hotel the British Embassy was phoned. The Ambassador had yet to receive a reply. A lot less than hoped for, it was not more than expected. Would a reply come? Too late, now, to set out today, instead we'd make contact again, later, and regardless we would leave first thing in the morning.

Later in the day the British Embassy contacted us. Excitement mounted. Could this be the big breakthrough? A letter had to be collected from the Embassy. A hurried farewell to Mark Blunt, we dashed to the pseudo homeland. Disappointment waited. All the letter said was that no reply had come from the Ministry of Forests. We were even more resolved to leave early in the morning.

To balance this disappointment, we visited another of Kathmandu's top hotels, the Yak and Yeti. On the way there Steve Webster drove past us in his Range Rover. He stopped and gave us a lift back to his office, where we received a letter to Mountain Travel, Lukla. A second avenue opened up. We imagined our bikes could go as far as Lukla and if we decided to leave them at that point at least they would be stored safely for collection on return. In fact, Lukla had never been included in the itinerary, nor was it our intention to change the route in order to leave the bikes. They were going all the way with us. But the letter was not refused.

That evening our bags were packed, final adjustments made to the bikes, excess goods lodged with the hotel, early breakfast and a lunchbox ordered. Enough money to take us to Base Camp was changed to small currency. The pile of notes looked enormous. The smallest denomination, 1 rupee (Rs1), of which there are about 40 to the pound (£) and at that time, Rs24.7 to the dollar (\$), lay in a huge pile on the bed while I tried to fathom out methods to carry it safely. It eventually ended up inside a plastic bag deep in my rucksack while using cash filled my wallet to overflowing.

All prepared! Still determined to do all we'd set out to do, nevertheless a lot of lost time had to be regained if Base Camp was to be visited on the 19th. Tongue in cheek it had often been said that our first day, all on tarmac, would take us to Jiri. In distance that would take us nearly halfway to Base Camp.

Stomach problems have plagued me all day and I feel exhausted. Hopefully the discomfort will have passed by morning. *Roughstuffer*

MITCHELL SCHOOL of DRAMA

**Workshops, Musical Theatre,
Performance Class, Exam classes**
Rhona Mitchell, BA (Hons), Dip S&D,
TQSE, LGSM, LLAM (Hons), MSTSD.

www.rhonamitchell.co.uk

01467 621861

Ian Grant

Gardening: - Grass Cutting
General Tidying - Rotovation
Pressure washing - Tree Surgery,
Welding (electric) and small repairs

£9.00/hr or estimates

30 Sclattie Park, Bucksburn,
Aberdeen

Tel (01224) 713033

Falling Leaves Reliability Trial

Put this in your diary, Sunday 01 October.
Probably Echt Hall for HQ and the hard folk can
get a cuppa in Tomintoul

Be one of the first to register your name. Email
Alan Campbell on info@deeside.org

The Deeside Thistle Cycling Club publishes this magazine. The Editor is Sandy Lindsay MBE, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ. Tel: 01467 681330 / 07867 857221 – Email: knockies@aol.com

