

## FIFE AND KINROSS CTC NEWSLETTER 2024

Getting the year off to a good start past and present trips

Pitlochry Weekend Kaye, Linda, Robin, Chris, Jean, Barbara April 2024



To commemorate special birthdays a 70km celebration ride was devised, this turned into a weekend away, with 6 riders heading to Pitlochry. The great Scottish weather ensured a flexible approach, and although the 70km day ride was amended, more than 70 miles were covered over the weekend. As our arrival day was dry, we headed south along the Logierait Road to Grandtully and



returned via Ballinluig, along an undulating single-track road with a fab downhill into Pitlochry. Saturday promised to be the best day of the weekend and so we headed along the North side of Loch Tummel, stopping at the Queen's view and the head of the Loch for great photo opportunities, before riding back to Pitlochry along the quiet south side. Despite the rain on Sunday, we all set off towards Blair Atholl, passing The House of Bruar to Trinafour and UP over the hill to Tummel Bridge, enjoying a marvellous long downhill, with spectacular views of Schiehallion. The rain cleared and we finished with a dry cycle back to Pitlochry along the south side of Loch Tummel.

## **French Revolutions Memoirs of cycling in France by George White**

What follows here is not an account of a particular bike tour in France but rather a random collection of musings on France itself, its people, and a little on the myriad delights that it offers the touring cyclist. I base the above thoughts on having toured France for around thirty years (sadly long passed) and having lived there for some time.

First off it's big...being four times as large as the UK but having roughly the similar population. Equally important though, is that every one of its regions is different, and sometimes strikingly so, which means that the scenery, the people and even the style of the buildings differ as one moves through the country.

France holds many delights, from its beautiful countryside and cities and its many cultural treasures, but for me it was the French people that brought me the greatest pleasure. This is why I would recommend that the tourist should equip themselves with some of the most basic phrases in the language as how one addresses people is critical. The French are formal in communicating so people should be addressed as Madam, Monsieur or Mademoiselle, whatever is appropriate. To do otherwise is to be considered uncivilised.

I think that it's important to know that the French like and admire cyclists...although when I toured there they were usually puzzled by anyone who toured by bike...suspecting that they did so because they couldn't afford a car. Cycling to them was competing, or driving, transporting their bike to a

good restaurant, then cycling thirty miles with their friends and returning to the restaurant for a good meal.

When cycling in France for some years I usually cycled from Belgium down to around the Lyon area as I enjoyed meandering along the tiny roads (white on the map) while avoiding any road that went direct from town to town....these being usually busy. I had no set plan but just wanted to cycle every day through the wonderful countryside. That said, I do think it better to choose a particular area and explore it thoroughly by bike, becoming familiar with its sights, its people and its food.

If camping it's better to be aware that sites differ in that there are those offering a camping *holiday* with bars, restaurants and swimming pools, and those cheaper sites aimed at travellers and having the basic amenities.

Gites can also be had but in my experience they tend to be for larger groups rather than a single person or a couple. That said, if avoiding August, and you should do as this is when the whole of France take their holiday, it is possible to find Gites as they are usually empty at this time.

As for food...what can I say? Food is woven through French culture and features in all their proverbs and sayings. It is seen by the French as being important, and the components of a dish and how it should be cooked is often the subject of many a heated debate....it matters. In any strange town it is possible to approach a stranger on the street and ask the whereabouts of a "good" restaurant. By doing so you will have complimented them and they not only give you the restaurant but exactly what to order and with what accompaniment. The food is usually of a high standard, and I'm talking about the small business or bistro....around Lyon the standard is even higher and eating there is a delight. If cooking is not your thing then La charcuterie will provide you with all sorts of lovely things.

I hope this essay may provide those tempted to bike tour in France with a little motivation....and again there are companies providing planned bike tours with accommodation....a good way of dipping your toe in the water.

Whatever.....enjoy.

## ROAM SCOTLAND RALLY

Founded by Calum Munro from Edinburgh after he had completed the Torino-Nice rally and thought Scotland needs this!

Roam Scotland Rally (RSR) is an annual self-supported sociable bike-packing ride, inspired by the incredible [Torino-Nice Rally](#). The RSR mission is to explore a different corner of Scotland each year on a week long ride.

The rally has two routes each year a Rolling route for tourers and road bikes and a rugged route for MTB's and gravel bikes. Averages 100Km a day with 1000m of climb. Entrants can mix and match the routes which finish in the same spot at the end of the day. Riders can socialise in the evening and compare notes on their day.

A donation rather than an entry fee is requested from the riders this money is then given to charity. The last two years Talking Tandems have benefited from this generosity.

More to follow from Jim when the week is over...

### Dates for your diary

13 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	100 Mile ride
24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	KM rally
27 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Group holiday - booked camping/caravanning available
16 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Ceilidh

Thanks to those who have contributed articles. We'd love to have your stories and photos.

