

Our Times in Leicestershire

Shepshed Edition
Editorial Address: 4 Romway Close,
Shepshed, LE12 9DT

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Email team-triplet@ntlworld.com
Web site: <http://www.team-triplet.com>

Enhanced Web Version

For those of you who have internet access, you can see an enhanced version of this newsletter, with links to photo reviews for 2007 and some other trips on our website: www.team-triplet.com.

Ann

Following a long period of suffering we have finally got a diagnosis of what Ann has been suffering from for the last 20 years: OACH.

The Home shakes for Ceri but she Sleeps on!

New year or Sylvester for our German readers was spent with our friends near Northampton who hosted a traditional family Hogmanay with other cycling friends. On New Year's Eve, a few of us keener adults which did not include Ann or Ceri, went for a ride to Stanwick Lakes, the weather giving a hint to what we would see in 2007, strong winds and rain. New Years day Ceri decided to play the part of a teenager and lie in bed in the Bowen's motor home, despite Chris rocking and banging on the motor home sides, whilst everybody else went for a ride to Pitsford Water.

Flood Riding

With very wet start to 2007 and many times though out the year, the Soar Valley was flooded. In January I took a DeeTour to work in order to photograph the floods in Slash lane in daylight. That was followed by numerous other rides home via Slash Lane to check the flooding situation in the Soar Valley. The deepest I found Slash Lane was when I rode in March and found the "Overflow" car park of the Waterside Inn at Mountsorrel under water. With the floods later in the summer I started to extend my flood rides to examine other flood hot spots such as the Soar at Birstall and Rothley Brook at Anstey.

A Sign that Ceri may be Courting?

We had a number of times this year when have had visits by frogs – the first instance was a large frog in our back garden. We have had other instances of frogs getting into our tents when camping. Ann was not amused when she found one in the tent at Quorn and instantly gave it an ASBO. I think Ann was concerned that Ceri was desperately looking for a Prince!

Frog Visits

This year has been dominated by "the French". In June we hosted two ladies from Domont which is Shepshed's twin town. Then in July we hosted a French girl, Sarah, from Roman-sur-Isère for two weeks as part of the Coalville Town Twinning Youth Exchange Programme. At the end of July Ceri and I spent two weeks in Pont-en-Royans, near St-Marcellin. We headed to Pont-en-Royans for three reasons: 1 – That part of Europe was not as hot as it is normally, 2 – Ceri's photos from her visit to the area last were very inspirational, 3:- Ceri wanted to visit the family she stayed with as part of her exchange visit last year.

Going the Extra 116 Miles

Our French ladies were cycling with their local cycle club – UC Domont, as part of a Town Twinning event. On behalf of the local CTC I organised a ride around the Shepshed area on the Saturday for them. As I was not too sure what time our French Visitors would arrive in Shepshed I had arranged to take the Friday of work. I found out that the cyclist were staying in Northampton on the Thursday night staying at Northampton, I rode to Northampton Thursday straight from work, to stay with our friends the Bowens. Then I had a short ride Friday Morning to their hotel from which I led them back to Shepshed. In all a 116 mile round trip.

Ann Plays International Rescue

This year I decided to set myself the target of riding 125 miles. This I attempted at the start of June. I set off early at 5:30am, and headed to Moulton, near Northampton. I called on our friends only to find they were not in, and headed back. It was a rare hot day we had this year and as the day got hotter I started to flag and got a bit dehydrated by the time I got to Desford, about 13 miles from home and having done 116 miles. I whimped out and got Ann to pick me up. I had planned to try a long ride at end of August but my Frankenhand put paid to that, so I had to wait until September. I chose a Saturday mid September when the forecast was good, and rode to Bidford and Stratford on Avon. As I got back I had done just over 138 miles, so a DeeTour to the Coop to buy a celebratory beer was made to extend the ride to 140 miles.

Who's Got the Biggest Dick?

In March our Canadian Cousin Jim came over with another relation. We took them out to Westerham to see Quebec House as it is an important NT property to Canadians (unless they come from Quebec!). We stopped in a tea room on the village green to have cup of tea and some food. Cousin Jim and I both chose Spotted Dick. Ann was not amused when I complained rather loudly that Jim's Dick was bigger than mine!

Frankenhand

In August I had a minor mishap on the way to work which resulted in 15 stitches in my left hand in two cuts, the worst of which required 11 stitches. The cause was a head on collision with another cyclist. I phoned home and got Ann out of bed and she took me to the Loughborough walk in centre, I arrived about the right time, as I was out, all stitched up within the hour. I went home via work and one wag called me Frankenhand due to my stitches. They were the modern blue plastic ones and they are horrible as they stand up getting in the way causing them to itch at the slightest brush of them. Good old cat gut was better, at least they lay flat. I had to have the stitches in for nearly 2 weeks due to the position of the cuts. Some people in the family and at work were not impressed by my pictures of the wound at various stages appearing on our web site.

Garden Burial Plots

Many pets have been laid to rest in the garden over the years, with Ceri's Guinea Pig, Marmite, joining that great rabbit hutch in the sky in the spring and is now pushing up daisies by our apple tree. Due to part of garden filling up with dead pets Ann got me to make two veg boxes. Doing things scientifically I calculated that we needed just over a cubic yard of earth to fill the two boxes. So it was a delivery of scrap builders top soil which had to be sieved plus umpteen bags of horse manure which had to be shovelled and shifted to fill them. The only problem is that to the un-initiated they look the ideal size to bury Ann and I in when we pop our clogs. Anyway whilst waiting for that event, we have had a good crop of courgettes and French beans this year, and will need to think what the best crops will be for next.

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Wet and Windy Weddings

Nephew James got married on Friday 13th July. The only thing unlucky about the day was weather. Despite being held on the so called dried side of the Pennines it rained all day. I was a bit concerned when James took his bride out into rain carrying a pair of green wellies. I feared that it may have been some form of Suffollian wedding ritual, a bit a akin to a certain nation and sheep! They did come back into the dry later with a smile.

The other wedding was dry for the wedding and early evening, but it turned into a wet and windy affair – and no it was not due to the beans. Ann's nephew got married and the party was in her brothers back garden, with a marquee and plus gazeboes in their neighbour's garden.

Being country bumpkins Ann, Ceri and I couldn't stand the pace so we drifted off about 10pm. During the night there was quite a storm and when we called on Ann's brother the following morning the gazeboes had collapsed due to the heavy rain and wind. Also considering how early we had called round the fairies had done a wonderful job of clearing up.

Really Really Big Skool Looms

Ceri is now in the Upper Sixth, ie year 13 in modern language. Her AS results were OK apart from two French papers which she plans to retake. She has dropped music in favour of extra applied maths to give her an appropriate mix for a Chemical Engineering course. Ceri's application for Really Really Big Skool went in at the end of October and she received her first interview date after just a week for the Really, Really Big Skool down the road and has offers from all her other choices.

Family Cycle Camping Weekend

The Tandem Club family camping weekend was at Bletchington in the Cotwolds this year. As it coincided with a University Open day at Oxford, we had a long weekend at our friends Caroline and Philip. As part of that weekend we cycled camped to Bletchington, with Ann riding half bike and the taller ones riding tandem. Ceri and Ann found the Saturday ride a bit too lumpy. However compared with what Ceri and I rode in the Vercors it was flat. Whilst the weekend was dryish, it was somewhat windy Saturday night/Sunday morning with some damage being caused to our tarps.

Ceri Joins the Mile High Club!

Spending two weeks in Vercors at Pont-en-Royans gave an ideal opportunity for a trip into the high Alps. We had nice day for a drive. Our first destination was a supermarket in Grenoble, altitude 200m, where we brought a plastic bottle of salad dressing and a sealed bag of salad. We then headed to the Romanche valley to drive up D211. Its 21 hair pins are famous for the mountain stage time trials of La Tour. We got to the foot of the climb just as the circus was driving into town. Hence our climb to Alpe-d-Huez was over 45 minutes in the car which compared very badly to the 37 mins of Pantani! At top of Alpe-d'Huez, 1850 m (6069 feet) Ceri learnt some very important basic Physics, air pressure drops with altitude and bags of salad brought at 200m expand to bursting point and the bottle of salad dressing exploded when taken a mile higher. I off course had to drum up to check the impact of reduced pressure on my ability to brew. After Alpe-d'Huez we headed further into the Alpes and drove up to Col du Lautaret, 2058m (6752 feet). After having some iced tea from a large plastic bottle, Ceri took great delight on the descent back towards Grenoble in seeing the bottle collapse with the increasing external pressure. These practical lessons resulted in Ceri being called a Smart Alex at one University when she correctly responded to the question "at what temp does water boil?" – everybody else responded 100 deg C, she correctly stated – "it depends on the pressure".

Ann

Ann started a new job in August at the local factory shop which has gone up market and not hosts several outlets. She works for Pavers the shoe people – her bad habit of watching daytime TV paid dividends as she knew more about Fylfots than the Pavers people! Don't tell Uncle Philip but she does get discount for friends and relations – he has enough shoes all ready so I am told.

Cha Lady Ceri

Ceri-Siân has been working a while at the local community college helping in the tea bar. Shortly after Ann started her new job, she found out about a vacancy at the Factory Outlet in the café – so now Ceri is working weekends as a cha lady. She has started driving lessons and gets practice driving Ann to work.

Wet Weekends in Wales and Scotland

Spring bank holiday week we camped in Beddgelert forest. The weather was very wet and windy at times, especially the bank holiday weekend. In June we had a long weekend camping in Edinburgh, as Ceri had an open day at Edinburgh University. The weekend was very wet, and slightly complicated by Ceri lobbing of the climbing wall on the Monday beforehand. She didn't break anything but she was on crutches for the week. Due to the wet weather, her excursions around Edinburgh's shops were limited due to the fear of slipping on the damp cobbles. Oxford and Edinburgh were the only big skools that Ceri allowed me to go around with her.

Ceri Loses her Bag

Ceri went away camping in the Brecon Beacons Easter Week with her friend Jo. They took the train to Newtown and then the bus to Brecon, walking the last mile to the campsite. When they got to campsite Ceri discovered she had lost her sleeping. After a distraught phone home a new one was obtained from the camp shop. The next day she found her sleeping bag locked away on the campsite cart! The new bag did not go to waste as the price of a nice Easter was cold nights, and both Jo and Ceri made good use of it as an extra layer.

Meli Gets Very Wet

Ceri and her cousin Melisa had arranged to have a little camping trip together in the summer. However due to other holidays etc the only time they could fit it in was August Bank Holiday weekend when we had arranged to cycle camp to Quorn with our friends from Oxford. Due to the Frankenhand incident earlier in the week, we adults drove to Quorn, making Ceri and Meli ride their bikes. The weather was pleasant and warm which resulted in Meli wanting to play her favourite game – "lets give the adults a shower". However she did not expect Caroline to join in the fun as actively as I did. The net result was that Meli got so wet she didn't need to bath for the rest of the year.

OACH

Over Active Cleaning Hormone. The classic symptoms are desire to clean, dust and tidy up when it is not required. The ability to spot a speck of dust or a cob web at a 1000 paces.

Editorial team: Stephen, Ann and Ceri-Siân Dee.