

The Newsletter of the Patrons,
Society of Friends and Volunteers
of The Rifles, Berkshire and
Wiltshire Museum



December 2023
Volume 5 Issue 3



Redcoats Review

The Ferozeshah Issue

Celebrating the 178th Anniversary

UPDATE FROM THE TRUST'S CHAIRMAN

2023 has been a very busy year for the museum and the Trust as a whole. Exciting new plans are in their final stages for a complete refurbishment of the collection, with a reconfiguration of all the artefacts in each of the display rooms. After 40 years of virtually no change, now is the time to update the visitor experience. This project is named UPDATE 25 and will take place over the winter months of 2024 starting in November and will spread across the months to April 2025, where there will be an initial opening, followed in the summer, by a grand opening. Much work has been done by the project team already and the Trust have placed a contract with a firm called *Scribble and Nonsense* (from Cornwall) who will carry out all the design work in conjunction with museum staff.

In 2023 the main effort in the early months was the garden refurbishment, by building a new path to complete a circular journey around the garden with various themed garden sectors along the route. Overlooking the river at the bottom of the garden there is a beautiful platform space where visitors can sit quietly for reflection, where there are two benches generously donated by David and Pat Chilton. For those with young children there is a child's fort and small play area. The cost of the garden refurbishment was paid for by a Rocke Bequest grant and also the Patrons Fund. The garden is a beautiful space and what it now offers to our visitors is exceptional.

In terms of events and activities this year, there has been a wide range. Routine activities such as the paranormal evenings, educational visits, conference and meeting bookings, and work experience for young people have kept the staff busy.

Continued overleaf

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FUTURE EVENTS

Please see page 38

Trust's Chairman Update continued:

There have been a number of wedding receptions in the garden, theatre events (outside companies booking space in the garden) and then the main effort being the Living History weekends. These have all been themed such as 'Women through time', 'Army of the Past', WWI, Allies and Axis WW2, all of which have been well attended by visitors. The project team of volunteers coordinated by Tom and Eila have worked so hard to develop these events and there is a rich programme of similar events planned for 2024. Many of the participants come from afar to attend and it is good to know that they enjoy the experience.

After a number of years the AMOT team left the office complex in the Spring and we were sad to see them go, but the office is now let to the College of Matrons, so the Trust still benefits from some income being generated there. The Trust is now employing an additional member of staff part time to assist with managing the marketing and advertising for the museum and with keeping the website up to date. Ross Keel comes to work twice a week and as we progress with the fundraising campaign, he will become more and more involved with developing the work to help us reach our fundraising target.

Without our volunteers the museum would be a struggle to run. Fortunately, we have a tremendous team of workers who volunteer on many varied tasks throughout the year. This is particularly useful on events days when we can put a strong team on the ground to handle the flow of visitors. For example in the summer we held an open garden event which was part of the Cathedral Close garden visitor event, and we received 1000 guests throughout the afternoon, which was astounding, many of whom delighted in the experience with some of them professing that they had no idea what a magnificent garden we had! This is all part of our aim to widen our audience base and make the site a community space for everyone to enjoy.

Finally I would like to emphasise that the museum is evolving and in order to secure its future there is a significant amount of work to be done to improve the displays, the quality of events and activities, develop an education programme and provide first class facilities for the community to enjoy. To achieve this we will be conducting a year-long fundraising campaign to raise all the money we need to conduct a successful UPDATE 25 project and wherever possible we encourage readers to join us and support us in this journey, not only by giving financial support but also volunteering in one or more activities. In the New Year we will publish the fundraising campaign map and hope that you will be able to join in when you are able. Thanks to our Patrons, we have been able to invest in a number of smaller projects and although this year we were unable to hold a specific event, next year there will be a social event to attend.

The Trust is so grateful to the management team members who have all worked so hard throughout the year to provide an excellent and professional commitment, and the results have been rewarding for everyone. 2024 will build on this commitment and the Wardrobe and museum will go from strength to strength.

Nigel Walker

Chairman The Rifles Wardrobe and Museum Trust

CHRISTMAS THANK YOU 2024



Chair of The Trust Nigel Walker giving a resume of the past 12 months, an insight in 'Update 2025' and Thanking Elizabeth for all her loyal service and Bethany, our excellent Curator for organising the Christmas party



Andy Fontana, Managing Trustee thanking the volunteers for their efforts on behalf of the Museum and Gardens and providing an insight how e might assist with Project 'Update 2025'



Readers who were unable to attend the Museum's Christmas party and who wish to see the Volunteers Christmas Challenge may wish to turn page 39.

THE LATE RONALD CLAVELL



In the July issue of the Newsletter we reported that Ron Clavell, shown above recently celebrated his 101st birthday. Sadly later Ron died 10 days later. His family were grateful for the article in the Newsletter and for the Regimental representation at his funeral.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS ANNUAL UPDATE

2024 has as ever been a busy year for the museum and it is hard to convey the extent of the effort put in by Bethany, Alistair and the volunteers to make it the success that it is; and it is heartening to learn of Project UPDATE. So very well done to the team – we owe you a debt of gratitude.

The Society of Friends (SoF) continues to work in the background and this year welcomed two new appointments to the Committee; the Museum Curator (Bethany) and someone to represent the younger members of the Regiment (Derek South). A most welcome development has been the evolution of the newsletter to now embrace the whole ‘Wardrobe Enterprise’ – so news covering the SoF, RMWT and the people working at the Wardrobe – both staff and volunteers. So another big thank you to Michael Cornwell and Martin McIntyre for their continued labours on the newsletter.

Looking ahead, the SoF will continue to work in the background to support the work of Bethany and the museum team with Project UPDATE and the 200th anniversary of the 99th Regiment of Foot in 2024. We will be refreshing the Redcoats ‘flyer’ and (with RMWT approval) improving our presence on the website, ‘training’ the museum staff to encourage visitors to signup to the SoF and enjoy their free entry to the Museum and Gardens at any time (while hopefully spending more money in the shop), and reaching out to schools, local Cadets and Reserves and other groups who might have an interest in the history of their county Regiment.

The SoF committee wish you all a very merry Christmas and Happy New Year

THE GOLDEN THREAD



'The Regimental link with the past'

The RIFLES today do not carry Colours, but they wear a cross belt plate which displays 31 representative battle honours from the forming regiments including those that were gained by the Royal Berkshire Regiment (49th/66th), and/or the Wiltshire Regiment (62nd/99th). These battle honours were later carried forward by the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire), and the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment.

A good example is the Battle of Ferozeshah, 1845 which involved the 62nd (Wiltshire) Regiment. This action was commemorated each year in different ways until it is believed the 1930's when a formal parade was devised whereby the battalion paraded with the Colours ceremonially handed over to the sergeants who retained them until midnight that day and then handed back to the officers. The Wiltshire Regiment perfected this parade which after amalgamation in 1959 was continued by the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire), and later by the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment. When the final amalgamation took place into the RIFLES this Battle Honour was one of those chosen to be shown on the cross belt plate.

Illustrations of good examples of 'The Golden Thread'

The following four images illustrate the continuance of '*The Golden Thread*'.





1st Bn, Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment on the Ferozeshah Parade, Berlin, 1972



1st Bn, Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment on the Ferozeshah Parade, 1998

Ferozeshah as displayed on the RIFLES cross belt plate today



ARTICLE FROM PETER BAISH

Peter Baish is a member of the Society of Friends who has made contributions to past Newsletters. The following snippet was emailed to Martin McIntyre accompanied by Peter's astute observations on the Wiltshire Telegraph report of a Sports Day held by the Wiltshire Regiment.

**WITH THE 1ST BATTALION IN BELGIUM.
TAKING A REST: SPORTS AND MUSIC.**

We have received the following account of sports and a concert held by the 1st Battalion in Belgium during their rest period.

THE SPORTS.

Although time was short an excellent programme was arranged and all events were hotly contested. Great credit is due to Captain Ogilvie, Captain Upton, and Committee, who worked hard to ensure success. Sergeant Bull, Private Lusty, and Private White gave fine exhibitions of long distance grenade throwing; in this event there were over 60 entries. Sergeant Barnes did the mile in fine style, sprinting in with a lead of 40 yards. "Hunting the greasy pig" caused great amusement, and will certainly be included in our annual sports when the good old "piping times of peace" come again. At the finish the Commanding Officer (Lieut.-Colonel Brown) presented the prizes and congratulated all on their fine sporting spirit. The band, under the conductorship of Sergeant-Drummer Baish, played during the afternoon.

Results:-

Bomb Throwing : Long Distance.—1, Lance-Corporal Lusty; 2, Sergeant Bull; 3, Private White; 4, Private Johnson.

Limber Race.—1, Private Palmer; 2, Private Giles; 3, Faulkner. 1, Sergeant Mark's team; 2, Corporal Dun's team; 3, Private Phillips' team.

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Machine Gun Race.—1, Corporal Ford's team; 2, Corporal Stanley's team.

Mile.—1, Sergeant Barnes; 2, Sergeant Preece; 3, Private Malton.

Tug-of-war on horseback.—1, Sergeant Hunt's team.

Bomb Throwing : Accuracy.—1, No. 14 Platoon; 2, No. 12 Platoon; 3, No. 3 Platoon.

Company Relay Race.—1, A Company; 2, C Company.

Hunting the greasy pig.—1, B Company; 2, C Company.

Tug-of-war.—1, D. Company; 2, A Company.

Consolation Race.—1, Private Phillips; 2, Sergeant Bull; 3, Sergeant Keeble.

Tug-of-war : Officers v. Sergeants.—Sergeants won.

THE CONCERT.

A concert arranged by Lieutenants Webber and Gosden was held the following evening. Several men of the H.A.C. (cheer ho! H.A.C.) very kindly assisted by giving some splendid "turns," which were immensely appreciated. Our own Wiltshire men did so well that it is difficult to single out any for special praise, but mention must be made of the excellent performances of Private Childs and Lance-Corporal Lusty, and also of a parody of "Sing me to sleep," sung by Company-Quartermaster-Sergt. Brewer. Altogether, in the words of the B.E.F., it was a "Hooge" success, and but the precursor we hope of many such delightful evenings. Subjoined is the programme:—

Selection, Regimental Band; song, Corporal Jefferies; recitation, Corporal Evans; comic song, "Language," Private Childs; song, "Reuben Rango," Private Mackreel, H.A.C.; comic song, L. C. Lusty; recitation, "The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God," Private Sims, H.A.C.; song, "Devon, Glorious Devon," Private Blades, H.A.C.; song, "Sing me to sleep," C.Q.M.S. Brewer; recitation, "Wiltshire Moonrakers," Corporal Hiscocks; comic song, Private Godby, H.A.C.; selection, Band; song, "My little Grey Home in the West," Lance-Corporal Allen; recitation, "More in sorrow than in anger," Private Childs; song, "Drake goes West," Private Mackreel, H.A.C.; recitation, "Dungadeen," Private Sims, H.A.C.; comic song, Lance-Corporal Lusty; song, "Tipperary," Sergeant Keeble; comic song, Private Childs; song, "Where my caravan has rested," Private Seamarelt, H.A.C.; recitation, "The Coward," Private Sims, H.A.C.; song, "Robert E. Lee," Private Godby, H.A.C.; "God save the King."

I attach an article from the "Wiltshire Telegraph" of 1915 which made me smile for a second or two until the date settled into my head. The Regt were in Belgium and "off duty" as it were with a rest from front line duty. The sports and concert details were sent onto the newspaper. The concept of bomb throwing, tug of war on horse back etc. indicated the opportunity for relaxation, though it could have been a subtle way of training and practising !!

I also attach it as a guide for any readers doing their family history, and if their relative is listed, it may shed light on a side the family did not know it had !!

It also shows co-operation between the Wiltshires and the Honourable Artillery Company, Possibly fighting side by side ?

Anyway, I trust that you will find it interesting at least, I will also look to see what else is available for possible use, if you wish.

TRANSPOSITION OF THE NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS

The Wiltshire Telegraph

SATURDAY OCTOBER 2 1915

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3, No 3 Platoon.

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Comic song, Private Childs
Song "Where my caravan has rested" Private Seamarelt H.A.C.
Recitation, "The Coward" Private Sims H.A.C.
Song, "Robert E. Lee" Private Godby H.A.C.
"GOD SAVE THE KING"

REDISCOVERED REGIMENTAL PLAQUE IN SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

Anyone who is interested in the History of the Wiltshire Regiment will be familiar with the regimental memorials and colours located in the main body of the Cathedral. This tradition has been passed down the Regimental line with the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire) having a set of Colours and the Regimental book of remembrance, and of course followed by the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire and RIFLES book of remembrance all now in the Cathedral.

What has come to our notice is a Regimental memorial located in the Cathedral clock tower. The script on the brass plaque speaks for itself.....

'62nd Regiment - A brass memorial plaque located in the clock tower at Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire.

'It was placed here by officers of the regiment in memory of their comrades who died whilst on service in India and Aden during the years 1868 - 1882. The named officers who died are Lieutenant Colonel G. Hay, Captain J.M. Theobald, Lieutenant A.Goding, Lieutenant A.L. Dennis Lieutenant G.G. Brittan, Lieutenant G. Lake, Surgeon R.J. Scott MB and 17 Sergeants, 11 Corporals, 4 Drummers, and 248 Privates.



The Brass plaque in Salisbury Cathedral

What is very clear in the figures of fatalities listed is that the Regiment during that period lost well over two companies of soldiers without a battle being fought.

Two entries in the Regimental digest of service give a picture of why they lost so many during this period.

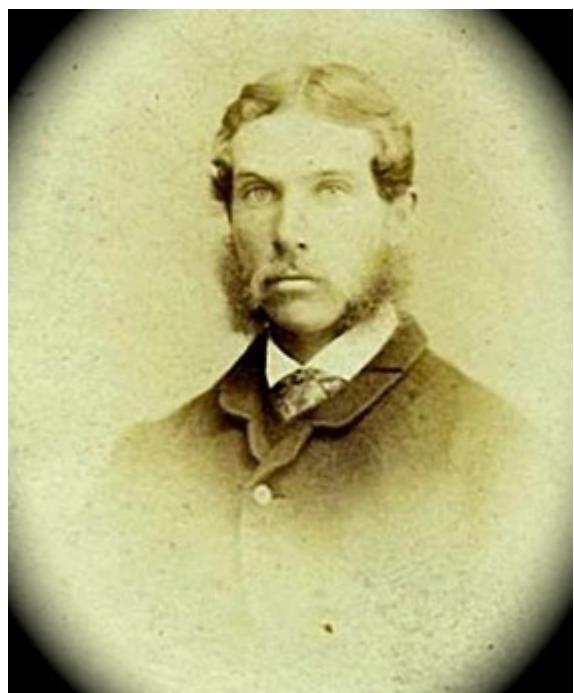
ENTRY - On 4 Aug 1869, India, Alumbagh. Cholera deaths increase. Company from Headquarters joins encampment On 8 August Sheckpore detachment rejoined Headquarters, cholera being abated. Losses: 49 Men, 3 women and 12 children On 9 August Camp shipped across River Goomtee to Sheckpore.

ENTRY - On 6 May 1878, India, Morar. Cholera outbreak. Two Officers (including Commanding Officer) and 14 men died by 16th

This prompted us to further investigate within the Regimental photographic collection to see if we could put a picture to the face of the named officers. To our delight we have identified all of them.



Major G. Hay in India. He had served with the Regiment in the Crimean War.



Captain Theobald



Lieutenant G. G. Brittan



Captain Arthur Goding



Lieutenant G Lake



Lieutenant A. L. Denniss

UPDATING THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION ON THE WEBSITE

As many of you know, our museum website (www.thewardrobe.org.uk) allows the public to research our collection and to view the regimental war diaries. The collection was first made available in its current format on the website in 2011 and at that time 27,000 objects were made available for research. The website was last updated at the end of 2019 and by that stage we had approximately 55000 objects in the collection. The Covid lockdowns enabled us to completely overhaul the object descriptions and to ensure that the objects are classified in simple groupings so that the general public can search them easily. We have also worked hard to make sure that the 38500 soldiers of the Regiment who are referenced in our collection are properly titled and identified. The website is being updated in December so that the public can see the benefits of this effort. It will shortly contain over 66000 objects, highlighting that the collection continues to grow at over 3000 objects per year. There will shortly be over 42000 photographs available to purchase, dating from the 1870's to the modern today covering over 150 years of regimental history.

The route to this part of the website is carried out by volunteers who when items are donated to the museum they are formerly accessioned by the curator, researched, described, photographed and then placed on the museum system MODES. Once logged they are in the passage of time placed on the digital website collection. The information regarding the items is normally correct at the time of receipt based on the information available, but later flexible enough to be corrected on receipt of updated or further information.

Searches can be carried out on units, countries, dates and/or keywords such as names and locations. This whole process has been made more manageable by the computer skills of the volunteer Robert McKellar who has a long experience of using and operating computer systems.

Further work is being carried out on the website in order to keep it fresh and up to date. Watch this space.

Modes Complete - Application: Object records, File: Museum Catalogue															
Grid Browser XML PDF Multimedia															
Grid layout: Mac's Main Grid Options: < > Row height: 50															
Index Key	Entry Number	Brief Description	Site/Box	Unit	Object Type	Current Loc	Yard Box	Refugee	Donor	Address/Original Owner	Recorder	Additional Loc	Date Recorded	Recorder's Name	Recorder's Notes
SBY/RW/11045	7th Bn, Royal Berkshire Regiment - A sepia portrait photo, taken around 1914, of Lance Sergeant E Pike who was killed at Salonika the following year.	Phot Royal Berkshir Regt. Sgn. E Pike	Box 227	Add 1	Photograph	1914	Unrestored	SRP/P	Pike, CH	18/11/2002	ERLF				
SBY/RW/16451	7th Bn, Royal Berkshire Regiment - A sepia photograph of No 2 Platoon, No 1 Infantry Company, Initial Training Centre, The Wiltshire Regiment, Salomonik, Greece, 1942.	Phot Royal Berkshir Regt. Sgn. E Pike	Box 177	Add 1	Photograph	1942	Unrestored	SRP/P	Pinner, CH	17/9/2003	CH				
SBY/RW/16452	7th Bn, Royal Berkshire Regiment - A sepia photograph on one sheet showing British Infantry and the welcome to Endronon, Ireland	Phot Royal Berkshir Regt. Sgn. E Pike	Box 177	Add 1	Photograph	1942	Unrestored	SRP/P	Pinner, CH	17/9/2003	CH				

The image above shows what the Volunteer sees when they have searched for an item on Modes. The image on the right shows what is currently displayed for the three items on the Museum's website. The information on Modes is far more detailed and has confidential details of donors that one would not wish to have displayed on the website open to all.

Showing results 1 to 14 of 14

Photographic > Photographic Print
Item(s): 16451
7th Bn, Royal Berkshire Regiment - A sepia portrait photo, taken around 1914, of Lance Sergeant E Pike who was killed at Salonika the following year
Person(s): Pike, Lance E;

[View Item](#)

Books > Recollections and Memoirs
Item(s): 16450
5th Bn, Wiltshire Regiment - Book of 162 pages produced by Les Pinner called "Conscript at War" covering his service with the 5th Battalion in the 2nd World War. A second copy is held as Object 9809
Person(s): Pinner, Les, Mr;
[View Item](#)

Photographic > Photographic Print
Item(s): 16451
5th Bn, Wiltshire Regiment - Group photograph of No 6 Platoon, No. 1 Infantry Company, Initial Training Centre, The Wiltshire Regiment in March 1940
Person(s): Pinner, Les, Mr; Blake, E; Pinner, L; Barnham, L; Schwender, H; Powell, L; Corporal; Whitmarsh, Sergeant;

OUR INTREPID MUSEUM ASSISTANT CUM GARDENER

For those of you who may not know Alistair Riggs other than to see him pouring all his energies into the Wardrobe garden, you may not realise the depth of his talents and passions. He has always been a passionate touring cyclist, undertaking the Land's End to John O'Groats ride, and having cycled 2,000 miles plus through the Soviet Union. He has an infinity with nature, a keen interest in history. As well as being an astronomer. Some of you may or may not be aware that Alistair recently planned and began a cycling pilgrimage from Truro to Canterbury. Sadly his pilgrimage had to be cut short. We asked Alistair to provide an account of his preparation and journey. So here is Alistair's own words are the first few days of his ride.

The Rambling of a Museum Assistant



'Stormfly' my recumbent trike outside work

As most of you know I am a keen cyclist and when you have visited the Wardrobe you would have seen my machine parked under the porch.

Just before Covid I had come up with an idea for a tour. How about cycling from the most west cathedral to Canterbury back to Salisbury.

Then Covid came along and put the stops to it, but the idea stayed and like a fire little by little it grew.

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "Every Journey starts with a single foot-step." I disagree, let me explain why. For me it starts with an idea, that little ember grows into a spark and from that spark a journey is planned.

I very quickly knew that it could not be just cathedrals, there are only eleven along the southwest coast. I needed something a little more, so it with some research grew to include Abbeys, Priories, Ministers and the like. In a little over a week the list grew from eleven Cathedrals to thirty one places to visit.

My journey so to speak had just begun.

Oh for the internet and maps. I got my list, fine tuned it into the sense that they were in a list from the West to the East in the order they appeared on the map. Then onto Google maps and plot a route so that I was not doing daft things like going back on myself at any given time or place.

At this stage, time is well spent planning and making lists. I know that some people just pack their panniers jump on the bike and go out on a wing. I prefer to have some sort of idea of daily mileage and places I am visiting, specially when I have only got a set amount of time on the tour.

So lists were made, kit lists drawn up and then thrown away as new things were added along with new places were added so a change in the order of churches till after several weeks, I had a definite list and the line was drawn.

Once more to google maps to plot a rough route and to add expected mileage up. Then to proper maps and thank you Mike Cornwell for the use of your maps they were a life saver. I now had thirty one stages all plotted and written out and ready.

While I was doing this I was increasing the weight of Stormfly and increasing my mileage into work so that I was covering ten miles into work by going up the Wyle valley to Great Wishford crossing the A 36 by the Swan at Stowford, a mile long hill climb, crossing the Devizes Road at the top before dropping down the other side into the Woodford Valley and then coming into town by the Leisure centre and through Waitrose car park. A very nice route specially early in the morning and early summer. I really enjoyed the rides and am thinking of coming work in the summer of next year the same way.

Set back

I pretty much designed Stormfly my self, she has a Pinion P 18 planetary gearbox, so all 18 gears are internal along with 90 mm drum brakes on the front wheels. Everything of importance is encased and not getting dirty with stones and grit getting stuck between brakes and rims. Now the Gear box is brilliant, pretty much bomb proof which is what you want on a touring machine the same with the drum brakes. I chose this set up because of a). its low maintenance, b). its durability and c), reliability etc. I have had Stormfly now for over four years have done over 18000 miles and have had pretty much no trouble from her. But she decided to throw a spanner in the works and the grip twist gear changer froze on me and I could not change up or down. This was on the way home from work.

“DAM! DAM! Dam! Where not quite the words I said but I think you get the picture. It took nearly a week to get the new part from Germany and then I thought it looks simple enough, a couple of minutes take the old changer off swap over, tighten up reattach cables and job a good one. Yea just hold that thought for a minute.

Now I am a gardener not a mechanical engineer nor do I have a mechanical engineering degree which is what it looked like I needed. I could not even work how to free the cables let alone see how take the shifter off. A telephone call later to leave a message with my friendly bike mechanic.

A week and a half later a reply from my friendly bike mechanic, he had been on holiday. How very much dare he have a holiday when I need him. There was a sucking of teeth once I had explained the problem and “I get back to you on that” which I did not want to hear. Which being the good egg he is did a week later, and he told me in good ‘Baldrick fashion’ he had a plan.

He knew someone who dealt with the Pinion company and knew how to sort the issue. But in his own words it would be easier to let him do it as it would in the long run save time and money. "That's fine with me" I said and Stormfly was collected and whisked away for repair. Lets just say four gear cables and about four hours work later it was done.

Three days later Stormfly was back with a new shifter and two new cables as well as a gear box oil change. And the gears changed as smooth as a hot knife through butter. Just a lovely sounding click click click as I changed gear. I was happy and Stormfly was back on the road after nearly a month off the road.

Preparation

The rides started up again and after a couple of days just to get back into it again, weight was increased again. As you know or have guessed Weight is a big thing, it does not take much of it to slow you down. A French Monk once said "He who travels light travels happy. He is quite right.

I weigh some where around the 75 kgs mark, Stormfly weighs in around the 23 to 25 kg see where I am going with this? Add on to that 4 panniers, 2 handlebar bags, some electric items like battery packs, tablet, charging cables, a sleeping bag, clothes, wash kit, tent, roll mat, stove, fuel, food and water. It all adds up till I am pedalling around somewhere around 125 kgs in weight.

I am tourer camper, by choice I am not then restricted by time or distance in one day, if something happens say a puncture or I stay to long in one place then I am not panicking or rushing to get to somewhere where I have to book in. I hate the race of allotted time against distance pushing yourself and machine to achieve the impossible, with no time to enjoy the ride or the scenery, which is what cycle touring is all about. I hate when touring having to clock watch all the time, by camping I can start when I want and stop when I want with no restrictions. For that freedom I have extra weight to push around, and camping kit specially by the time you added clothes and food and water, starts to get notably heavy. As most of you know water weighs a lot.

Yes things have changed, sleeping bags are warmer lighter and pack down a lot smaller - stoves are more powerful pack down to basically nothing and weigh just grams. The tents are lighter and more durable but all the little things add up.

Behind the scenes there was a lot of activity. I was trying out my new touring panniers with the wash kit strapped onto the outside of the right hand side rear pannier. It is designed this way to keep the damp flannel and stuff away from what you want to stay dry. New micro fibre super absorbent towels were purchased. A new gas cannister was brought as well. At the same time the tent was put up and taken down a couple of times just to get used to it and refamiliarize myself with it pegs were counted, the surplus ones were taken out. And the wardrobe department was sorted.

Then onto food. I have earlier this year become Gluten intolerant, boy what a bummer that is: where I would just fuel up on cakes and tea in the little cafes, can't do that anymore. Pasta is out, which is my go to meal base with say tuna and sweetcorn, so I am stuck with rice or noodles. I opted for rice.

I did look at the expedition meals, but by the time you added how many I needed I would have had another national debt to my name. Thankfully, I can still have porridge and peanut butter, not together I hasten to add. But I did take a jar of honey and a jar of peanut butter crunchy of course.

So what did I take:

Tool Kit

On the Trike is the arm of the Jack and a small but powerful pump.

Three tyre leavers.

A pair of tweezers (to remove thorns from tyres)

Three spare inner tubes.

Two tubes of glue, one open one sealed.

A selection of patches

A couple of pieces of chalk

A couple of squares of sandpaper

One adjustable spanner

One pair of pliers

A selection of small spanners two 10 mm, one 11 mm, one 12 mm, one 8 mm

A selection of nuts and bolts

A selection of Cable ties

A small can of oil

Two multi bike tools, one that is fairly large and comes apart it has a knife blade on it. And one that I use all the time and is my usual go to tool. These are brilliant and worth every gram in weight and pennies.

Tentage, Toiletries and Safety Equipment

One two man tent for that extra room and comfort

One roll mat

One blow up pillow (still undecided on these) but weight nothing and take up very little space.

One three season sleeping bag with a sleeping inner.

One stove (was going to take a Trangia) but did not and took light weight small modern one should have stuck with the Trangia they do not go wrong.

A couple of pots From a Trangia set

One water purifier system

One gas cannister.

One entrenching tool (Very useful)

one roll of toilet paper (Also very important but hardly ever mentioned)

One wash kit that contained

Toothbrush, toothpaste flannel two super towels that pack to nothing, weigh nothing but are supper good at drying.

One medium size fleece blanket (for on top the roll mat)

Soap and shampoo.

One travel first aid kit

Food

That consisted of packets of various nuts and dried fruit
A jar of honey
A jar of peanut butter, (crunchy)
Several tins of tuna
Several tins of sweetcorn
Several packets of rice
A couple of packets of noodles
Several packs of porridge.
A tin opener (Old army one)
A veg peeler (why? I still ask my self)
One cutting knife for said veg
A knife folk and spoon set.
A bag of tea bags and One of my China bee mugs from Work

Wardrobe which consisted of :

Four cycle shirts
one extra light weight cycle top
One fleece.
Three tee shirts.
Seven days worth of underwear.
one wide brimmed hat with neck flap for sun protection
Two pairs of shorts
I pair of cycle leggings
All of which had to fit into four panniers

My electrical items where

Two solar panels
One mobile phone
one tablet (Less bulky than a camera and still takes good photos.)
Various cables
A pair of battery packs
and last but the most important the Bryton rider 750 cycle computer

If I have forgotten any thing, then its because it was small, never got used and was forgotten about.

Stormfly set up

One boom bar bag that sits fixed to the boom which the gear box is fixed to by two straps and one around the support for the fairing. This housed one battery pack (In use) the cable for it then a couple of disposable gloves, lip balm, a couple of pens and pencils, a notebook, and a compass.

Right hand side handlebar bag. It is attached to under the seat acts as a forearm rest. Inside it, it has front wheel jack attachment (Thank you Ian its brilliant system so simple and works every time can not sing enough praise about it) My go to multi tool, a spare front light (Acts as a torch), my mobile phone.

An old ice cream box full of things like Matches, cable ties, spare charging cables, a couple of USB plugs, a roll of electrical tape, some thin wire and another couple of pairs of blue disposable gloves, a tube of hemp hand cream and another tube lip balm and a pair of sunglasses and my wallet.

The Left handlebar bag contains the water Purifier system in its own little ice Cream box several bags of nuts and dried fruit (easy to reach when on the road). Water bottles are three in number each holding one and a half litres, one attached to the fairing support and one attached to special water bottle holders attached to the king pins on the front wheels covered and kept clean by the mud guards.

Small front right pannier (the smaller set sits on the pannier rack low, just behind the seat holds the food. The small left front Pannier holds the stove as well as the cook pots and cooking and eating irons.

The left rear main pannier holds the sleeping bag, the blow up pillow and the sleeping bag inner. The Right main pannier holds my clothes as well as the wash kit strapped on the outside.

The two main panniers have accessible rear pockets which extra drink get stored in. On top of the rear rack is the bike tools and puncture repair kit in dry bags then the roll mat and strapped on top of that is the entrenching tool. I removed head rest of Stormfly seat making room for the tent. I had added an extra tarp and pegs as well as a couple of metres of cord just in case. The top rack luggage was covered with a waterproof rucksack cover while the four new panniers had their own new waterproof covers that were in fact rucksack covers. They are bright blue with reflective strips on them, better to be seen by.

The important thing with packing is getting the balance just right so it is even on both sides. I set up a solar panel on top of the fairing with a very much Heath Robinson fixing that involved cords and a couple of cable ties and small carabineer so that it trickle-charged my battery pack but could be swapped over to the cycling computer as and when needed.

A couple of shorter than I would like shake-down rides later and I was happy.

I tend to choose September and usually the first two weeks because traditionally they are good stable weather weeks with very little rain and usually sunny. The evenings are still light enough to be able to set up camp and cook before the nights draw . All in all September is a good month to tour in, as the summer holiday traffic has gone and all the kids are back at school.

So with time booked off and transport arranged again. I was ready so the night before Stormfly and all the panniers were loaded into the van ready for an early start.

Start Day

We set off at eight in the morning and arrived in Truro by midday How my friend Dom arranged parking just behind the cathedral. He would not tell me how, but we here we were.



Alistair checking his kit over before mounting it on Stormfly, to late if I had forgotten any thing.

As you can see I had plenty of space to check and load everything on Stormfly. We found an entrance to the back of the cathedral and we managed to get a few shots before I pedalled around to the front and started the tour.

Two things, I had arranged with Ross our new Social media and Marketing man that I would send him a question from each of the places that I visited and also Thank you Alan Jeans, the regiments chaplain, who after some advice and a discussion, we both decided that I was on a pilgrimage and he got me a pilgrim's shell to keep with me and take into any of the churches that I visited.

So armed with it I went up the steps and into Truro Cathedral the main thing to notice it is built six degrees off centre. Work started in 1880. it was the first Anglican cathedral to be built on a new site since Salisbury Cathedral in 1220 the two western towers were opened in 1910.

Once I had got my question I sat on the steps in the sun and texted the quiz before I rung Alan Jeans and told him that I was in Truro and was about to set off. He wished me luck and to telephone when I neared Canterbury .

So a sip of water, put the shell in my right handlebar bag slipped into the cockpit, clipped my shoes into the pedals and with one last look. I set off. I turned left only to get to the bottom of the cobbled street to realise that I had gone the wrong way. To be fair the Cathedral is halfway down the street, so I had to do a big circle then cycle up past the Cathedral again this time going in the right direction ha ha.

It was a tad warm lucky I had plenty of water and it was level, not that it stayed level for long and just over a half mile in I was climbing and it went on and on in the end four and a half miles of climbing.

I can remember when I did Lands End to John O Groats, I was warned that Cornwall was a killer and if you make it through Cornwall and Devon, you cracked it. Which turned out to be true.



All ready for the off. Alistair and Stormfly at the back of Truro cathedral about to set off on their pilgrimage

I had started half a day early in the hope to get some miles under me and ease pressure, as it were, for quite a steep mileage tour. In my planning stage I had worked out the total mileage was just over seven hundred miles leaving me with a target of sixty miles a day to reach, which can be done. In my mind I was hopping to do at least thirty if not forty miles on the Friday to get some miles in the bank as it were.

My up hill turned into a steep twisting down hill that soon had my brakes squealing which is not a good sound and at the bottom, I coasted pass two houses with the chap in the driveway of one saying he could hear me coming all the way down the hill and good luck getting back up it. The two houses were literally in the v of the bottom of two hills and I had a steep climb in front of me. I touch tested my brakes and they were hot to touch. Sipping water I started off and thankfully was in shade and around the bend from the house as the hill went straight up. My front rose as my heart sank. I got two thirds of the way up each turn of the pedals getting harder and harder and my gears getting lower and lower, before I was going so slow that the cycle computer was not registering my inch by inch climb.

One advantage of a trike over a bike I can go slower without falling. The other advantage trikes are far more comfortable than the saddle of a bike. And they can carry a fair bit more if really needed.

I admitted defeat and hopped off and pushed Stormfly up the rest of the hill, around the curve and onto the flat. After remounting, drinking some water I started to pedal thinking that my sixty mile a day target was not going to be easy to reach. I was naturally avoiding the busy main roads which was good because off them there is very little traffic and with some clever map reading, I was choosing so quite narrow roads.

I passed through Idless crossed the A 39 through St Erme across to Ladock got lost so did a big loop that found me back on Grampound road were I got on it. (still have not worked out how) before turning right and cracking on, (if you can call it that). I whistled through Coombe (Not) and shortly after, as the sun was sinking, I started looking for a place to camp. I soon found a field in which I stopped in, tired sweaty but happy and once out of sight of the road, pitched my tent.

The first day stats:

Mileage 19.43 miles, average speed 5.33 mph. I climbed 1860 ft and my most interesting stats is my Cadence, Average being 68 rpm while my uphill was 67 rpm. That shows and tells me that I am using the gears properly. The temperature was min 64 F Average 68 F and max was 7 F.

Time to eat, so stove out, hose attached to the gas cannister, tin of sweetcorn and tuna open pan ready. So lit the stove and with no time at all, did not even get too reach the pan and empty contents into it. WOOSH, I had flames halfway down the hose. Too close for comfort to the gas cannister.

O Boy! Turned it off quick, real quick. That was close, undone it, checked the hose could not see anything wrong, reattached for second attempt only for it to happen again. That was it. So unattached the cannister and put away slowly and carefully checked stove and its hose; got to assume that it has slit somewhere so assigned to the bin. So cold tuna and sweetcorn for dinner with a couple of squares of flat-jack and then black berries picked in the evening sun from the hedge behind me all washed down with a drink from my water bottle, sat watching dusk fall.

My last job before turning in was to cover Storm fly with the tarp peg it down, alarm her and turn in to bed. I put the cycle computer on charge just to make sure.

Day 1

Woke fairly early, my first problem was breakfast, with no stove my plan of porridge each morning out of the window. I fell back on a few spoons of peanut butter then honey followed by flat jack and blackberries along with water. I moved the tent into the sun as it was quite a heavy dew and did the same with the trap covering Stormfly they dried a little and once I packed up and rejoined the road with hat and sunglasses in place.

Off the beaten track like I was I needed to find a shop or a cafe were I could get breakfast there was no way I do a ride like yesterday in that heat and with climbs without Breakfast..

After a mile I dropped down into a small village and stopped just pass a Spar co op shop: this was where I found that on those really steep descents carbon had built up on the brakes and well lets say they were not doing their job properly. And the shop was on a slope. This is why I like touring I have to over come problems on the road and think out of the box. My Entrenching tool, off the rear rack and placed with the handle against the wheel acts as a pretty good parking brake. So job sorted then. As I sat down by the side of Stormfly, a lady across the road looked at me and called across and asked if I would like a cup of tea as it looked as if I needed one. So walking across I soon had a wonderful mug of tea in a bone china mug with two sugars .

Now that's how you restore oneself in the morning. She said as she was walking the dog that just leave the mug somewhere where she could find it. Now I just had to sort breakfast. But another lady came up the hill and asked were I was going. Well to cut a long story short, she smiled and asked if I had breakfast and when I said no, I was then invited to her house for a good solid breakfast. Her in-laws and family were staying with them and another mouth to feed was nothing as there was plenty. Not only did I have breakfast but was shown the downstairs shower so was able to freshen up and brush teeth. This really did restore my faith in humankind. It was a wonderful time and after I finished and filled water bottles up, I coasted down to the small car-park found an empty corner. Panniers off tool kit out, Jacked the left front wheel up, took the wheel off then rubbed the carbon build up off with sandpaper, tightened the cables up and then put it back together to repeat the process on the right wheel. Cannot complain really first time I have had to do that in months and I have not touched them since.

Once I was happy, entrenching tool in front of back wheel and into the shop for a couple of bottles of Lucozade and Boost drinks. In hot weather cycling some people do not realize just how much fluid you loose, you are hot but are being kept cool most of the time by the breeze you are creating as you ride along. So you drink lots more water which is good but you need to replace the salts and minerals you are sweating out. That I knew was a danger due to the heat and so I wanted to keep my levels up.

I was off to a later start but my brakes worked, I was clean and refreshed and I had breakfast I was a happy chap, a very happy chap.

I was climbing again and apart from a couple of short down hills it was up hill to nearly the eight mile post then down hill for just over a mile before a steep climb to the highest point of the days ride. But just before that climb I reached my second church. It was flat at first then you turn and see the church above you and you start the shallow climb to it but it gets steeper then the T junction at which you turn right with the entrance right on the junction.

Tywardreath Priory made famous by Daphne Du Maurier with her book the House on the strand she lived about a mile away. It is recorded in the Doomsday book 1086 when it was one of the twenty eight manors held by Richard from Robert Count of Malain.

The village grew out of a Benedictine priory established around the Norman conquest and the founding Abbey was the Abbey of St Sergius and Bacchus in Anger in France. The Church today is dedicated to St Andrew its first dedication was in 1343 but was rebuilt and reopened 1880 it has a peal of six bells and a diamond shaped clock.

I parked Stormfly by the front bench under the tower and took in the peace and tranquillity taking in the views sipping water and munching on a square of flat jack, before going in and viewing inside, with its whitewashed walls and a central row of Norman arches and pews.

One of the very first things I saw was a copy of Daphne Du Maurier book The House on the Strand. The translation of Tywardreath is House on the sand. I did sit for awhile pondering on life and the world we live in today. Being glad to be in the cool for a bit. It was just nice to sit in the peace and quiet and enjoy the atmosphere of the church.

But the road was calling, so I left and wheeled Stormfly up the path and onto the road by the Celtic cross memorial mounted up and pedalled off up the road in the right direction only to get out of the village to find I left my map in the church well I hoped I did. I turned around coasted back popped in and found the nap just were I had been reading the House on the Strand. OOPPs.

So back on Stormfly, pedalled back up the road pass the pub and on up the hill till just pass the bus stop and into new territory.

Sorry but the photo I took of the tower with the golden cockerel is rather blurred. But onwards and upwards I went with the sun beating down. It was a steep climb crawling along at 2.5 mph climbing 337 ft with an avenge cadence of 79 rpm. But with every uphill there comes a down hill and it was down hill all the way to the river Fowey. Paying 50 p for the ferry crossing to sit and watch the sun sparkling on the still water and to see the boats anchored. But not time to think, to soon we were docking and then I was off up the ramp and climbing up the hill glad of the shade cast by the mature trees growing on the steep hill side. I climbed to Whitecross then down hill to before climbing again to about 419 ft on to Wilton Terrace and on to and through Pelynt on to the B 3359. So far I had done 19.86 miles all day.

It was getting dark but I knew I was close to my third church or Abbey, so a quick look of the map and carried on through Barcelona and onto new surfaced road crossing the A 387 and then still on this wonderful surface turning off onto a narrow line to find the Abbey on my left.

Scleder Abbey



Well what can I say about this abbey, not a lot. The monks numbered two, the door was locked, the monk who answered the Ring doorbell, did not understand English much and did not understand my simple request of somewhere to pitch a tent, I think that what he was saying he had no room available because he had guests staying, a retreat. I gave up specially when he started saying I could come back at Nine in the morning for Mass, so Roman Catholic. No thank you. I wanted to be on the road before then as my distance was around forty miles a day short, I could not waste an hour in mass in a language I do not speak. So Nope that was not going to happen. I left feeling a bit what the hell and something thing about French Monks and the understanding the English Language I leave the rest to your imagination. It was not asking for much, was it? I turned Stormfly around and pedalled up the road coming back to the crossroads. I was looking at the field and thinking I could get away with it when I heard voices.

Now I did not want to camp any where near people, just too much hassle but where were the voices coming from. I walked across the road to find behind the hedge a campsite. The five bar gate had no lock and after a chat with a lady who was in a camper van before you could say Jumping Jack flash, I was in, tucked away tent up. Stormfly covered and alarmed and a cold meal of tuna and sweetcorn washed down with water Flat jack to follow.

So stats for this day:

Total Miles 20.63 average speed 5.11 mph climbed 1797 ft with an average gradient of 12% cadence 70 rpm, up hill was 68 rpm with the min Temp 57 F average 75 F Max was 86 F.

I slept with the tent open and with just the fly screen closed and soon I was dead to the world.

Day 2

Was up early, a breakfast of nuts and dried fruit, several spoons of peanut butter and then honey a few black berries off the hedge behind me and two squares of flat jack. Rubbish of the last couple of days got rid of so a little lighter. By now I should be six packets of porridge lighter as well as the gas to cook said porridge and the rice which I can't cook the nearest place I am thinking I can get a new stove from is Exeter. I had a shower that was nice to get rid of the sweat and grim of yesterdays ride. Back to Stormfly asked for some hot water and milk from a couple of chaps who were camping and had the kettle on, they came from Portsmouth, so had a hot mug of tea. (yea) Packed everything down turned Stormfly around, loaded her up and went and paid the seven pounds. I did ask if they had any camping stoves for sale but that was answered by a why would we sell them stare. Fair enough.

Back to Stormfly opened the five bar gate and slipped through the lady from last night closed it and we were off. We were back on the newly tarmacked and stoned lane. It was narrow I could just pass down it the tall thick hedges giving me some shade. The sky was an azure blue with out a cloud. It was a lovely day and at the moment the temperature it was a fairly level ride with some climbing, then I dropped down to cross the East Looe river and a real steep climb followed with the river below me on my left with a little dip before passing through St Martin and climbing up to No Man's Land.

A little quirky fact No Man's land were pieces of land that were not owned either by the church or the crown and therefore who ever lived there did not have to pay extra taxes to either.

Just pass this was the highest point of the ride, I was heading for St Germans.

The weather was hot unrelenting hot. Because of the small number of villages I was passing through I was being very careful of my water intake and when I did, I was stocking up on sports drinks. I was drinking a couple at the shop then storing the others in the rear pockets of my panniers and then getting my water bottles filled up as well. I was on the B 3253 till after Widegates then on the quiet A 387 through Hessenford. I was zapping along then turning right onto the A374 for St Germans which I reached around lunch time. The one thing I noticed straight away that the twisting drive down to the church would be slippery in winter. I parked Stormfly up by the Lynch Gate and walked down to the, what on the outside was an impressive looking church, well Priory I had arrived at the fourth church on my list.

Now for the history lesson folks .There has been a church on this site since 430 A D, the first church being founded by St Germanus himself; the first written record is of Conan being made Bishop in the church as the result of good old King Athelstan settlement with Cornwall. The fixing of the seat at St Germans shows how the importance of the Celtic Monastery was. The Monastery was in possession of two holdings of land in the parishes of Landrake and Landulph. This was confirmed by King Canute in 1018. They had been granted to the monastery by King Edmund and both remain in the monastery's keeping till 1538. At the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII the priory was abolished with its buildings becoming the private house and grounds of the Elliot family who still live there today.



St Germans Priory



What a door and entrance. You can just see the two towers making it look more like a castle than a church. The cool, welcoming interior of St Germans

St Germans was at one point the largest parish in Cornwall and at one point was going to become the Cathedral of Cornwall but was deemed to be too far east, so Truro was built instead.

I had a quiet lunch sat just inside being careful of the six steps that greet you as soon as you open the door. I left the impressive St Germans behind me and headed off towards Plymouth.

The stats for this stage of the ride were:

Mileage 10.20, Speed average 5.82 mph, Climbed 1066 ft, average cadence 66 rpm, uphill cadence 64 rpm, average gradient 14% min Temp 62 F average temp 73 F and Max 78 F. Dam hot.

Coming away from St Germans on the B 3249 I passed the gate house for the big house and I am on this road for nearly two miles where I reach Polbathic where I join the A 374 which is not the best road, but not as busy as some I have been on, it gets quite busy the closer you get to Plymouth. It is a twisty road and with no little lay-bys to be able to pull in for a rest, so was quite glad when I saw a church spire appear through the trees and I entered the village of Shevick and this church deserves a special mention.

I was flagging, it was baking hot and this was the first real place I could pull in off the road.

It is on Georges Lane and is one of the very few churches in Cornwall with a spire and when I opened the door, walked into the cool but light interior (and this is why it got a mention folks) there on the far wall was a sign saying please help yourself and enjoy a cup of tea and that was the best cup of tea I have had all day (all right it was only the second cup of tea of the day but still it was the best and a biscuit, well two) and out the back in the little hobbit house with a living roof was a lovely clean and efficient toilet.

Stats for this stage are:

Distance 11.77 miles, average speed 5.13 mph, climbed 826 ft with an average gradient of 9%, average cadence 68 rpm, uphill 66 rpm, min temperature now this is from lunch time folks, min 77 , average 82 F Max 95 F.

So church number five struck off the list.

I needed to get out of Plymouth lets say that was fun (not). In the end I resorted to home Navigation "What's that you ask? Let me explain My maps did not give me a clear enough picture of the actual city and how to get through it. So I rang my Heidi, my wife who got goggle up maps on her computer and with me stopping at the junctions where I was a lost, described where I was at with the names of the buildings and the road names, got my direction and set off. Stop, starting like this all the way across Plymouth. This way I got through Horrible Plymouth mainly on the cycle path along side the A 374 under the North Cross roundabout back onto the A 374.

Now please answer me this why why why? do they put in a very nice cycle path, then just stop it dead to start in again on the other side of the road. Plymouth did not just do this once but several times it does my head in, it really does, choose a side I don't care what side then stick to it. (ok folks rant over).

I was still on the A 374 pass the arts University Plymouth crossing the road yet again onto Exeter street then onto the A 379 and finally across the river Plym and finally out I took a cycle track down the river that was level and past an amphitheatre, before doubling back to find a camp in the woods.

Stats for this bit are

Mileage 4.34, giving me a grand total for the day 26.32 miles speed 4.50 mph, climbed 196 ft, average gradient of just 2% yea, average cadence 66 rpm, up hill 67 rpm, min temperature 80 F, average temp 87 F and max temp of 95 F: remembering folks this was just over an hour ride starting at six in the evening. It was a tad warm .

A typical lane
Alistair was on, in
Cornwall you can
see the solar panel
set up on the fairing



Day 3

Heading for Buckfast Abbey. I was actually looking forward to seeing this bee friendly abbey and seeing their hives. I was thinking I might loose some time here if I could see the hives. So up early, had my normal cold breakfast was beginning to look forward to Exeter so that I could buy a stove. Packed Storm fly and was off along the river Plym into the grounds of Saltam house, then under the A 38, this was going to be a problem, later I need to get over and away from the Devon express way (the A 38) was a dual carriageway and looked and sounded busy. Through an industrial estate with a cycle path twisting around the back of it till it reached a road then through a park and into Plymton.

I have not even done three miles yet but have climbed over two hundred feet. I am on the ridgeway, or a ridgeway so fairly straight but built up, and just after three miles join the B 3416. I am one this for only a short distance before I am back on the B 3416 and then I cross under, once again, the dreaded Devon express way as the ridgeway just ends as I come off. I miss the narrow cycle path off on my left and loop around and up a track to end in a garage workshop and farm. I am not the first to do it but least its all back down hill. I get onto the proper cycle path that runs along side the A 38, through Smithaleigh, crossed the A 38 once again before stopping at the eight miles at Lee Mill services for a cup of tea and orange juice and something to eat. Back on the road I have somehow crossed the Devon Express way again with out realising it and am on the B 3213 and I stay on it for some time, passing through North Filham and Brittaford till I reach Wrangaton Cross and I leave the A 38 behind me. It is never that far away, but the road I am on is quiet and peaceful and I am pretty much climbing all the way; I have a dip at the fifteen mile, I climb to South Brent and stop at the Pack Horse hill. One glass of lime and lemon and two packs of ready salted crisps sat admiring a lovely Black German shepherd and ask about a room and they are completely full but told about the station house just up the road so I walk up there to be told yes they have a room for wait for it NINETY EIGHT pounds but if I went on some app, I could get it cheaper at SEVENTY EIGHT pounds. "Why I ask can I not have the cheaper rate? I am standing here. The owner does not want people like me who come in off the road to book a room. "Your loss" I say but then I am not paying seventy eight pounds for a room with, wait for it, NO BREAKFAST or evening meal, sod right off. But as we were talking a local lad came in and he has an uncle in Buckfastleigh who has a camp site and he, there and then rung him up and at seven pounds a night I was in, I just had to get there. Straight up the road it is. Yep literally up the road as as soon I was out of the village I am climbing pretty much the steepest climb of the day as I reach the top, which seemed about a mile long and was told it was, he caught up with me. He was on an electric bike. Don't blame him and I pick up an escort all the way into Buckfastleigh then through the village out the other side and then up the steepest climb of the day, thankfully it a wide very quiet road and I weave up and across zig zagging up this monster eating the steep climb on each Zig zag till I reach him. He been sat at the top watching me. The climbing has not stopped and after a gentle climb past the church and then up the drive I reach the camp site. It took about fifteen minutes for the owner to turn up and show me the field and blow me tight there is only one other camper on site, a camper van from guess where; Yep, Salisbury of all the places. He was retired and used to work for Trethowans.



The camp site at Buckfastleigh with tent set up . Just look at that view, wonderful

So folks another day under my belt the stats for this day are:

Distance 21.05 miles, speed 4.19 mph, feet climbed 1824 ft average gradient 13% my average cadence was 66 rpm while uphill it was 64 rpm and the temperature was Min 64 F, Average 80 F and Max a cool 87 F.

So after a lovely shower and the clean up another cold dinner of sweetcorn and Tuna with nuts and stuff and honey I turned in and slept the sleep of the dead.

Day 4

Once I had my breakfast of peanut butter, honey, flat-jack and water with some nuts, I washed everything up, got rid of some rubbish, packed up loaded Stormfly, paid five founds for the night I was off all the way down hill to Buckfast Abbey.



Sorry my phone does not take great photos this is a blurry Buckfast Abbey

I think my tablet needed charging. It was less than a mile to the abbey and what a huge complex it has it not just the abbey the Abbey is a masterpiece standing in its well maintained grounds. I went into the Abbey and sat in taking in the silence and the cool.

History lesson:

Buckfast has had a monastery on the site since 1018. Who founded it? Well it could have been a chap called Aethelweard, an Earldorman of Devon or the Norse King King Cnut. This was then followed by first Savignac Monks, granted the land for a second monastery somewhere around 1134 or 1136 by King Steven. In 1147 the two monasteries merged with the now Cisterian monastery to become a Cistercian Monastery. It was well placed and became rich with the wool trade and the fishing. It became one of the wealthiest Abbeys in the South-West of England: it owned its own extensive sheep farms and runs on Dartmoor, fisheries on the rivers Dart and Avon seventeen manors as well as a couple of town houses in Exeter. A country house for the Abbot. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries 1.5 tonnes of gold guilt and silver were delivered to the tower of London. All of its buildings were stripped and left in ruins and the local people used the site to get stone for themselves to repair build what were they needed.

Then in 1882 a group of French Benedictine Monks brought the ruins, founded another monastery dedicated to St Mary. This new church was built between 1906 and 1938, during the first world war some of the monks were German but were not sent to interment camps on the understanding that they did not leave the Abbey grounds. The church we see today was consecrated in 1932 but the church was completed in 1938. The tower has a peal of fifteen bells.

Today the complex is huge with a shop, canteen, conference centre. Off site I discovered are the bees, they only have two hives which are hidden away. And it is totally self sufficient with a farm that has pigs and cows various herb gardens and off site over 400 bee hives. Then of course there is the Buckfast mead.

I had to wait for the canteen to open and I was looking forward to a lovely, cooked breakfast of eggs, sausage, bacon, beans, mushrooms. And a mug of tea. I waited with my tablet on charge with one of the solar panels open and when it opened I went in to find, wait for it NO BREAKFAST I was in shock I could not believe it they did not do any breakfast. I had the choice of Homity pie or a lightweight croissant. To say I was not impressed was an understatement I had a Homity pie not my favourite by any means I ate it because well I need it, along with two bananas an apple and two pots of tea.

I was on the road again and was and the next place of call was Exeter where I hoped to get a new stove so that I could eat my porridge that was just sitting in my pannier taking up space and weight. I was hoping my weight would be going down slightly as the food was being eaten.

My first port of call was the post office to stock up on sport drinks then once I was off it was to be on to the old Exeter Road and pretty much follow that.

I got onto the Old Ashburton road that runs just off the A 38 climbing up to join the B 3352 pedalling my way through Ashburton crossing over the dreaded A 38 onto Dol-beare road that turned into Gale road and then staying on pedalling along enjoying the scenery. Just over seven miles I had crossed the A 38 and much to my surprise joined it as now it not part of Devon Express way but only for a short distance and it was on a cycle path. And was soon off it again but at the nine and half mile mark I was crossing the Devon Express way yet again. I cycled through Liverton and onwards hitting a big roundabout the Drumbridges roundabout at the 11.77 mile mark which then put me on the cycle path along side the Devon Express way I was on this for some time getting the big lorries to give me a toot or blast on their air horns. I peeled off this and joined the B 3344 passing through Chudleigh Knighton and then onto the B 3193 and at the 13.44 mile marker crossing over the River Teign and once again over or under I can not remember which, the Devon Expressway.

I pass through Chudleigh and join the Exeter road for a little while then guess what yep over the A 38 and onto the Old Exeter Road. I start climbing and climbing, a three mile hill no lower than a 7% grade. It just went on and on grinding forever up wards, I was glad in the sense that I was under trees and did not have the full heat of the sun bearing down on me, but boy did it wear me down, and not many hills can say that. I stopped in one place my feet still on the pedals holding Stormfly, arms flopped down just about done in. I even, I am sad to say, had a rant to a poor driver about engineers and do they not know about going around dam hills. I did not say Dam though (leave you to fill in the correct word). I finally reached the top and had a quick mile descent for just over a mile then through Shillingford St George and then a few quick climbs one on a hair pin bend before finally seeing Exeter in front of me and descending into it I stopped on the edge of the River Exe pretty much in the centre of town. I set up camp under some trees and watched the actively on the river before going and getting something hot to eat. I was pretty much done in for the day but the descent into Exeter had let me recover some what.

So why do the road engineers in Devon and Cornwall go up hills instead of around them. Well it is because the farmers can not really grow crops on them, enough to make money so why loose good fertile land in the valleys to roads when you can go up and over the hills. Well that I was told in Cornwall when I asked the farmer campsite owner in Buckfastleigh.

So the days stats:

Distance 23.74 miles, speed 5.49 mph, feet climbed 2158, gradient 30%, average cadence 66 rpm, uphill cadence 65 rpm, Temperature Min 71 F, Average, 82 F, Max 92 F.

Day 5

It was so hot humid that even by the river under the trees with just the fly screen up, I could not sleep so at a daft time in the morning I packed up camp and thought I be better off by the Cathedral (Big Mistake let me tell you).

I moved off came off the quay onto Quay hill and because I was tired I did not see the curb it was a very deep one and tipped me and Stormfly on her side I was ejected. Because of the weight of everything was on the left panniers and the left front wheel, it bent the fixing for the front mud guard I got up and dusted myself off righted Stormfly and bent it back so it was not rubbing as much, then slowly pedalled my way to the Cathedral. Lets just say it was not my best move ever. The noise of the various drunks, then the homeless people checking on each other in the very early hours along with the seagulls followed by the crows savaging for food and then the bin lorries and early morning deliveries with lorries beeping as they reversed. So my short ride in the early hours the cycling computer registered the temperature as Min 59 F, Average 62 F, and Max 64 F.

I stayed trying to sleep till it was early then went in and had in MacDonalds some porridge and a mug of tea by this time I had taken the mud guard off and it was just a waiting game for the shops to open. The Cathedral did not open till something like nine thirty or ten. So I found myself on the main shopping street with Stormfly, on the jack taking, the left wheel off trying to straighten out the mudguard fitting and then putting it on before putting the wheel back on: but it was bent beyond repair and I was in danger of splitting the actual mud guard so in the end I just left it off. I had a metal well being charity set up shop beside me and they did ask what I was doing; by this time I was beginning to ask myself that. I enquired about a cycle shop as I found that my left tyre was nearly bold in a couple of places and I could see the canvas. Oops. That made me check the right front very carefully to find the same. So a small trip down to the Bike Shed where they let me keep Stormfly inside the shop and then told me of a good independent camp shop were I finally got a replacement camping stove that would fit on the gas cannister I had. Back at the Bike shop I brought two new tyres then in out of the back I jacked Stormfly up again and changed the tyres over. Packed the tools away, packed my new stove and was ready for the off. I did go back to the Cathedral had a yogurt bar with a cup of tea.

Now Exeter Cathedral, what can I say about it. Well there has been a church on the site since 1050 AD they started to rebuild it in 1260 that was before it was a Cathedral. It was a Saxon minster and has the longest uninterrupted medieval vaulted ceiling in the world. It also has a peal of fifteen bells. There is a Salisbury connection which is the style of Exeter was copied from Salisbury. Also it has no cloisters as they were pulled down between 1655 and 1656.

So in a happier frame of mind than first thing in the morning I left Exeter behind me minus one mudguard which the good chaps in the Bike Shed was going to get rid of for me along with my two worn out tyres. I headed north towards my next destination Dunster Abbey it was a fairly level ride, at first heading towards Cowley on the A 396 and I stay on it for most of the day I pass through Stoke Canon the Bickleigh following the River Exe up and I stay on the A 396 all the way to Tiverton.

It at first a mix of up and down till I reach the 5.66 mile marker and have a steep climb before another steep climb at the 8.86 miles then after a steep climb at the 10.64 mark I am climbing the rest of the way. It was on this bit of the route that the tube that protects my upper chain broke from the frame, and wrapped itself onto the front chain ring I did a fix with cable ties but they broke shortly and after another failed attempt. I got multi tool number two One with the Knife Blade and got rid of the problem all together.

I skirted around Tiverton and headed out on A 396 wheezed through Bolham and then Cove. Past Cove. I stop at a public house and ask if there are any campsites, there is one three miles in the wrong direction so I decided to skip that and carry on, but the light is failing and I decided to stop. I see a lady in her front garden and ask if there is any place to camp nearby ,she tells me that all the land is owned by the lady next door so I better ask there. There is no one in so I travel a few hundred yards pulled off the road and down the track so I could not be seen from the road and set up camp and joy oh joy I had a hot meal of rice tuna and sweetcorn then sat in the porch of my tent drinking a hot mug of tea, which was bliss wonderful in fact. I settle down to sleep and all of a sudden am woken up by two helicopters playing tag with each other and what a racket they made thankfully they do not stay long and I am soon in the land of nod.

So the stats for the day ride:

Mileage 23.50, speed 6.44 mph, climbed 849 ft, cadence lost gismo that measures it in Exeter mishap and did not notice, bit of a bummer. Straight onto Temp Min 66 F, Av 86 F. Max 96 F.



Exeter Cathedral seen under slightly more alluring conditions than on Alistair's unfortunate Big Mistake Move

Editor's Note: Here is where we must break Alistair's account, purely due to the space limitation we have. It will be continued in the March – Tofrek Issue of the Newsletter. It merely leaves me space to thank Alistair for his commitment to making the pilgrimage, to liaising everyday on the route with Ross Keel to provide a daily update and quiz question of the Museum's Facebook page.

The article over the page will provide a more detailed insight into Ross's role within the museum.

KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU...

Hello! My name is Ross Keel and, as the newest member of staff at The Wardrobe, I have been given the opportunity to introduce myself and my role, so here goes...

In August 2023, I was given the opportunity to take up the role of Marketing & Visitor Assistant. My role is varied, encompassing everything from creating social media content and designing new leaflets/posters, to advertising our events programme and building partnerships. Principally, however, I am charged with getting more people through the front door and spending money in the museum.

Having been born and raised in Salisbury, I have spent most of my life here and know the area

extremely well. I spent three years living in Bath studying History at Bath Spa University, specialising in early modern British social and political history.

At the time, I had never even considered working in museums. I grew up wanting to become a journalist and left university with the intention of working in academia, writing very boring history books that no one else would ever read. Although the academic career, let's just say, never really took off, I have always loved writing and still hold aspirations of becoming an author. Being a New York Times bestselling author has always been my 'backup' career plan.

Away from the workplace, I love baking and can also be found pounding the streets of Salisbury or Winchester early in the morning. My other passion, however, is Aston Villa Football Club, the team my stepdad, (an actual Brummie), introduced me to when he took me to my first Villa game ten years ago. At the time of writing, Villa sit second in the Premier League after beating Manchester City and Arsenal within the space of a few days. Having spent most of the last ten years languishing either in the bottom half of the Premier League or in the Championship, I am finally understanding the smugness that comes from supporting a successful team.

I first came to The Wardrobe in September 2020, just as the museum was cautiously opening back up after the first COVID-19 lockdown. At the time, I was out of work, living at home with my family and feeling completely directionless. My mum found the museum's volunteer recruitment advert on Facebook and encouraged me to go down and join up. Though, having spent the previous six months locked in a house with me, her encouragement was less a gentle nudge out the door and more a firm boot. But, having inadvertently launched my heritage career, I should thank her nonetheless...



"Can I play with the guns?" A photo from my time at The Wardrobe as a volunteer.

I volunteered at the Wardrobe for 18 months between September 2020 and March 2022, working on a variety of projects with the aim of gaining employment in the heritage sector. This included everything from collections-based tasks and environmental monitoring to our successful grant bid with South-West Museums Development. Probably the standout project was being asked to re-design one of the museum's cabinets to tell the story of the Wiltshire Regiment's involvement in the closing down of Belsen Bergen Concentration Camp- an often-forgotten part of the Regiment's history.



Sticks carved by the inmates of Bergen-Belsen Camp. Currently on display in the museum.

In the Spring of 1945, the 11th Armoured Division entered Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. Attached to the Division at the time was Brigadier Hugh Llewellyn Glynn Hughes, Chief Medical Officer for the British advance across North-West Europe, who had previously been attached to the Wiltshire Regiment from 1915-1918 during the First World War. As Chief Medical Officer, Brigadier Glynn Hughes took on the responsibility for clearing up the camp as well as aiding and repatriating prisoners. For these tasks, he enlisted the help of the 4th Battalion Wiltshire Regiment. The objects and photographs I discovered whilst working on this project were staggering. Of particular morbid interest included the spring and bolt from the door lock of Belsen's crematorium and three sticks taken from the garden of the camp's commandant Josef Kramer, (the 'Beast of Belsen'), carved

with messages from the prisoners and given to the Regiment as a 'Thank You' gift. Delving into this part of the Regiment's history is certainly something that will live long in the memory and was one of many important projects I worked on as a volunteer.

Three years later, I find myself back at the Wardrobe as a member of staff I briefly left my roles with AMOT and The Royal Hampshire's in April 2023, joining the Museum of Farnham as their collections & exhibitions officer. However, I was not in Surrey for very long before being offered the opportunity to return. In the late summer of 2023, I was made aware of a new marketing position that would be opening up at The Wardrobe. I jumped at the opportunity to return and accepted this position, taking it up alongside my position with The Royal Hampshire's, who also took me back .



Serle's House, home of the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum. A beautiful Georgian building in Winchester that I get to call my other office!

And what an exciting time it is to be returning!

As we march onwards into 2024, there is an enormous amount to look forward to here at the museum and I cannot wait for the new year to begin.

From February, we will be welcoming visitors back to the museum with the launch of our new temporary exhibition, ‘Hidden’, which will explore the military’s influence on popular culture. Building on the success of last year’s events, we also have an even bigger and better events programme scheduled for 2024, with no fewer than five ‘Living History’ weekends throughout the year. We’re kicking this off with our ‘Medieval Matters’ weekend on the 18th-19th May, which will then be followed by two more in June, ‘Waterloo at the Wardrobe’, (8th-9th June), and ‘The Great War Weekend’, (15th-16th June); before one more in July, ‘Roundheads vs Cavaliers’, (13th-14th July). The grand finale to the year’s ‘Living History’ events will be the ‘Living History Festival’, (10th-11th August). Finally, (as if that wasn’t enough), the museum is due to host its first ever ‘Folk Festival’ on Saturday 1st June, with music from an array of local folk acts playing in the museum’s walled garden throughout the day. So there is plenty to get excited about!

Away from these events, many will be aware that the museum is also due to undergo a huge redevelopment project, taking place from the tail end of 2024 into 2025. Hearing of this project was one of the many contributing factors to my return. This development will give us the opportunity to rejuvenate our displays and find new ways of telling the story of our Regiment, from the days of the numbered regiments of foot to the modern era.

My role in this redevelopment is two-fold. I am primarily involved with the marketing and re-branding of the museum, which will work in tandem with the redevelopment of the displays. This will incorporate everything from the logo and the website to developing the way in which we advertise ourselves outdoors. Secondly, I am also looking into multiple sources of fundraising, as we look for new partners and different platforms through which to gain money for this project.

Moving into the new year, I am very excited about the upcoming opportunities and am looking forward to the journey the museum is about to embark upon.

May I take the opportunity to thank those who have welcomed me back to The Wardrobe and I look forward to meeting many more of you once we re-open in February.

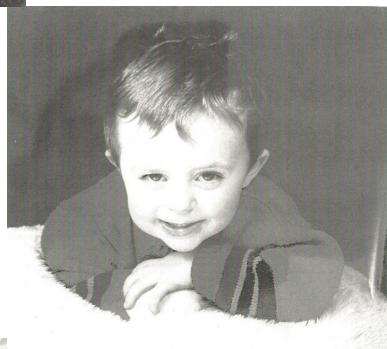
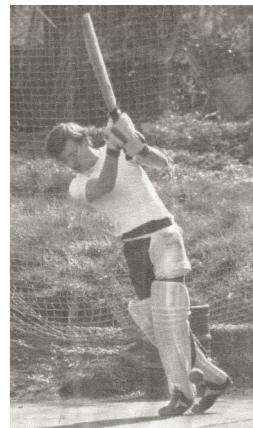
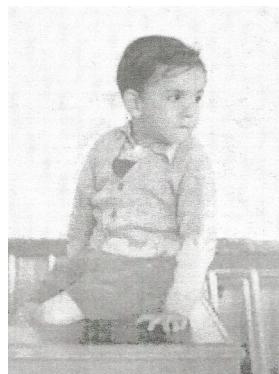
I also want to wish one and all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

Editor’s Comment: Thank you Ross for such a positive article and with the plans the Trustees have in store with ‘Project Update 2025’, the enthusiasm that you have imparted will just what the Doctor ordered to push us all forward in supporting the cause.

CHRISTMAS PARTY CHALLENGE

Those Patrons, Friends, Volunteers and Staff who felt brave enough were asked to produce images of their younger selves, which were then placed on an A frame easel, for those attending on Friday 15 December to try their recognition talents. For those of you who could not make the party here is your recognition challenge.

Who Are They?



EDITOR'S NOTES

The aim of the new distribution of the newsletter is to keep Patrons, Friends, Volunteers and the staff informed of the roles, work, aspirations that each element of the museum and the Wardrobe Trust have. It is possible that as individuals we may not be aware of the workings of the other components who support the home we call 'The Wardrobe' so the Editorial team hope that this Newsletter can redress this aspect. Please keep us informed of any shortfalls that think we are not addressing and please do let us know if you receive this newsletter in what you may consider to be an untimely manner.

Please feel free to put pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard if you feel you wish to have your own story printed or there are subject matters that you wish to see in future Newsletters.

Lastly may we take this opportunity to thank you for your past and future support and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2024 and Project Update 2025.

Editor: Michael Cornwell

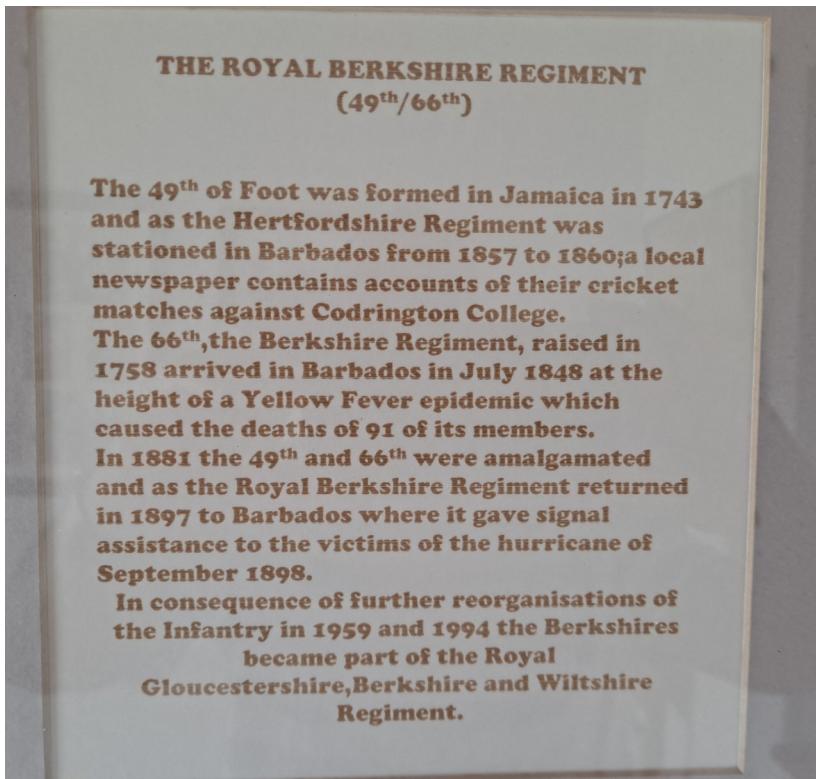
Researcher3@thewardrobe.org.uk

Mobile: 07388224129



IMAGE FROM BARBADOS

Most of you know of my interest in cricket, so I thought I would share with you an image sent to me by a fellow Wiltshire Umpire who usually holidays in the Caribbean in the offseason.



Your web page on the Museum web site is:
<http://www.thewardrobe.org.uk/museum/contact-us/support-us/friends-events-and-publications>