

## Cycling -- London -- Brighton London

It must be remembered that the roads and London were a lot safer than they are now. Not so much traffic and a lot less crime. We never locked our cycles and they were always in the same place when we returned. We were often told by adults "if you are in trouble, speak to a policeman or a man in uniform." There were plenty of them around in the early 1950s.

I think London was my favorite trip, because there was always something going on. All those large buildings, and we had to find our way round usually by asking people, and they were always helpful. The markets round the east end were wonderful places. Petticoat Lane, Brick Lane, and others all within walking or cycling distance of each other.

We were visiting one of these markets either in the school holidays or on a Saturday. I had a small amount of change left at the end of one visit. I noticed a man selling day old chickens at a bargain price of One Penny each! (Old monies). This was too good to miss and I bought eight. Brother Charles looked dumbfounded! But Banger Maynard and Ernie Wells just laughed. The man put them in a large brown paper bag and I placed them in my saddlebag. I was very pleased; I had a present for my mum.

We set off home and everything was going well, that was until we were cycling through Streatham. A car driver shouted at me; "your chicks," I looked round and jumped off my cycle. There were four of my chicks running across the main London Brighton road all in different directions. They were causing chaos with the traffic and a great deal of mirth with Banger. Between us we managed to dodge the traffic and recover three chicks. Unfortunately one met its end under a car. My mum was so pleased when we arrived home with her gift. Seven chicks survived their journey, and did well in life.

## Brighton

Long summer school holidays were the most enjoyable. We often cycled to Brighton and returned the same day, a total distance of 60 miles. Cycling in small groups was the favorite way. Usually with my brother Charles and Banger Maynard; we would set out early on a Saturday morning and arrive in Brighton at lunchtime. After eating our sandwiches and a rest we would go for a swim.

Often we cycled up to Black Rock and collected winkles and other shellfish. Today the area is a large marina. Then if time and monies permitted we paid a visit to the Palace Pier or the West Pier, unfortunately there is not much left now of the latter. The West pier has suffered both major fire and storm damage. We were always tired and the homeward trip took longer than the outward journey. Handcross Hill was a long pull upwards; we often had a rest before continuing. But we always managed to get home before darkness, just.