

INTER DA MEMORIES FROM 1940

In the late 1940s and early '50s the Inter DA meets, then held several times a year, were very popular. The DOLLAR CAMP in June (often attracting more than 150 members) and the October meet in Barns Youth Hostel, were probably the most successful.

Sawmill Park near Dollar, was a wonderful site, a real sun-trap, south-facing, and sheltered by surrounding trees. The sun seemed always to shine those first weekends in June. There was usually a merry campfire gathering on the Saturday evening, and on the Sunday, various races in an effort to win one of the precious prizes (Baby Can Openers, available in those days in nearly every bicycle shop for the magnificent sum of 6d!), the balancing in slow bicycle and slow tandem events, and the tremendous muscle tearing lung bursting efforts in the Tug 'O War (the prize this time being usually a chocolate caramel each!) had to be seen to be believed – but the honour of one's DA was at stake. Sawmill Park was ploughed up in 1953 and the June Camp was never quite the same again.

Equally popular was the annual meet at BARNES YOUTH HOSTEL in the autumn and tickets had to be strictly allocated according to the size of the DA. The trees around Peebles were generally a glory of autumn colours to welcome us as we rode the last few miles to the hostel. Saturday evenings saw the large dining hall crowded (how did these old beams survive?) as we danced to the wonderful music provided by two Glasgow members – 'Big Jimmy', a giant on the drums, and the late Roy Dick with his magic fiddle.

In October 1948, Mr Reg Shaw, then popular Secretary of the CTC was present for the first time at a Scottish Inter DA Meet. Twenty Fife members rode to meet him and the Lothians DA at Eddleston, a favourite tea place and escorted him over the hill road to Barns. During the evening he gave a very interesting talk on the history and future plans of the club. He commented on the number of girls present and thought they would be interested to see the membership card of the first lady member – Mrs Welford, who joined in 1880 - when the CTC was 2 years old. She was still, in 1948, at the age of 96 years, taking an active interest in the club and was one of the vice-presidents. Mr Shaw was wearing a badge belonging to Mr Cotterell, founder of the CTC or Bicycle Touring Club as it was then called. He stressed the founder's aim of creating friendship, not only in this country, but throughout the world. He said that overseas cyclists were eager to come to Britain on tour, and hoped the Scottish DA's would invite them to join their tours or provide party leaders.