

The Quester

A miscellany of bits and pieces of what is happening in the British Cycle Quest world!

Issued Quarter Yearly

Number 1, September 2017

I have often thought it might be interesting to hear snippets of other participants experiences as they pursue their cycle-touring and the Quest, together with some of my thoughts as I read your notes, letters and my ideas of keeping the scheme up to date. I also seem to be adding more and more 'slips' of hic-cups/problems in my replies to you as you send in answers for validation, so here is a first attempt. Let me know if this helps and is of interest next time you contact me. *Jeff.*

Some practical stuff:

Check your envelopes -- This year I have been regularly receiving split envelopes in the post, and have one that came completely empty (postmarked Dorset and SW Hants, 3rd July 2017 – is it yours?). I even had one from Cycling UK which came delayed as it was wrongly stamped. Sometimes you can fold A4 contents in half and post it at A5 postage weights and price, perhaps that thick foolscap envelope would be better in an A5 one at the same postage rates? (A4 costs 98/76p, A5 65/56p per 100gram). Will it cost more to return for any enclosures?

Postages – I am no longer re-imbursed by the club for postages I incur (even after several requests), and although I am happy to add stamps to cover the cost for return postages, some-one else may not, so kindly help with a stamp(s), please. It costs me an average of £18 a year.

Checkpoints – These change all too regularly which causes confusion, so I will continue with the three monthly update listings. If in doubt, give me a ring (if out leave a message), and I will contact you. We are trying to get the Club to up-date the Web address Question Book more quickly, so a check there may be quicker/easier. Where possible we try to make revised checkpoints/questions more time-resistant. Any help in any way with this ongoing problem is really appreciated – send to the address below.

Latest News:

CONGRATULATIONS to Derek Heine from Cheshire, who has completed the Quest and gained his Trophy in early July.

Our **Post Box** has been demolished and we have been given a multi-month estimate for its re-instatement, so there may be delays in replying by post!

Many Thanks – for all those enquiries about dog Mimi-Jill who rides on the carrier of one of Jeff's bikes. She is still long-term poorly so I cannot leave her to cycle-tour properly, but she enjoys a short day out cycling and looks forward to joining passing cyclists for a mile or two! (She hasn't lost her Jack Russell Terrier cheekiness).

Jeff. has – presently an undiagnosed illness that causes cycle balance problems/general availability. Rest assured I will do my best to validate your Answer Cards etc. etc. as promptly as possible.

Certificates - We are looking into the possibility/practicality of issuing these without request when answer cards are validated (especially the first certificate for 10 checkpoints).

Website – As at the 20th September we have noted that this is *still out of date*, despite some sterling work by Mark Waters, (retired CTC staff member), recently. Please note that there are many changes outstanding for pages dated July 2017. Jeff. and Mark continue to try remedy this situation!

Future Ideas - We are exploring new ideas for the future of the Quest, one to develop a better spread of the checkpoints, another to interest those who for personal reasons cannot expect to visit all 402 checkpoints yet still cycle-tour extensively, and a third to find ways to overcome checkpoint changes.

(continued over)

Extracts from Jeff's postbag:

Simon wrote in May "I suppose the hardest thing was that after 230 miles of strong headwind, I turned south at the same time a southerly gale hit the Outer Hebrides. At times I couldn't stand and cycling was almost impossible. It took me ten hours to cycle sixty miles.....the road from Tarbet to Rodel has to be the best cycling road in Britian, even with the headwind it was stunning"

Whilst *Jacqui* in August says "Scotland and Orkney involved six ferries and ten trains, the Cairngorm hills proved challenging and wind deafening, but the beauty and isolation were spectacular. Scotland is easier (for us) to reach than the closer Wales."

Several report riding Audax or similar events and combining BCQ (- why not?) But pity *Iain* riding the Edinburgh-London who six hours up on his time and 100miles to go suffered Shermers Disease (could not support his head) and had to quit with just six checkpoints! as a reward.

Some-one else wrote to say how they had enjoyed their BCQ *family* holiday, so much that their two teenage daughters completely forgot about accessing their smart 'phones as they were so immersed in the solitude and scenery.

Alan Bailey's family advised of his sad death, and how Alan only started BCQ in retirement and enjoyed cycling the Quest with his family.

Mark in telling of a checkpoint that has very recently closed, suggests an alternative but adds, I find it more interesting if the checkpoint is something more unique to the place! (Is this a selling point for the Quest, perhaps?)

Can you help with:

Zennor, **Cornwall** Checkpoint. The Museum is now closed, and there may be new tenants, but the plaque is still in situ. It might be helpful if someone could identify a possible new checkpoint in the area, Lands End perhaps!

Hartland, **Devon** Checkpoint. We are advised the school has closed, but the answer still available. It would be helpful if someone could identify a new checkpoint, perhaps at the coast or at nearby Stoke, St Nectan's Well, or even Hartland Abbey – Everywhere here is a super place to explore.

Strathclyde, **Balloch** Checkpoint The Castle is undergoing restoration and the checkpoint clockface was put into storage. Has it been replaced or do we need to seek a new checkpoint?

Perth and Kinross, **Dunkeld** Checkpoint Has caused problems ever since Jeff. took over validating (on one occasion it was found in a builders skip!). I think we ought to replace it with something more permanent, so could someone seek out the Golden Post box (celebrating a 2012 Olympic Gold Medal winner) in Dunkeld, and provide the details from the plaque on it, and where the postbox is located?

Thank you.

Answer Cards for Validation and Checkpoint problems to

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