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Touring Notes

The Newsletter of the Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club A Recreational Club for Central Texas <http://www.hcbtc.org> - mail@hcbtc.org

Riding the Route of the Hiawatha and More

by Jim Matthews

Personal travel log entry: July 22, 2001- rode the 15 mile Hiawatha Rails to Trail (also called the Taft Tunnel Bike Trail) which is situated on the border between northern Idaho and Montana. The trailhead is located approximately 1 hour east of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho on the south side of IH-90. The trail has 9 train tunnels and 7 very high train trestles. The longest tunnel is 8,771' in length and highest trestle is 230' high. It begins in Idaho and exits in Montana. Lights and helmets are required. Make sure you carry along a better light and try not to fall off your bike in the dark next time. Views along the trail are definitely breathtaking. First time we've ever been able to look down on 150' tall pines from above, which can be exhilarating to say the least. Great crop of red, yellow, purple, white, and orange wildflowers growing along the route. One moose was also seen chomping away at some grass in a bog. Do this again soon.--End of travel log entry.

Janet and I rode the Route of the Hiawatha on mountain bikes. Some bike store employees in a nearby Idaho town said road bikes or hybrids could also be used, but we personally think this would be dangerous. The trail surface is basalt type gravel, with some areas having compacted gravel so as to almost be as smooth as pavement. However, some of the loose gravel covered portions of the trail could present some real problems for road tires as well as greatly limiting the rider's control of the bike. If you have a problem with claustrophobia, then this trail might not be a good choice. At least two of the tunnels are pitch black shortly after entry and can only be negotiated with a suitable light mounted on the handlebar or helmet. Handlebar mounted lights can be rented at Lookout Pass for \$4.00 per day. Trek brand mountain bikes can also be rented. This trail presents many photo opportunities so be sure and carry a camera along. The trail is open from May 26th to October 9th of 2001 from 8:30 am to 6 pm. A bike mounted Trail Marshall collects a trail fee of \$7 per person along the trail or trail passes can be purchased from the bike rental store at Lookout Pass. If interested in

this ride, additional information can be obtained by calling 208-744-1391. Bus shuttles (\$10 per person) can take a rider back to the vehicle parking area at the end of the 15-mile ride. The downhill grade is only about 2%, so ride down and back, which will be right at 30 miles. You won't be disappointed.

We found northern Idaho to be very bike friendly. Mountain bike trails are designated in most of the state parks, plus paved bike paths and well-designated bike routes were noted in the urban areas where we traveled. For instance, there is a paved bike path from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho to Spokane, Washington. This path is about 42 miles long and will accommodate any type of bike. There is also a great paved bike trail around part of Lake Coeur d'Alene. If you are ever in northern Idaho, don't miss this biking opportunity. A great century ride would be to leave Spokane via the bike path, pedal thru Coeur d'Alene, Idaho on the designated bike routes, then ride the paved bike path along the southeast shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene and return to Spokane via the same route. There is so much to see, that you probably won't see the same scenery on the return. Temperatures during the three weeks we were there reached a high of 78 degrees F. and a low of 38 degrees F. during one night after a rain squall blew thru the area. We want to go back and ride the Route of the Hiawatha when it is extended another 32 miles which should be completed in a few years according to the Trail Marshall.

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Club Activities

Saturday, September 8th, Missions Ride. Meet at the Spaghetti Warehouse at 8:00 AM for a 23 mile ride. The Spaghetti Warehouse is located in downtown San Antonio, east of Hwy 281 on Houston street. Ride leaders are Debbie 210-522-0532 or Jackie Jeys 210-675-0538.

Saturday, September 15th, Castroville Ride. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Park and Ride across from Sammy's on US 90 in Castroville. Ride leader is Fernando Padilla, 210-674-5553.

Sunday, September 16th, Cibolo Ride. Meet at Cibolo at 8:00 AM at Harmon's Bar B Q. Allow yourself time to stop & use the restroom before the ride. First pit stop will be 15 miles. To get to Harmon's Bar B Q in Cibolo take I-10 towards Seguin, pass loop 1604 & exit at exit 591 (FM 1518). Turn left on FM 1518 to TX-78 then right on 78 to Niemetz park on right. Go .6 of a mile beyond park to main street (Cibolo) then turn left on main street to Harmon's Bar B Q. Park in the back. Ride leader is Vernon Jeys, 210-675-0538 or email v.jeys@worldnet.att.net

Saturday, September 22nd, Equinox Ride. Meet at 8:00 AM at Eisenhower Park. Watch the seasons change. Ride will start at Eisenhower Park. There will be 2 rides. The first will be called the challenged ride. It will be approximately 22 miles. The 2nd will be approximately 32 miles. Picnic lunch will follow the ride. Bring your own snacks & finger foods. Cold, bottled water will be furnished. (and ice). Directions: Take Loop 1604 East from I-10 Highway to Military Highway. Exit & take a left for 2 miles on Military Highway to Eisenhower Park on the left. Ride leader is Mary Bowman, 210-692-9099.

Saturday, September 22nd, Club Meeting. The September Meeting of the Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club will be at the home of Chris & Jan Marsh at 7:00 PM. Chris and Jan live at 9835 Addersley just inside Loop 1604 between Braun Rd and Bandera Hwy (TX 16). See the map on page 8 for the exact location. The classic bicycling movie *Breaking Away* will be shown after the meeting. Come and bring a friend! Call Chris or Jan Marsh 210-681-5768 or email

cmarsh@texas.net for more information.

Saturday, September 29th, Second Annual Club Century Ride. Note the change of date! Meet at 7:30 AM at Sandra Day O'Connor High School, Helotes Texas (off Leslie Rd and TX 16, just outside Loop 1604) for a 100 mile (Century) Ride. Shorter routs also available. Get in shape for the MS 150. Member Only! Call Chris or Jan Marsh 210-681-5768 or email cmarsh@texas.net for more information.

Saturday, October 13th, River Road Ride. Meet in Gruene across from Gruene Hall at 9:00 AM for a 30 mile up the River road and back. We will eat at the Grist Mill after the ride. Call Chris or Jan Marsh 210-681-5768 or email cmarsh@texas.net for more information.

Sunday, October 14th, Paul Bryan Memorial Ride. Meet 8:00 AM at Taft High School on FM 471 just outside Loop 1604 for a flat 27 mile ride. We will eat at Rudy's Bar B Q after the ride. Ride leader is Vernon Jeys, 210-675-0538 or email v.jeys@worldnet.att.net

Saturday/Sunday, October 27th/28th, Schulenburg Painted Churches Weekend. Rides available in different distances each day. Join the Houston Bicycle Club for this classic weekend now in it's 16th year. Stay at the historic Von Minden hotel with other riders from around the state. Saturday's ride will start at Flatonia. Flatonia is 12 miles west of Schulenburg on I-10. Check the club web site or call Chris Marsh For exact starting point in Flatonia. Sunday's ride will start form the Von Minden in downtown Schulenburg and will highlight the Painted Churches with distances of 28 to 55 miles. Other activities include a special biker feast on Saturday night and a great biker breakfast on Sunday morning, both available for a small fee. After dinner on Saturday night there will be a movie at the hotel theater with a possible tour of this historic facility. For reservations at the Von Minden call 409-743-3714. For more information on the famous painted churches see the fol-

lowing web site: <http://www.agen.tamu.edu/users/jfrid/churches.html>. Schulenburg is 100 miles east of San Antonio off I-10 (halfway between San Antonio and Houston) To get to the Von Minden take I-10 to Schulenburg, go south on state highway 77 to US 90 and make a right turn. The Von Minden is one block down on the left. If you want any more information on this event call Chris Marsh at 210-681-5768 or email cmarsh@texas.net.

HOT HOT HOT !

Saturday/Sunday, November 10th/11th, Fredericksburg Fall Foliage Frolic. Cost is only \$10 and includes two days of supported rides with maps, rest stops, sag support and a ride souvenir. The Saturday night German meal is available for an extra cost. The Frolic will be held rain or shine. The tour brings people from all over the Texas to enjoy a weekend of riding and friendship in the scenic Hill Country of Central Texas. There are supported rides varying in length and degree of difficulty available each day. An application will be send to all members. For more information contact Pam Tucker, ptucker@ctesc.net, 830-990-9261.

For information on other rides not yet scheduled look at the club web site or contact Vern Jeys (210) 675-0538 or email v.jeys@worldnet.att.net.

Other Area Rides

Saturday/Sunday, September 22nd/23rd, Fort Davis Cyclofest. The highest road in Texas through the Davis Mountains. A challenging 75-mile ride through the mountains or a more leisurely 10, 25 or 50-mile rides. For information: (800) 373-4764 days or (915) 697-4035 nights.

Saturday, September 29th, Sealy Cross Roads Classic. Sealy (20 miles this side of Houston). 30, 55, 70, 85, 105 miles. \$25 before September 9, \$30 thereafter. T-shirts, sags, medical services etc. Between 700 / 900 riders. Sponsored by Sealy Lions Club. For more information, call: (979) 885-6850.

Saturday/Sunday, October 6th & 7th, MS 150 Bike to the Beach. Are you ready for the beach? Join us as we pedal from San Antonio to Corpus Christi, Texas. The tour will start at Brooks Air Force Base with an overnight stay at Beeville, Tx. After a hearty breakfast its off to the beach. This ride is will supported with SAG wagons and plenty of rest stops along the way.

Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling disease of the central nervous system. Your contribution allows us to increase our support for research into the cause and cure for multiple sclerosis. I am planning on riding this tour. It will be my third time. Hope you can join me in fighting this disease. Martha Espinoza email: mm_espinoza@yahoo.com .

Saturday, October 13th, Hill Country River Region Classic. Ride from Garner State Park. Bar B Q dinner on the Saturday night. Registration \$20.

Saturday, October 20th, Missions Tour de Goliad. 100 mi., 50 mi., and 30 mi. rides. Gently rolling hills of scenic farm and ranch country, ride past century old live oaks and through the beauty of rural country villages. A SAG

vehicle will accompany each of the rides. \$20.00. See www.goliadcc.org/bike.htm

Saturday, October 20th, Biketoberfest. 8 am. Boerne. 18, 33, 42, 50, 62.5 miles. \$20, \$30 Tandem. Registration prior to October 5, 2001 is encouraged to ensure that all participants receive a t-shirt. T-shirt and door prizes! Lunch provided to all registered riders.

Saturday, November 3rd, Tour de Gruene. 8 am. Gruene. Recreational Tours - November 3rd 26, 36 miles. \$20 early \$25 late. T-shirts and first 500 entrants receive free Wurstfest ticket. USCF 26.2 Mile Two Person Time Trial Sunday, November 4th. Call 210-826-0177.

West Coast Adventure

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of my cross-country bicycle trip I made in 1981 (that ended in Astoria), I signed Jan and me up for a two week, 900 mile bicycle tour from Astoria to San Francisco. We road with Cycle America. They provided a full service tour including camping, three meals each day, SAG support, a marked route, motel options, and carried our gear. Cycle America tours run around \$80 a day which makes them the best deal around for a professionally run bicycle tour. For a few dollars extra they even pick you up at the airport.

The first week we road down the Oregon coast. This week started our a little tough with 80 mile days up and down the hills. We had around 80 riders on this leg of the tour with the average age around 50 (with one rider at 79) and a few in there 20's. With fog in the mornings we road to lunch each day when the sky would clear up. The afternoons were great with a tail wind blowing us into camp each day. On the last night of the Oregon portion we had a camp fire on the beach. Then we road into California.

I knew we were in trouble the second week of the tour (Northern California) when most

New Members

Mimi Perkins

Mary Hargrove

Jesuita Suarez

Geradie Margit

Tim Thomas

Albert Motz

Bruce Lockhart

Joe Davis

Henry "Norm" Kelly

Welcome!

of the laid back riders left the group and we were replaced by a smaller, younger crowd that looked like they were training for the next Olympics. This group got up before sunrise each morning to take their tents down and wait in line for breakfast. I thought I was in boot camp. California was a lot like Oregon with tougher climbs and longer days. The ride through the Redwoods was one of the most spectacular (and toughest) I have ever done. One day to get away from the traffic on the coast highway we road over the coast range into the wine country. The climbs here were so tough that even those Olympic want-to-be's had to walk their bikes up the climbs. When I got to lunch that day the trip leader looked like he had been listening to a lot of complaints. When he saw me he said "Chris used to lead tours. He knows what kind of abuse trip leaders have to put up with." The tour ended with us riding across the Golden Gate bridge into San Francisco.

This tour is considered to be on of the top bicycle tours in the world. If we had done it on our own we would have ridden fewer miles per day to compensate for the climbs. If you want to go on a professional tour without spending a lot on money check our Cycle America www.cycleamerica.com. We are considering a tour with them next year in the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Park.

New Club Web Address

At the July club meeting/picnic the membership voted to get our own internet domain name. You can now access the club web site at <http://www.hcbtc.org> or <http://hcbtc.org>. Be sure to update your web browser bookmarks to the new address.

Volunteers Needed

We need volunteers for the Fredericksburg Fall Foliage Frolic in November and the club century on September 29th. For more information contact Pam Tucker, ptucker@ctesc.net, 830-990-9261 or Chirs Marsh, cmarsh@texas.net.

Club Officers

President: Pam Tucker
ptucker@ctesc.net
830-990-9261

Vice President: Jackie Jeys
210-675-0538
jackiejeys@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Jim Matthews
210-690-3872
jjmtbnkr@att.net

Secretary/Membership:
Jan Marsh, 210-681-5768
janism@texas.net

Ride Coordinator:
Vern Jeys, 210-675-0538
v.jeys@worldnet.att.net

Newsletter Editor:
Chris Marsh
210-681-5768
cmarsh@texas.net

Web Site Editor:
Fernando Galdos
210-509-8619
fgaldos@prodigy.net

Recall of Recumbent Bicycle Suspension Forks

In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), BikeE Corp., of Corvallis, OR, is voluntarily recalling 1,400 suspension forks on FX and RX model recumbent bicycles. The link pins in the forks can fall out, causing the rider to lose control of the bicycle, fall, and possibly suffer serious injuries. BikeE Corp. has received two reports of pins falling out of forks, resulting in two minor injuries to riders.

The recalled forks were used on the front suspension of the BikeE FX models and on the full suspension of the RX models. The 2000 and 2001 model year bicycles can be identified by a serial number located below the crank bottom bracket on the frame.

Model Name: FX and RX, Serial Number Identification: Starts with "F" and is followed by five digits or starts with "B" followed by one character and six digits. Examples: F1111 or BF111111 or BR22222F.

The recalled bicycles have a lowered seating position and foot pedals right below the handle bars, allowing riders to sit in a horizontal riding position.

BikeE authorized dealers sold the bicycles from December 1999 through August 2001 for between \$1,500 and \$1,750.

Consumers should stop using these bicycles immediately and return them to the nearest BikeE authorized dealer for a free repair. Consumers can call BikeE toll-free at (800) 231-3136 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. PT Monday through Friday or visit the company's website at www.bikee.com/recall.

Show Your States' Colors

Voler, a leading maker of team cycling apparel for over a decade, has come out with a new line of jerseys. Some of the most popular state flag designs are now available on their high-tech cycling jerseys.

Jerseys are available at <http://www.adventurecycling.org/ads/voler.cfm>. If your state is not on their site, VeloWear.com can create a state flag jersey just for you. Simply e-mail velowear@velowear.com with your request. VOLER's line of travel jerseys feature countries such as France, Italy, Ireland and USA, and are also at VeloWear.com.

A Lovable Curmudgeon

An eBook titled *Cycling to the Source of the Mississippi River* by Barbara Mary Johnson is worth a click. Barbara convinces her husband to follow the Mississippi River by bike from New Orleans to his homestate of Minnesota. Ted becomes the hero of her 288-page travel adventure. Readers of the first chapter (free on internet) pronounce Ted a lovable curmudgeon.

A Missourian, Barbara grew up with flooding rivers and summer excursion boats. Now the couple match their pace with river barges for their 2000-mile bikeride. "Part travelogue, part memoir--this pleasant ebook is about social mores, physical endurance, willpower and companionship..." A boy in Louisiana, pointing at their panniers, asks, "Do you ever live in houses?" PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY

Cycling to the Source was nominated for a Frankfurt Book Fair award and was finalist at EPIC (Electronically Published Internet Connection). Author of *Pilgrim on a Bicycle*, 1982, Barbara also writes poetry--about bicycling (soon to appear in Bike Bits). http://www.hardshell.com/detail.asp?product_ID=1-58200-582-6

Wyoming Road Construction

Adventure Cycling has been informed that the state of Wyoming is planning major highway reconstruction for U.S. Highway 26/287 east of Moran Junction, which is on the eastern border of Grand Teton National Park, and is part of both the Trans America Bicycle Trail and Great Divide Mountain Bike Route. This construction will continue to the southeast over Togwotee Pass toward Dubois, and includes adding 6-foot or smaller shoulders and rumble strips, making the road potentially dangerous for cyclists to ride. A preferred recommendation would be to have 8-foot shoulders and no rumble strips over the pass, as rumble strips can be particularly dangerous when descending steep grades. Comments can be sent to:

Tim Stark
Manager of Environmental Services
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340

Tragedy Strikes

Khaliq Culbreath of North Wales, PA, died of head injuries in Strasbourg, France, on July 18, 2001. Just 43, he was struck by an automobile on July 13 while crossing a street to observe the cyclists racing in the Tour de France. A long-distance cyclist, Khaliq had ridden coast-to-coast, from Los Angeles to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware; from Maine to Florida; across Pennsylvania; and across North Carolina. He was an active member of Suburban Cyclists Unlimited and the League of American Bicyclists, and met his girlfriend Emily Littleton of Kensington, MD while riding in the League's 1996 "Pedal for Power Across America" event. The two remained very active in cycling since meeting.

What is the Worst City for Cycling in America?

"Bicycling Magazine" (<http://www.bicycling.com>) is working on a story they run periodically that will rate the top ten and list some of the worst cities for bicycling in North America. Here is your chance to voice your opinion. If you think you know what the worst city for cycling in North America is, please send a message to <mailto:anthony@bikeleague.org> (Please tell us why you chose a city in 75 words or less, and please mention the name of the city and state in the subject line of your message).

Support Needed

Letters of support are needed to help push part of the East Coast Greenway, from Maine to Florida and the American Discovery Trail from California to Delaware forward. Please join with the WB&A Trail Association, Washington Area Bicyclist Association, One Less Car and the LAB to urge Anne Arundel County Executive Janet S. Owens to continue her support for the WB&A trail connection, expressing your support for the current trail alignment. It is important that Ms. Owens understand that we all appreciate the work that has been done so far to complete this task. Include your personal desires and plans for the use of this facility.

Please send letters to:
Ms Janet Owens
Arundel Center
44 Calvert St., 4th Floor
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bankrupt Schwinn Being Sold to Huffy

The Cycling Division of Schwinn Corp. will be sold for \$60 million to Huffy. Yes, that would be Schwinn, the bike many of us grew up on. Schwinn/GT announced it has commenced proceedings under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. The company is also laying off 300 employees of its Cycling Division. For more sad info, visit <http://www.schwinn.com>.

Michigan Promotes Healthy Living

With statistics showing that more than 60% of Michiganians are overweight, the state Department of Community Health is launching a new program to promote healthy living. The department's free Fit Kit includes a cookbook, tips on eating and exercise, coupons for sporting goods and a guide to healthier grocery shopping. Michigan radio stations also will be airing public service announcements that urge people to live healthier. One ad compares being overweight to having a kindergartner strapped to your back. Community Health Director James Haveman said the state is spending about \$800,000 on the campaign.

Michigan usually ranks in the top five states with overweight residents. In 2000, 39% of Michigan residents were overweight, and an additional 23% were obese. Obesity is defined as being more than 30% over your ideal body weight. People who are overweight are more at risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke and certain cancers. In Michigan alone, there are an estimated 23,000 heart bypass surgeries conducted each year, costing more than \$100 million.

Good News from Bicycle-Friendly Oregon

HB 3712, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance's Safe Routes to School bill is now headed to Governor Kitzhaber to be signed into law. While the amended version of the bill does not include funding for Safe Routes projects, it does require cities and counties to work with school district personnel to identify hazards that prevent children from walking and bicycling to and from school. This is a small but important first step toward making schools in hundreds of districts around Oregon accessible by walking and bicycling.

Maintain for Peaceful Refrain

Keeping up with the maintenance on your bike can be very rewarding. When your wheels are rolling true, and your gears are clicking precisely into place, you can darn near reach a state of euphoria. With this in mind, the London School of Cycling has published seven reasons for learning to maintain your trusty bicycle.

1. If your bike is clean, lubricated and properly adjusted, you will enjoy riding it more.
2. Keeping your bike clean and lubricated prolongs its life.
3. Punctures are inevitable. Self-reliance allows you relax and enjoy your travel.
4. Simple adjustments to brakes and gears extend the gaps between major services.
5. Identifying problems early significantly reduces the risk of unexpected breakdowns.
6. Tools for bikes are cheap to buy and easy to store.
7. Understanding how bicycles work allows you to adapt them to fulfill your needs better.

The Rise and Fall of Touring Bikes

You've seen the links before, but internet touring guru Ken Kifer has come out with another one. This time its "The True Story of the Decline of the Touring Bike," in which Ken explains why after true touring bikes first appeared in the late 70's, their sales steadily declined. He explores the real problem--the way in which the bikes were promoted. This is a must-read for all adventure cyclists.

<http://www.kenkifer.com/bikepages/lifestyle/nobody.htm>

The Best of Western Ireland (part 3)

by Norman D. Ford
(Continued from last issue)

DAY 12: Waterville to Inch, 85 kms. Rhoda describes today's ride in her journal: "We plugged away again today and saw majestic mountains and rivers, lakes and bays. We see many beautiful sights while perched up on our bikes. We stopped at Milltown for hot pizza and warmed ourselves with coffee. Jackets on-jackets off! That is the story of today's weather. The rain passed us by but we had no sun either. Dinner was delightful--herring salad, carrot and potato soup, choice of salmon or chicken breast, vegetables and lemon-meringue pie plus good friends." From Waterville, the 4-cyclists rode N70 over frequent hills to Caherciveen then along the shore of Dingle Bay to Killorglin and around Castlemaine Harbour into the beach resort of Inch. B&B. Red Cliff House, Annascaul (7 kilometers west of Inch).

DAY 13: Inch to Dingle via Sleah Head, 72 kms. From Inch, it's a fast ride of 24 kms into Dingle. If you wish to ride over Conor Pass tomorrow, I suggest seeking a B&B as soon as you arrive in Dingle and leaving your panniers there. Then, free of panniers, you can enjoy the 50-kilometer scenic loop around Sleah Head which brings you back to Dingle for overnight. To make the Sleah Head ride simply follow R559 completely around the loop. The loop is dotted with pullouts and viewpoints that let you visit a variety of old stone forts, stone age beehive huts (mostly roofless), and such popular sights as Gallarus Castle and Oratory, and Caher Dorgan stone fort with more beehive huts. There's also a terrific view of the Blasket Islands. Here again you'll find steady traffic and tour buses and most cyclists recommend riding the loop clockwise. Dingle town, an erstwhile fishing village, is now a tourist center full of craft shops, pubs, restaurants and B&Bs. A famous dolphin called Fungi frequently visits the harbor while boat trips depart regularly to meet him at sea. Ethel writes in her journal for today: "Another great day of biking, sun, cliffs, hills up and long downhill, memories to be tucked away and pulled out sometime in the future."

DAY 14: Dingle to Tralee, 50 kms. Fifty kilometers doesn't sound far but today's ride takes you straight out of Dingle and up the steep, hard climb to Conor Pass. In 8 kilometers you climb 456 meters, third highest paved road climb in Ireland. Though often windy and clouded over, you can also be rewarded with majestic views of Dingle, Brandon and Tralee Bays spread out far

below. From the top, the road drops steeply for 7 kilometers; halfway down there's a waterfall on the right. At Camp, you join busier N86 for a final 25-kilometer run around Tralee Bay and into Tralee. This town's biggest attraction is the National Folk Theater of Ireland which depicts Irish life and culture in music and dance 5 nights each week. You can call and reserve seats in advance from any tourist office. B&B Green Gables, Ballymullen Road (near theater).

DAY 15: Tralee to Ballybunion, 69 kms. Today's ride around Kerry Head provides a last glimpse of the great crags and cliffs of Ireland's shore. R557 leads out of Tralee past the ancient (roofless) cathedral of Ardferit and takes you on to Ballyheige with its splendid views of the Margharee Islands. Then you cycle on a narrow clifftop road that loops right around Kerry Head with grand views of both the Shannon and Dingle Bays far below. Finally, you pedal down R551 into Ballybunion (described under Day 1). GH: Eagle Lodge.

DAY 16: Ballybunion to Limerick, 88 kms. Today's ride is the same as that of Day 1 in reverse and you end your tour in Limerick. GH: Waterloo House, O'Connell St.

Tips and Advice

Once in Ireland, buy yourself a calling card from a newsagent, tourist information office or Post Office, good for a total of 20 calls. Provided you know the number, this enables you to call any B&B and make reservations, a move I advise on Saturdays or holidays or anywhere with limited accommodation. In fall, horserace meetings often fill every available room for 30 kilometers around.

Before leaving the U. S., send for a free copy of Bed & Breakfast Ireland and Hotels and Guesthouses, both available free from the Irish Tourist Board at 212-418-0800 or <www.ireland.travel.ie/pts>. Both guides give rates, locations and phone numbers for most of the leading accommodations in Ireland. Bord Failte, as it's also called, can send helpful general information including rail and ferry timetables; the same information is also available instantly on their website. The accommodations guides just mentioned are too bulky and heavy to carry by bike so you may want to jot down the names and phone numbers of a few B&Bs. Off-season rates are usually lower than those listed in these books.

And off season is the time to go. I recommend touring by bike only between April 15 and June 15 or from September 15 to October 21. Obviously, you'll need good raingear and warm clothes. That means a

yellow Goretex jacket and black Goretex rainpants plus rubberized workgloves to keep your hands dry. Black rain pants are far less conspicuous than say, yellow pants, which many cyclists wear. Some bikers are lucky and encounter rain on only one or two days. Others report that blustery wind and rain can continue for days. There's no one best time for avoiding rain. On Achill Island, strong headwinds slowed my progress to 8 k.p.h. for hours at a time. Offsetting this was a period of ten dry, sunny almost windless days. Weather can be a real factor in touring Ireland and a strong gale could cause you to modify your schedule. Yet only on one out of the 21 days of my tour was I actually unable to ride and even then I went for a hike instead. The damp, cool and often windy weather also discourages tent camping but hostels with dormitory accommodation are plentiful.

I also recommend taking a mountain bike with Specialized Nimbus 1.5 inch tires or the equivalent. If you take a road bike, use 38C tires. Most roads are paved but surfaces are often coarse, broken or abraded and scattered with "chippings" (loose gravel).

Roads are not as well marked as in the U.S., or France. Road junctions are studded with unofficial brown signs pointing to B&Bs, hotels or scuba diving centers but there's an acute shortage of the official green or white signs pointing to the next town with rarely a mention of a road number. Unless kilometers are specifically stated, white signs give distances in miles and green signs in kilometers. On country roads, signs are often non-existent or are neglected or twisted around to point the wrong way and at times, I found map and compass more helpful.

The first job on arriving in Ireland is to unpack your bike and make sure there's no damage. If a wheel needs truing, get it to a bikeshop as soon as you can. Then buy maps, calling cards and exchange money. Banks give the best exchange rate and virtually any bank will change traveler's checks to Irish pounds. Carry a lightweight pedal wrench and don't tighten your pedals too hard; they could be difficult to loosen. And don't forget to pack half a roll of duct tape to seal your bike box for the trip home plus stick-on and tie-on labels.

Try to get the airline to put red "Fragile" labels on your bike box when checking in. And don't try to ride on the day of arrival, jet-lag can sap your energy. Ed advises that it's not worth packing and unpacking bikes for a tour of less than 14 days. And the 4-cyclists found that eating evening meals in pubs was better and cheaper than dining in restaurants.

Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club
A Recreational Bicycle Club for Central Texas
<http://www.hcbtc.org> - mail@hcbtc.org
Membership Application

Come Join Us

This is not a racing club. This is a recreational club for all abilities. Most of our rides are leader led where we stay together in groups. Maps may be available for riders who want to ride at their own pace. In addition to rides, we have meetings, parties, picnics, overnight events, an on-line newsletter and email notices of the latest news and information. For more information, contact Pam Tucker ptucker@ctesc.net, (830) 990-9261 for more information.



Yes, sign me up today!

In submitting this application, I hereby make known that I will hold blameless in the case of accident, injury or damage of any kind, the Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club, its officers, members and volunteers. I recognize that bicycling is potentially dangerous, and I represent that I am a competent cyclist with safe equipment. I understand that all rides are on public roads and that I ride at my own risk. I further recognize that safety is a personal responsibility, and I agree to participate in keeping all Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club rides safe. Although bicyclists are not required by law to wear helmets, I understand that the Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club encourage the use of ANSI/SNELL approved helmets and that wearing such a helmet can greatly reduce my risk of serious and/or permanent injury.

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

I want to help. I can _____

[Lead a ride, host a meeting or party, be an officer, etc.]

Membership is only \$5 per household. Send checks to: Jan Marsh, 9835 Addersley, San Antonio, TX 78254. Make checks payable to Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club.





Christopher Marsh
 9835 Addersley
 San Antonio, TX 78254



Member Discounts

The following Bicycle Shops offer members of the HCBTC a 10% discount:

B & J Bicycles, 8800 Broadway, 826-0177

BikeWorld, 5911 Broadway, 828-5558 and Blanco at Lockhill Selma 344-2303

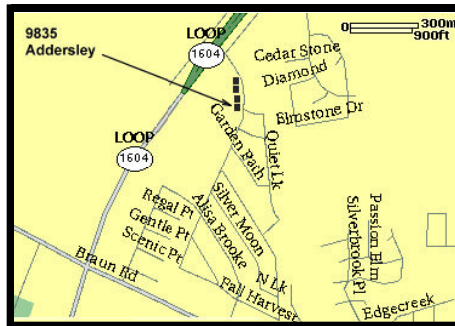
Britton's Cycles, 4109 Naco Perrin, 656-1655 and 803 E. Blanco, Boerne, 830 816-2305

Ride Away Bicycles, 8830 Huebner, 696-9925

A big thanks for their support to our club.

September Club Meeting

The September Meeting of the Hill Country Bicycle Touring Club will be at the home of Chris & Jan Marsh on Saturday, September 22nd at 7:00 PM. Chris and Jan live at 9835 Addersley just inside Loop 1604 between Braun Rd and Bandera Hwy (TX 16). See the map below for the exact location. The classic bicycling movie *Breaking Away* will be shown after the meeting. Call Chris or Jan Marsh (210) 681-5768 or email cmarsch@texas.net for more information.



League of American Bicyclists

This club is affiliated with the League of American Bicyclists, founded in 1880 as the League of American Wheelmen.

Check out our club website for more news and information:

<http://www.hcbtc.org>