

oil the chain, brush the cobwebs off the handlebars and pedal off up the hill out of the village. Running comes first, but cycling's a good second in fair weather, and the illusion of speed, somewhat difficult to obtain nowadays in the former, is still attainable in the latter. There can be few things so exhilarating as gliding down from the main road towards Chadlington, basking in the warmth of late afternoon sunshine. Or snaking around the hidden villages of Wescote, Icomb and Oddington, interrupting Bledington's V.E. Day street party, or drifting through the time-warp that is called Idbury.

I quickly lose count of my blessings.

Back home and out of the shower, I return to my desk with ailing foot resting on a hot-water bottle. The pills have nearly all gone now, although such fluorescent gob-stoppers took some swallowing.

So what of tomorrow? Will it be further recuperation and consolation on the bike? Or will the rest, the treatment and the memories of past glories drive me to blow the dust off those trainers?

Only time, that great healer, will tell.

THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

At its March meeting Anthea Jones talk was called "What is a Wold?" In this Anthea explained the early derivation from the word "wald" - a forest or wooded area, with particular reference to the wooded upland above Stanway at the time owned by Cod. As trees were cut down to create space for grazing sheep so the word "wold" changed its meaning to treeless open upland. Since Anglo Saxon times there have been further changes of land usage and the name Cotswold has spread to an ever increasing area.

In April Carl Boardman, County Archivist, spoke on the material available in the County Archives, originally the County Record Office. The archive includes material deposited by local civil and church authorities as well as those from private individuals. From his research of some of these records, some of which go back to the 12th century, Carl told of some of the weird and wonderful stories which can emerge from the archive which is open for public inspection.

At this season's last meeting, the venue was Ascott's new Tiddy Hall for a talk on "Wychwood Forest, Past, Present and Future". This was given by Alan Spicer who detailed the documentary and botanical evidence for the forest, whose extent varied according to the demands of hunting and grazing and arable farming. Research continues on the past history and there are present day projects to maintain, conserve and extend the forest.