

It Should Not Happen To A Cyclist...

...But it did.
And it hurt.
Yet the ride
had started
without
difficulties:
up the hill
from Shipton
and down
into
Swinbrook



closely
followed by
the police
(never
knew I was
so popular).
Cyclists
have a
whimsical
term called
'road rash'

where, for some reason, at just half past nine on 31st January, 'men in suits' were idling their time away outside The Swan. It subsequently turned out that David Cameron and President Hollande were to have lunch there later that day so the suits were presumably on the lookout for threatening or suicide cyclists.

Forster Floored

I rode on to Carterton and into Curbridge, looking forward to coffee at a friend's house on the edge of Witney. Crossing the bridge over the A40 I glided down to the roundabout, completely unaware that my world was about to be turned upside down - literally.

There was no traffic on the roundabout so I carried on, as did a dark car approaching from the Deer Park road on the left. The driver simply did not see me, despite my apparel of a fluorescent yellow jacket and pillar-box red trousers. He accelerated onto the roundabout. I had no warning, not even a premonition. He hit me. Hard.

Suddenly I was just a multicoloured rag lying in the road, shocked, confused, conscious but hurt and, temporarily at least, quite still. A bystander sent for the ambulance which arrived within minutes,

which, believe me, is a lot more painful than it sounds, encompassing every contact between hard tarmac and soft flesh. Knees, elbows, cheek, hip and sundry other places 'where the sun does not shine.' My left knee was a mess of blood and lumps of flesh. After an examination and quick statement, the driver was by now wedged uncomfortably in the police car for his grilling; I was taken to the Minor Injuries Unit in Witney where I was immediately whisked into the treatment room lest my dripping knee should upset patients of a delicate nature. Multiple dressings, twelve stitches and three hours later, I was driven home where I sat for the rest of the day feeling rather sorry for myself.

They Scraped ME off the Tarmac...

A couple of days and sleepless nights later I was able to take a rather more light-hearted view of the events when I remembered the children's version of the words of 'John Brown's body.' There, one verse gleefully chants: "They scraped him off the tarmac like a lump of strawberry jam." I knew how he felt. I'll live. A few days later, I had my first walk around by the church, a horribly contorted shuffle during which a little old

Continued on page 23

man with a walking stick overtook me; oh, the indignity of it all - ex-marathon champion humiliated by a gentleman twenty years his senior. It was even slower than my current running speed, and that is saying something.

Regular visits to the surgery over the past fortnight have put me on the verge of having my own coffee mug provided.

Villagers have taken pity on this wreck as I've gone on my daily shuffle - during the first week, the editor of this magazine, bless her, stopped to offer me a lift and in the second week, during an icy blast of snow on Fiddlers Hill, Postman Pat offered me a lift; unwilling to displace his cat from the van's passenger seat, I declined and stumbled onwards.

Now the mantelpiece is lined with cards while two of the neighbour's children have coloured cartoon figures for me to stick up on the kitchen cupboard doors.

Friends from the Baptist Church have been marvellous: cards, visitors on two legs and on four, phone calls, prayers - all immensely heart-warming. I could not have asked for more, except perhaps an influx of intravenous chocolate.

And now, when I walk gingerly up to the village shop and watch fluorescent streams of children doing their cycle training, I wonder what I could say to them; perhaps firstly, always wear a helmet (mine was dented above my black eye, showing how much worse it would have been if I had not been wearing a helmet) and secondly, when on a roundabout, do not assume traffic on the left will give way.

But perhaps, in addition, I would say, "Enjoy your cycling, for such accidents are very, very rare and cycling is still a wonderful activity."

Bob Forster

And an Encouraging Wave to Martin to... Keep on Running

It has always been an ambition of mine to run The London Marathon so a chance conversation with a fund-raiser for a very worthy cause resulted in my entry. I am running for the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust (www.cwmt.org.uk), a great charity which raises awareness and support for young people who have mental health issues.

It was established following the death of a young man who could not cope with the pressures of life and sadly took his own life due to a lack of support. At the time of writing (end of February) I am running thirteen miles and although very pleased

with this, it is only half distance! Please if you see me plodding around our beautiful villages in a luminous yellow top, give me an encouraging toot or wave.

Or even better please help me raise money for this important charity by donating online at: www.justgiving.com/martin-hampshire or give me a ring on: **01993 832103** if you want more details or wish to donate personally.

Your donations will be very gratefully received. Thank you .

Martin Hampshire