

British Bikers Pedal Through County As Part Of World Tour

BY DOUG RUTTER

A British couple pedaled their mountain bikes through Brunswick County last week as part of a world bicycling tour expected to last at least five years and cover nearly 50,000 miles.

Bikers Steve Bradford and Emma Scrimshaw said they hope to see the world and experience its many different cultures during their long-distance ride.

At the same time, they hope to help educate a special group of youngsters back in their homeland. The 11-year-olds are in a class for children with learning disabilities at Hayes School in Kent County.

The students will stay together for the next five or six years, and the two bicyclers plan to keep in constant contact with the youths during the duration of their world tour.

"We thought it would be nice to do that with them because they don't get too much attention," Bradford said. "They're a special group of children."

The bicyclers already have sent three or four packages to the class and plan to send more as they gather tourist leaflets and photographs at their different stops. The purpose is to help teach geography and culture.

Before leaving England, Bradford had worked 12 years for a finance company and Miss Scrimshaw was a nurse. They lived in Nottingham, which they described as "Robin Hood country."

Their tour began Nov. 29 in Miami, where they purchased 21-speed hybrid mountain bikes, loaded them down with camping gear and the bare necessities and set out for southern Florida and Everglades National Park.

They had covered just under 1,500 miles by the time they crossed the North Carolina state line last Monday and got their first look at Brunswick County.

According to current plans, the couple will pedal through the United States and 31 other countries during their trip. The world tour will cover six continents, with Antarctica omitted for obvious reasons.

From the United States, the bicyclers plan to make their way through Central and South America before taking a ship to New Zealand. Then it's on to Australia, Indonesia, Pacific islands including the Philippines and Japan, China and southeast Asia, Africa, Spain and France before returning to the United Kingdom.

"All of that is subject to change. We haven't cast anything in stone," Bradford said. "The rule is there are no rules. If something looks better than something else,

we'll change the itinerary."

The bicyclers have already modified their original plan to pedal as far north as New Jersey before heading west. Friends they've made along the way have warned them about urban traffic in the Northeast, so they've decided for now to only go as far north as Washington, D.C.

Miss Scrimshaw said they decided to start the tour in the United States because it is a friendly culture and there is no language barrier. Neither one of the bikers had been farther from home than Turkey before the tour began last fall.

What they've seen so far has blown away any expectations they had about the United States. Southern hospitality is alive and well as far as they're concerned.

Bradford said whenever they stop at a small-town store for a drink and a break, a friendly American will ask them where they're going.

"It's confounded all of our pre-conceived ideas about the United States," he said. "I didn't think we would meet as many people. We were warned about all of the bad people over here, but we haven't met any yet."

When they got to Brunswick County, they happened to meet Don and Deborah Arnold, who own property at Brick Landing Plantation.

Mrs. Arnold said she first saw the bikers posing for photographs at the North Carolina state line and saw them later pedaling up N.C. 179. She offered assistance and ended up "adopting" them for two nights.

Miss Scrimshaw said bicycling in America is a lot different than England, where it's only 500 miles from one end of the country to the other.

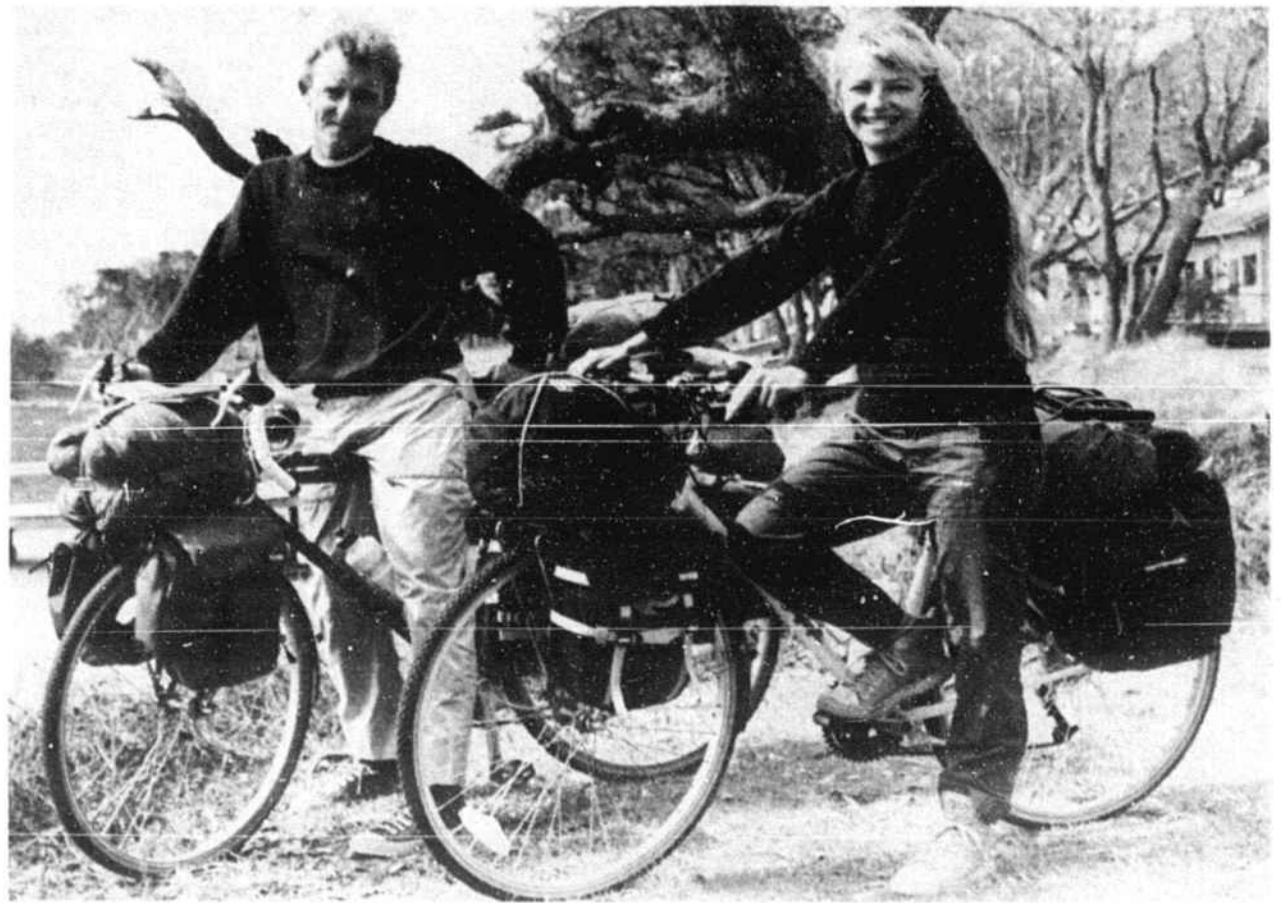
"Here it's so vast. You could pedal for a couple days and be surrounded by pine forests and swamps the whole time," she said. "You could spend easily seven years in the states and still not see it all."

She's convinced that bicycling is the best way to see the world. "It's not too slow, and it's not too fast. You can take everything in as you travel."

Miss Scrimshaw said the couple sold all of their possessions, including their apartment, to finance the trip. "The whole lot went," she said. "We haven't got any ties at all back in England."

They said they didn't do any special physical training to prepare for the world tour. "We just enjoyed cycling," Miss Scrimshaw said. "We weren't long-distance cyclists."

Their practical preparation included determining



BRITISH BICYCLERS Steve Bradford and Emma Scrimshaw prepare to move out after a stop at Brick Landing last week. Their world tour is expected to last at least five years and cover approximately 50,000 miles.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

their basic course and reading about people who have pedaled around the world.

"If the truth be known, the only way to prepare for a worldwide cycling tour is to cycle around the world," Bradford said. "There's really nothing you can do to prepare for something this big."

When they're on the road, the couple tries to average 30 to 40 miles per day and stay at state parks or other campgrounds. "We have succumbed a few times to a motel when it was freezing," Bradford said.

They recently were forced to stay in a motel in Georgetown, S.C., because both of the camping sites on their map had been wiped out by Hurricane Hugo. They follow bike routes on maps published by an United

States organization called Bike Centennial, which they said has been a big help.

The two bicyclers, who have lived together for the last four years, say the world tour should be a great test of their relationship. They are together just about 24 hours a day.

Some of the biggest challenges so far have come from dogs they've passed on the side of the road. "The people have been fine," Bradford said. "One thing we didn't think of were dogs."

Bradford said they learned quickly that they couldn't outrun very many dogs on their bikes. So they've developed several techniques to discourage the animals, including squirting them with bottles of water.

Burning Car Found At Shell Point

BY TERRY POPE

Investigators say a fire that burned a car near Shell Point early Sunday is of a suspicious nature. The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department is looking for the owner, a resident of the Shallotte area, according to the vehicle registration.

A sheriff's dispatcher received a call around 12:26 a.m. that a car resting on its side in the ditch on Gator Pond Road was on fire. The driver's side door, resting against the ground, couldn't be opened.

The 1980 Pontiac was fully engulfed when fire fighters from Civietown Volunteer Fire Department arrived, reported Deputy Becky McDonald. Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad also responded, but no victims were found at the scene.

Deputy McDonald reported there were footprints leading from the car.

In other reports on file at the sheriff's department:

■ An employee of Wilson's supermarket in Southport was taken to the hospital after an alleged shoplifter ran over his foot in the parking lot. Deputy McDonald reported that two employees spotted a bottle of wine protruding from a lady's purse while she was shopping inside the store Saturday. When she failed to pay for the wine, the employees approached her outside, but she refused to re-enter the store. The left rear wheel of her car ran over the

CRIME REPORT

employee's foot. He was treated at Doshier Memorial Hospital and released.

■ An estimated \$6,970 in tools were taken from a storage shed at a home in Ash Saturday when the homeowners were in Shallotte washing clothes and buying groceries, reported Deputy George Stanley.

■ Vandals caused an estimated \$2,000 in damage to a garage door at the Smithville District Park in Southport Friday night, reported Deputy William Hewett. The door had been dented by a blunt object and was discovered around 8 a.m. Saturday by park manager Arch Wilson.

■ A Leland home was burglarized Friday when someone broke a window to gain entry through a rear door. A videocassette recorder, telephone, jewelry and television games valued at \$1,925 was taken, reported Deputy Richard DuVall.

■ Someone broke into a Leland mobile home Saturday and took a television, radio and \$17 in cash, reported Deputy Robert Allen. The items were valued at \$125.

■ Windows to three vehicles parked at the Rite Aid, Hill's and Wilson's stores in Leland were broken Saturday night, reported Deputy DuVall. A passenger side window valued at \$350, a rear window valued at \$350 and a rear door window valued at \$300 were broken.

■ A Leland woman reported she was robbed of \$230 Saturday by three suspects that ripped her clothes and took money from her purse. She also reported that her identification cards and keys were taken by the suspects, reported Deputy Randy Robinson, who said the victim was highly intoxicated.

■ Someone broke into the Southport Solid Waste Transfer Station Friday night causing \$75 in damage to a window. A \$20 pitchfork was taken, reported Deputy Hewett.

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