

Rachel Moynihan who died this summer aged 96 was a very active participant in the Ride & Stride and only stopped her annual 46 mile tour of the Romney Marsh churches when she was 85. She asked that, at her funeral, the collection should go to support the Ride & Stride and below we share her memories of riding for 10 hours around the Marsh.

BALLAD OF THE BIKE RIDE

(Saturday, 14 September 1996)

Dog days are done now autumn's come,  
And gold spills out on every side, as I  
Begin the Sponsored Ride.

The gold of crops now gathered in,  
The golden sands at water's rim.  
High in the sky a golden throat  
Pours out its heart in joyful note,

And in my heart a golden prayer urges me on without a care.

Now, with St. Nicholas to bless, and friendly faces at the door,  
I mount my veteran B.S.A. and start the Annual Sponsored Tour,  
To spend a golden autumn day reaping real gold my debts to pay.  
Eighteen churches are my aim starting with Clements down the lane,  
Across the road to Lydd-on-Sea. Martin of Tours, All Saints, Westlea

To Brookland then, and Fairfield – fair –

Becket was once the Landlord here;

At Appledore Chapel and Church there are,

Clock striking four from the ancient Tower.

Eleven churches up to date, six more to come, if I'm not too late

So downhill now to St. Dunstan's Shrine

At Snargate – a favourite church of mine,

With Brenzett close by – these two are the best

For providing the bikers with food, drinks and rest

Snave, sadly redundant – note pinned to the door,

With dozens of others I sign one name more.

Ivychurch in the gloaming, Mrs. Waite at the gate,

Nine years since Terry met with his fate.

Darkness is falling and free as a bird

I'm happy to know my prayers have been heard

As skim down the lane, passing Peter and Paul,

With a nod at the Marys in Marsh and on Wall

With the sea on my lefthand, fifty miles on my right.

Ten hours in the saddle – I shall sleep well tonight.

Rachel Moynihan