

Rhythm of the Road

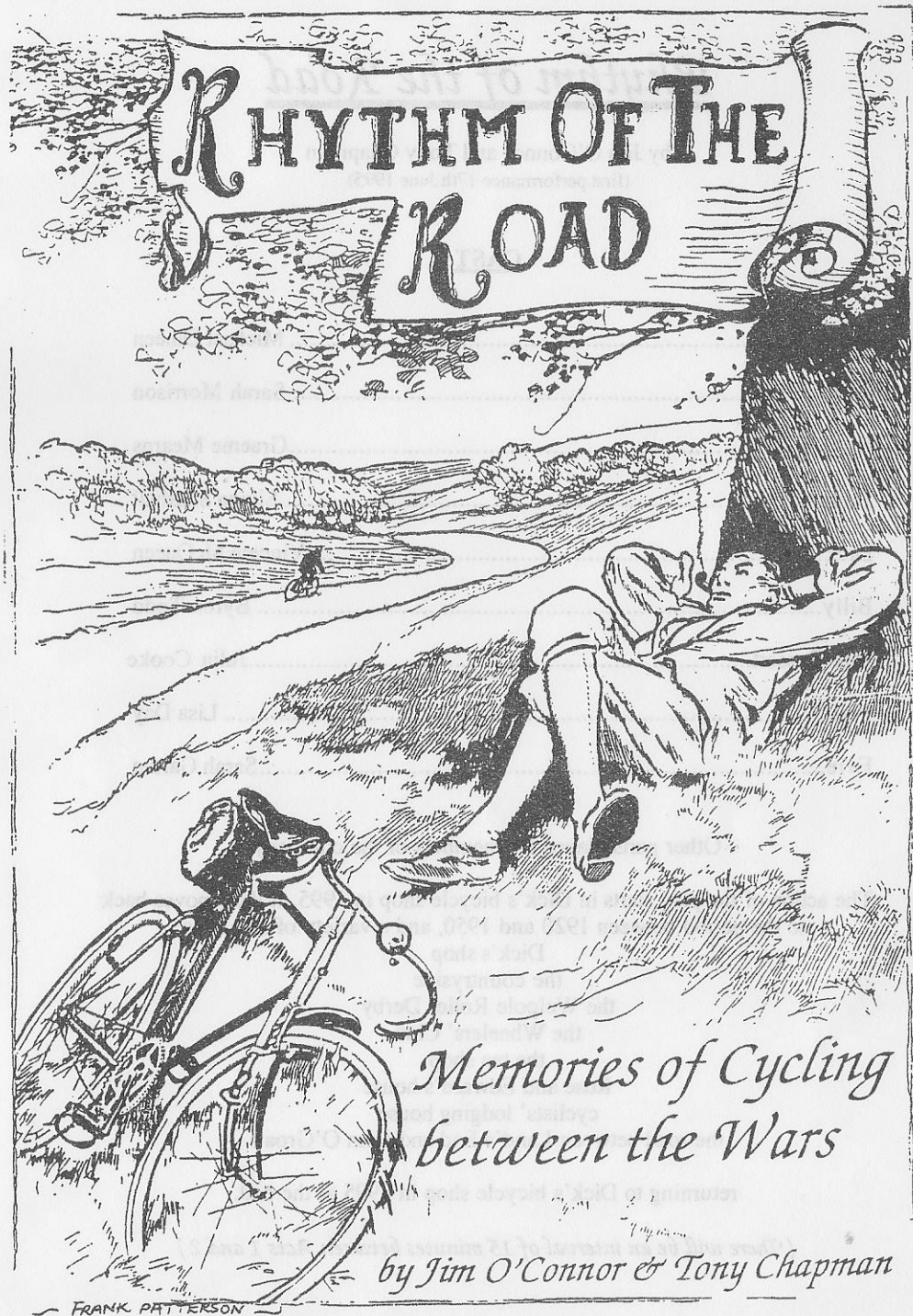
Our story is about the wide range of bicycles and the people of Ealing who rode them, for work, for pleasure and for sport. The story of policemen, district nurses and delivery boys whose bikes were their livelihood; of the racing men, the heroes of their day; and of those men and women who cycled for the best reason of all - because they loved it.

It begins in the late 20s, when there were around ten million cyclists on the road, and a bike shop, it seemed, on every other corner. But it was the tandem that provided many families' transport needs. Additional seats on the back or on the crossbar were frequently supplemented by one- or two-seater sidecars; beyond that things got tricky! The tandem was the vehicle of the sporting fraternity too. Syd Parker and Jimmy Letts set a new record for the End to End (Land's End to John O'Groats) on a tandem tricycle in 1948, and went on to break the 1,000 mile record.

In 1942 the cycle club world was torn apart when a breakaway group began racing against one another, instead of racing against the clock, and the Ealing Cycling Club was the hot-bed of the battle. The controversial vote to go over to the new code was taken during the War, when many members were away at the front.

For most cyclists, the pleasure of the open road was enough - club runs with a stop for tea at a cafe such as Cressex Farm near High Wycombe or Mrs. Brooks' at Tinsley Green, and the run home when it was every man - or woman - for themselves. Many cyclists took their holidays in the saddle, packing their camping gear, or staying in one of the many bed and breakfast places recommended in the Cyclists' Touring Club Handbook.

The bicycle and the tandem both meant freedom to escape the daily routine. In the words of one of our contributors, it was all about "the sheer joy of using your own body to propel yourself along. You feel you can go anywhere in the world!"



*Memories of Cycling
between the Wars*

by Jim O'Connor & Tony Chapman

Rhythm of the Road

by Jim O'Connor and Tony Chapman
(first performance 17th June 1995)

CAST

Edward.....	Michael Dineen
Rose.....	Sarah Morrison
Eric.....	Graeme Mearns
John.....	Simon Snashall
Dick.....	Vincent McQueen
Billy.....	Byron Todd
Mrs Bassett.....	Julia Cooke
Phil.....	Lisa Day
Evie.....	Sarah Galton

Other parts played by members of the company

The action of the play starts in Dick's bicycle shop in 1995. It then moves back to the period between 1920 and 1950, and a variety of locations:-

Dick's shop
the countryside
the Walpole Roller Derby
the Wheelers' Club
the tea shop
Rose and Edward's house
cyclists' lodging house
the road between Land's End and John O'Groats

returning to Dick's bicycle shop in 1995 at the end.

(There will be an interval of 15 minutes between Acts 1 and 2)

PRODUCTION

Director.....	Sita Dickson Littlewood
Assisted by.....	Jane Dewey
Musical Director.....	Edwin England
Set Designer.....	Tessa Curtis
Stage Managers.....	Jennifer Reid Adrienne Talbot
Deputy Stage Manager.....	Richard Bridgen
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Cécile Rodriguez Cécile Paulin
Lighting.....	Frank Wood Katy Gallantry
Sound.....	Nigel Worsley Tom Harrison
Wardrobe.....	Anne Gilmour Rachelle Ellis
Prompt.....	Marielou Pereira
Musicians.....	Edwin England...Lloyd Davies Grainne O'Kelly.....Daisy Reid Helena Lines Welchman

With thanks to :-

Jim Caithness, Sandra Coventry, Jim Craddock, Pete Kendrick, John Rolfe,
John Stacey, Martin Stoner.

Rhythm of the Road is an original play researched and written by Playback members from the oral memories of Ealing residents.

Playback wishes to thank all those who contributed their memories, as well as the many people who have lent or donated cycling artefacts.