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Two 'Friends' on one bike but no teddy this time

By Cathy Young

More than 22 years ago *The Archer* reported that Kit Friend, just eight years old at the time, had completed a 25-mile cycle ride for Friends of the Earth on the back of a trailer bike with his dad Melvyn and his constant companion Heartbeat Bear.

"There were hundreds of bikes there but mine was the only one with a teddy bear on the back," he told *THE ARCHER* back then.

This October the father and son team (without the teddy bear) completed the Palace to Palace bike ride from Buckingham Palace to Windsor Castle, reliving some of Kit's cherished childhood memories, as Kit says: "...because it sounded like a great idea."

There was no trailer bike this time, but no bi-cycles either. The Friend duo, from Manor Park Road, rode the 45 miles on their beloved bright yellow tandem.

They left The Mall with thousands of other cyclists to ride through the Thames Valley to Windsor, raising funds for The Prince's Trust, which works with young people with a range of problems such as homelessness, unemployment and mental health issues.

"It's a charity that empowers underprivileged teenagers and helps to give them self-esteem and an independent start in life," explained Melvyn.

The father and son team raised over £645 for the Trust; a figure that was then doubled by a contribution from Accenture, Kit's employer. Their JustGiving page has now closed but contributions to the Trust can still be made through the website: www.princes-trust.org.uk/support-our-work/donate.

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Kit Foster and Heartbeat the bear (with dad, Melvyn)

A bicycle made for two

by Cathy Young

"There were hundreds of bikes there, but mine was the only one with a teddy bear on the back," Kit Foster-Friend of Manor Park Road proudly declared.

Now aged eight, he is a veteran of the annual Friends of the Earth sponsored bike ride. "I've done it for four years now. The first two I went on the baby seat of my dad's bike, but this year and last year I rode the trailer bike.

Downhill racer
"I'd recommend trailer bikes as soon as you're old enough to ride a two-wheeler. It gives you a chance to ride safely on the roads with your mum or dad. You learn road sense and, besides, when you get tired they can pull you along.

"At first I was afraid of falling off, but I never have. You can go really fast down hills," he grinned, "and if we get stuck in mud it's my job to pedal us out, because my tyres grip better than Dad's."

Rubbing it in
This year Kit and his dad, Melvyn, rode from Bushey Park, Herts, to Clanden Park in Surrey - a distance of 25 miles.

"The best bit was that I got a free Tango apple-juice and some Jordan bars, and I liked the Body Shop Indus rubbing sunblock on everyone. The worst bit was the 40-minute queue for chips at lunchtime."

When asked why he did it, Kit explained about pollution, endangered wildlife and the effect cars have on our lives.

"Actually, though, it's quite good fun, even if the route was a bit short this year."

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How we told the story in July 1994

Now and then: Kit and Melvyn, above left, on the Palace to Palace ride this year and, above right, 22 years ago with Heartbeat Bear on their Friends of the Earth ride

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