

Remembering Rajasthan

CTC Cycling Holidays are run by cyclists for cyclists. Tour leader **Neil Wheadon** discusses his Indian tour

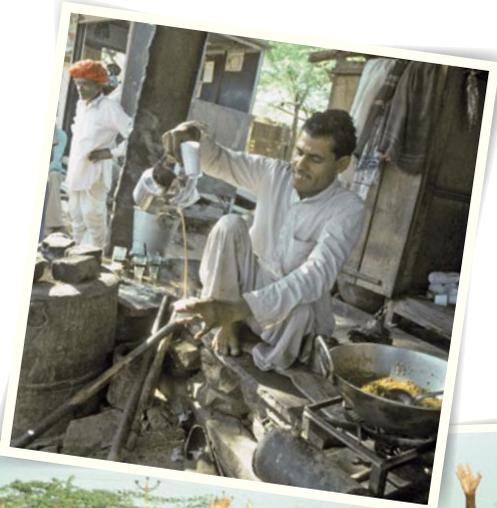
Mmm, India: images of curries, elephants and saris. In November last year, 11 CTC members set out to discover the western state of Rajasthan. Equipped with a local guide, back-up bus and mobile catering crew we acclimatised in Dehli before heading west and into the desert. Our itinerary was to explore the golden triangle of Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur and the places in between – the bits that the tourist buses never see.

So, what was a typical day in Rajasthan? Having breakfasted on toast and omlettes we'd set out into the sun and sand along tarmac roads, dodge a few camels and wave at numerous locals. At about 10:30, I'd find a chai stop, pull over by the roadside and we'd watch while fragrant thick tea was stewed over a kerosene flame as we drew another crowd of smiling villagers.

On again, and we'd spy a flash of orange, where the mobile catering team had erected a canopy, always in a shady spot close to water. We'd be served a selection of mild curries from steaming pots. As the afternoon beckoned, schools would finish and we'd cycle with children on heavy bikes loaded down with textbooks, before settling into a maharajah's palace for the night.

We saw the impressive fort at Jodhpur, the Amber Palace at Jaipur and the beauty that is Udaipur. But it was the impromptu cricket match at the school, the wall-of-death riders wearing sandals at the Pushkar camel fair, and managing to persuade our Indian guide to cycle 20 miles (which he loved) that are the real memories.

Over 40 voluntary leaders are available to take you to places near and far. It's Yunnan province in China for me next year. I can't wait.



The End to End together

Bob Nolan is deaf and going blind. He rode the End to End for charity with wife **Louise**

I have Ushers Syndrome, a condition resulting in my being born deaf and slowly going blind. Despite not having cycled for nearly 25 years, I've just ridden over 1,000 miles from Land's End to John O'Groats on a tandem with my deaf wife, Louise, to raise funds for Deafblind Scotland.

Learning to ride the tandem wasn't easy and of course we could

not hear each other. Fitting a mirror to the handlebars enabled us to communicate by lipreading.

After departing Land's End on 31st May in glorious sunshine, we soon found getting up to a cooked breakfast and cycling somewhere new every day became very addictive. The camaraderie with our two deaf friends who accompanied us, and the support team, was priceless. We experienced much spontaneous generosity from strangers, just when muscles were aching, which boosted our morale. Friends organised large welcome parties for us en route.

Whilst Devon, Cornwall and Cumbria had everything, including



murderous hills, and the gentler English counties from Somerset through to Cheshire were lovely, the mountains and lochs of Scotland were spectacular, with the five-mile downhill through Glen Coe a highlight. Arriving in John O'Groats after 16 days on the road was overwhelming. But it marks just the beginning of more exciting times to come in the saddle for us both.

For more information, visit www.bobstandemride.zoomshare.com



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