

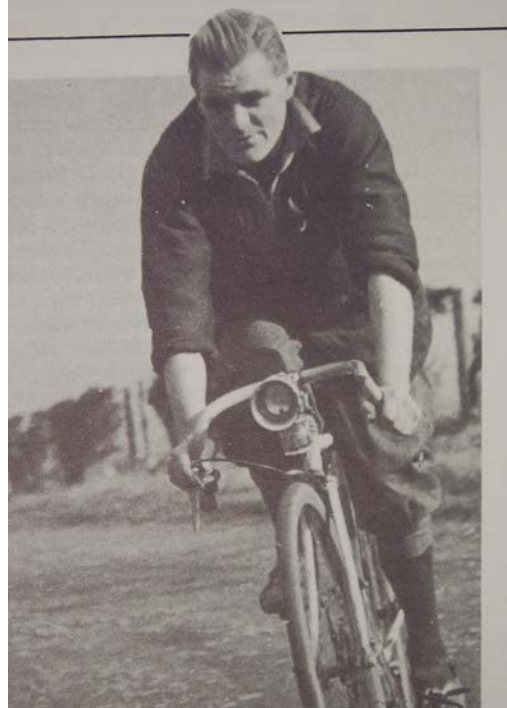
David E T Bell
“The Highwayman“

Founder member of Ayr Roads Cycling Club 1930

From 1930 until his untimely death in the Spring of 1965, David E T Bell a gardener and nursery man took the readers of *The Ayrshire Post* with him on his cycling journeys and adventures. Writing under the pen name of *The Nomad* and then *The Highwayman*, David was never idle. His motto, “If I rest I rust” described him most aptly. David had an irresistible urge to discover what lay round the next corner on his chosen route.

Born in Brydekirk, Dumfriesshire in 1908, David explored countless places throughout Britain and Ireland, and also cycled on the Continent after the Second World War. He was most at home however, in his favourite, native South West Scotland, describing the scenery he loved, and writing of the history and mood of the countryside through which he pedalled miles after mile, in search of some elusive target he had set himself.

David intuitively captured the camaraderie and friendly banter of his era in the halcyon days of cycling, before the motor car ruled the road, writing of shared experiences, around the common-room fire of a favourite Youth Hostel, or of events out on the open road with his fellow cyclists and companions.



Solitude suited him equally well and he would write in meditative fashion of his day’s progress, telling of the changing scene, as the miles dropped behind his restless wheels. He took the bad days smiling with the good.

Thousands of readers throughout the years followed his wanderings and exploits. The name *Highwayman* was probably a bit misleading, for David was an exponent of the byway and of rough-stuff cycling – abandoning recognised routes for tracks and open hillsides.

He was the all-round dedicated cyclist. His weekly column was sadly missed, by a legion of followers after his death in April 1965. So intense was the devotion he evoked in his companions and readers that they built a monument to him in the heart of the country he loved best – within sight of the Merrick and its neighbours in the Ayrshire and Galloway hills, he knew so well.

Peter Blane