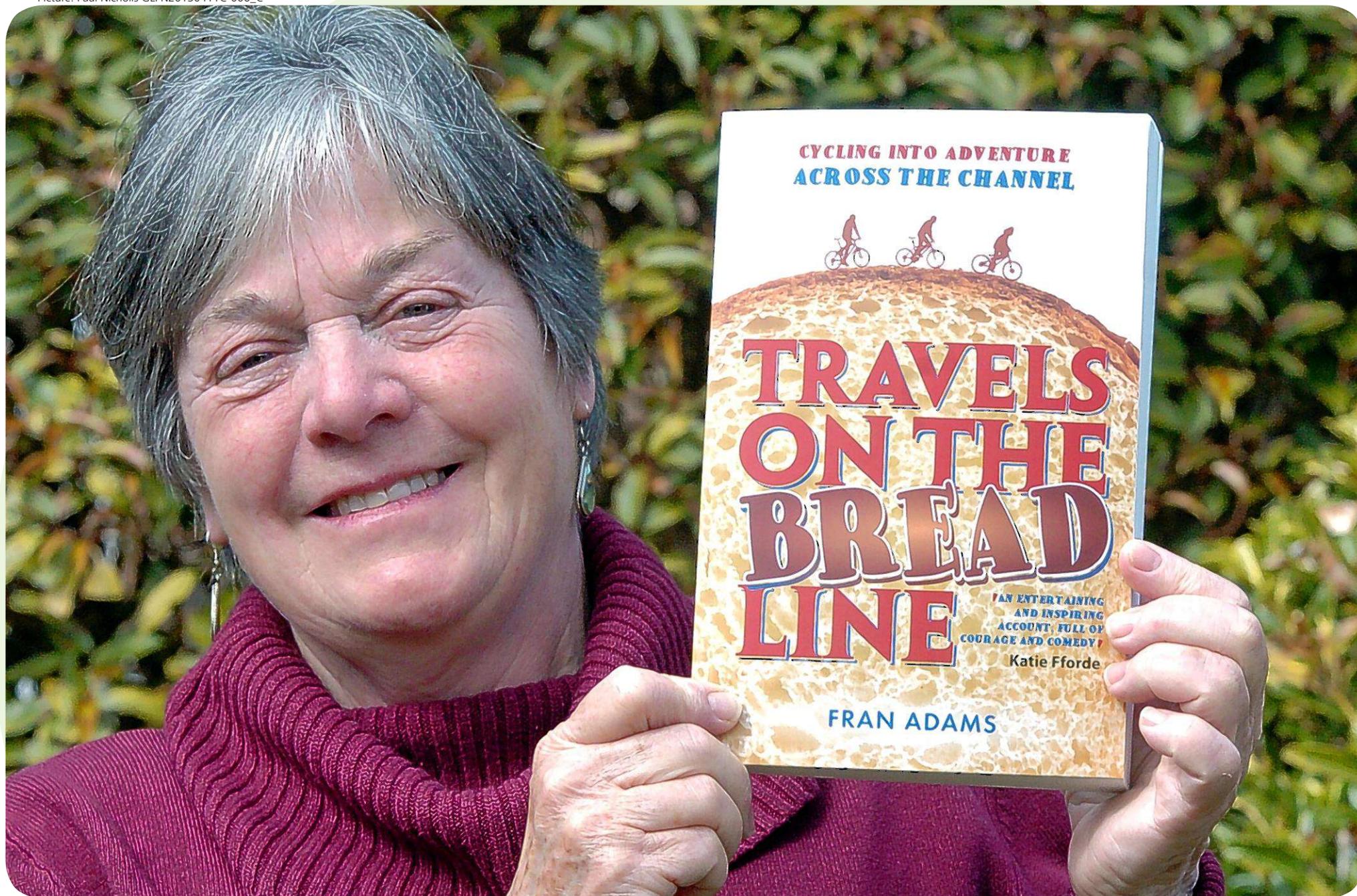


Picture: Paul Nicholls GLPN20130411C-006_C



Fran's Bread Line cycle adventure takes her readers on an entertaining journey

For the first four decades of her life, holiday for Fran Adams meant one thing – a day trip to Weston-super-Mare. Listening to her friends talk about their escapades beyond the English coastline in places she'd never heard about, inspired her to dream of adventure.

But living on the breadline meant the goal was but a dot on the horizon – always out of reach.

Scrimping and saving whenever she could, Fran scraped together just enough money to pay for her and her two sons Pete and Malc to go on a cycling tour of Brittany.

She was 42 but her sheer perseverance enabled her to accomplish her dream – not once but twice, as she returned for more a year later.

That was 26 years ago. The event was such a momentous part of her life in terms of instilling confidence and self-assurance that she recalls the adventure as if it was yesterday.

And it has led her to publish her first book called *Travels on the Bread Line*, published by Memoirs Publishing in Cirencester.

Best-selling author Katie Fforde describes it as “an entertaining and inspiring account, full of courage and comedy.” And I would echo those words.

Fran writes with passion and honesty, engaging the reader so that they are taken on her journey – not only in terms of geography but in character building and family unity.

A growing up and independence takes place for all the adventurers as they deal with torrential rain, furious gales, being surrounded by armed soldiers, punctures, broken panniers, sore toes, hunger pains, mechanical problems and money shortages.

Anyone who is longing for a break from the treadmill and rat race of 21st century living will certainly be inspired to overcome fears and step out into

the unknown as Fran did many years ago.

“Years before we went I read a book by Dervla Murphy called *Full Tilt*. It was about her cycle ride from Ireland to Ireland and it sowed a seed in my mind,” recalls Fran, who lives in Stroud.

“As each year passed without us ever affording any holidays at all, apart from the odd day trip to Weston, it grew into a passion which spurred me into action. I was nearly 43 and nothing was going to stop me. I craved for adventure; to cycle off into the unknown.

“It was about freedom I guess but unlike Dervla I couldn't do it alone. I needed my boys for company.”

Like many creative works, Fran's book provides a universal understanding of a personal experience. At times we all long for a form of escape, a break from the mundane but don't make the time to create those opportunities.

In many ways the adventure had consequences. Fran admits it was the start of her marriage break up.

A few years later she started work at the old Stroud Museum in Lansdown, where she stayed until she retired.

Her book has been her retirement project and has propelled a new career as a writer.

“Those cycling trips gave me a sense of adventure and freedom and it also gave a lot to the boys.

“I think they were amazed at their sense of achievement in doing it and overcoming the hurdles along the way. It was an opening up for them and me. I kept a diary in 1987 and 1988 as it happened and Katie Fforde kindly typed it up for me and in returned I cleaned for her,” explains Fran, who joined the Cycling Touring Club on her return and has since travelled far and wide with her faithful bike. Instead of camping, she has preferred slightly more comfortable

accommodation.

“When I retired, my son got me a computer and it inspired me to write it all again. So I have been reliving the memory and I am really chuffed that it is now out in print,” she adds.

“It has given me so much satisfaction and a sense of purpose. It has started me thinking about a second and third book; one on holiday mishaps and the other on a life story, written in the third person.”

Fran, who also enjoys going on narrow boat holidays all over Britain with her partner, has rediscovered her sense of adventure again by reliving that first trip abroad. Now officially an author with one book published, there is no stopping her. And I can't help being impressed by her enthusiasm and courage.

Travels on the Breadline by Fran Adams is available from Stroud Bookshop, Waterstones, Amazon or www.memoirspublishing.com.