



John Shirley with his wife Emily and their children Meg and Sam — happier and healthier since they exchanged four wheels for two

## Family happier on two wheels

A FATHER-OF-TWO has discovered a form of transport that is cheaper, healthier and often quicker than the motor car — the bicycle.

Fed up with garage bills and traffic jams, John Shirley abandoned the family car two years ago and has never looked back.

Now he commutes to the London trading company where he works from his home in Pett Hill, Bridge, using the train and his bicycle.

He said: "The bike travels free on the train and it is a well-known fact that two wheels are quicker than four in London traffic."

John and his wife, Emily, have tough mountain bikes and their two children, Sam, aged

four, and 18-month-old Meg are carried on the back.

"I don't mind if people think we are a bit eccentric as they see us pedal by in our weather-proof gear carrying the shopping," John said.

"Naturally, the thought of cycling through the winter can be off-putting, but providing you wrap up well and have powerful lights it's no problem.

"You actually warm up very quickly and it's very good exercise," he added.

"In the summer, of course, it's a real delight — especially out in the country.

"And if we have to travel any distance, we just put the cycles on the train."

## SIR JAMES MOUNT

**Sir James Mount, CBE, BEM, horticulturalist, died on July 26 aged 85. He was born on November 8, 1908.**

JIM MOUNT was one of those who led the fightback by British apple growers against the invasion of Britain by the imported Golden Delicious. One of the country's largest and most innovative fruit farmers, he helped to found, in 1961, the marketing co-operative Home Grown Fruits and became its first chairman.

Not only did this encourage British orchards to counter-attack, with the Cox's orange pippin and other indigenous varieties, but it strengthened their negotiating position when selling to the powerful new retailing chains.

Mount also lived long enough to see his ultimate ambition realised when Home Grown Fruits merged recently with its principal rival, East Kent Packers, to form ENFRU. An acronym for "English Fruit", ENFRU further increased the farmers' muscle overnight.

James William Spencer Mount had inherited the family business from his father. He began work on the family farm near Canterbury after leaving Tonbridge School and then, together with his brother David, took over the management of the fruit-producing firm of S. W. Mount on their father's death fifty years ago.

It was a daunting task because entrepreneurs of his father's generation tended to keep a tight rein on financial matters. Jim Mount took over as chairman, with 100 men under his control, without ever having been allowed to see the books. He developed the firm, however, into not merely one of the biggest enterprises of its kind, with at one time four separate farms and 1,200 acres, but turned it into one of the most progressive. He also added a dairy herd of Jersey cattle to the orchards of pears, plums and apples which constituted its main business.



He continued his father's connections with the world-famous East Malling Research Station (now known as Horticulture Research International) where he was appointed to the governing body on his father's death in 1944. He became honorary chairman

in 1950 and held the position for the next 20 years, when he was made chairman of the development and endowment fund.

After helping to guide the station through a difficult period for the industry and for research establish-

ments, he retired from this post or four years ago — by which time he felt that the station's future was secure.

Appointed CBE in 1965, he was knighted in 1979 for his services to British horticulture and three years later received the Royal Horticultural Society's highest award, the Victoria Medal of Honour. His BEM reflects his war work when he led his local special services division of the Home Guard — those volunteers who would have gone "underground" to start a resistance movement had Hitler invaded Britain. He also ran the Canterbury Army Cadet Force and belonged to the Auxiliary Fire Service during the Canterbury blitz.

An honour which must have given him particular satisfaction came three years ago when the new Jim Mount Building, designed for carrying out research on apple storage (a special interest of his) was formally opened at the East Malling research station by John Gummer, the then Minister of Agriculture.

Mount's strength lay in the breadth of his talents. Not only was he a sound administrator with his feet firmly on the ground, but he was also a knowledgeable enthusiast for research who demonstrated his faith in horticultural science by practising what he preached. The biological control of pests — as opposed to the spraying of trees with toxic chemicals — was one area in which he led the way.

Mount was a big man in all senses of the word. Over 6ft 7in tall, he remained even at the height of his powers a courteous, unassuming person. In private life he loved opera and the arts as well as gardening and fishing, and was able to indulge these interests in later years.

His life was not without sadness. The death of his first wife, Margaret, in 1973 was followed by that of their only son seven years ago. He is survived by his second wife, Jane, and by three daughters of his first marriage.