

CYCLE LETTERS

Write to: Cycle Letters, CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX, or email cycleletters@ctc.org.uk

DON'T RIDE, WON'T RIDE?



I was very interested to read this article, since I, like many others, have pondered the question of how to improve conditions for cyclists in the UK. It seems that in countries like Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, this has been as a result of government policy.

The experience of Denmark has shown the success of the 'Safe Routes to School' policy, which was included in their Road Traffic Act of 1976, and required that all local authorities create safe routes to all schools. This has resulted in nearly 50% of all secondary school children cycling to school, compared with 2% in the UK.

If we are going to change the habits of future generations, then surely we need similar legislation in the UK. I feel sure that such a move would have a great deal of popular support, and would deliver benefits, not only for children, but also the general cycling population.

Chris Wallace, Burnley

I was very disappointed by Mikael Colville-Anderson's comments in the April-May issue. I really think he ought to find out more about cycle campaigning in the UK before he passes judgement on us. We seem to be in caught in a cleft stick – on the one hand we are characterised as vehicular cyclists who are confident on the road and have no conception of what it is like to be a novice cyclist, and on the other we are only interested in fighting our own corner. If the former were the case, why would we bother?

**Simon Geller, Secretary
Cyclenation**

In the article 'Don't ride, won't ride?' your picture of cyclists in Copenhagen

shows them riding bikes of a type that would never make it into the review pages of your magazine (they're mainly of the sit-up-and-beg type). And the riders are wearing everyday clothes – no Lycra, no hi-viz, no shoes you cannot walk in, and scarcely a helmet in sight. The two ladies at the front of the queue even have their handbags dangling from the handlebars.

If you took Boris Johnson as a role model – riding in a suit, hair and trouser legs flapping in the breeze – more people would be inclined to ride.

George Tedbury, Calne

I'm sure more Britons would cycle if practical roadsters were more readily available here; like Thoreau, they 'Distrust any enterprise that requires new clothes.' Yet Cycle does review roadsters – a Pashley and Velorbis a dozen issues ago, a Gazelle and an Azorbike further back – as well as practical hybrids.

ALPINE BIKING



Left: by Clive Andrews

To take a bicycle to the Alps, one option is to take the direct daily TGV from Lille to Strasbourg, which has an easy cross-platform connection at Lille with the 08:27 train from St Pancras. This is much easier than changing in Paris, although the bike must still be packed into standard 90x120cm, TGV-permitted bags.

From Strasbourg there are local trains to Basel which have dedicated cycle spaces, as do normal Swiss trains. Alternatively there is a cycle path along the Rhine from Strasbourg to Switzerland, which passes historic towns such as Colmar.

Peter Mynors

I read the article 'Making tracks to Verbier' in the April-May issue first with

interest and then with considerable concern!

Every mountaineer who walks or climbs is fully aware of the risks and consequences of accidents in mountain regions and ensures that he or she is adequately covered by mountain rescue insurance, including accident medical and recovery/repatriation. Such cover is essential, especially when one considers that helicopters are usually the rescue and recovery vehicles of choice, and they can cost upwards of £3,000 per hour to fly.

I am shocked to realise that the article in Cycle fails to even alert members to this matter.

Don Anderson

Like mountaineers, mountain bikers do need insurance that specifically covers their activity. General holiday insurance might not, but CTC's Cyclecover travel insurance, for example, explicitly covers mountain biking.

REFLECTING ON HI-VIZ

Car drivers may say they like to see cyclists wearing hi-viz clothing, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they actually take due cognisance of cyclists, with or without hi-viz.

Tom Vanderbilt's excellent overview of research in his book 'Traffic' shows just how complicated, and usually counter-intuitive, the business of driver perception and behaviour is. What they expect to see often overrides the reality, as in SMIDSY. Nor is it just a matter of being seen, as shown by the high number of emergency vehicles on call, with hi-viz stripes and flashing lights, which get hit.

Tom's book does show that the more unsettled drivers' expectations become, the more cautious they are likely to be, and the safer everyone is. This includes the CTC 'Safety in Numbers' campaign, where noticing more vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists around leads to greater care and consideration.

It would be good to have a proper study of hi-viz made. But until then, don't cycle frightened. Statistically, start worrying when you have ridden 32 million kilometres.

Peter Hayman



FULL SPEED AHEAD

I agree with James Tanner's and Barnaby Stackhouse's letters about encouraging your kids. It is also great to set an example as a parent by choosing an active lifestyle. I'm 52 and have cycled most of my life, and have two active, student-aged kids.

Only recently, using my workplace cycle scheme, have I invested in a light road bike: a Cube Attempt. Up to this point, I had always ridden pannier-laden steel tubed tourers such as a Dawes Galaxy and a Saracen Skyline. They are good bikes but this new bike has been a revelation. I go faster for less effort and can whizz up hills that before got me panting hard. Fantastic! I never knew bikes could be like this.

There is nothing quite like the feeling of freedom that comes when you set off on a ride in the country.

Bob Cole

NON-SICKLY SPORTS DRINKS



I too felt nauseous after drinking two bottles of most sports drinks on 200km audax rides. The reason for this and the chemical taste is the artificial sweetener, aspartame. I now only drink High 5 '4:1' carbohydrate and protein mix, which contains natural sugars. I also make the drink slightly weaker than the recommended dilution.

David Galle

STICKY PROBLEM

This is a bit of a plea from the heart: if any CTC members are in the habit of using energy gels on the move and

then throwing the empty sachet on the ground, could they stop? It creates unsightly litter, which must give us a bad name, and quite possibly harms wildlife.

I use them myself, and know that the empty sachets become incredibly sticky, but that's our problem to deal with. Incidentally, I'd welcome any suggestions as to how to deal with the stickiness problem.

Alan Mason

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT



Thanks to Mike Jones, President of Merseyside CTC, for sending in this picture of David Martindale, receiving his CTC Certificate of Merit from Mike.

David has been a mainstay of what was the Liverpool DA for over 40 years, leading and organising rides and helping run the Association Clubroom. He still enthusiastically helps out at events.

'Even the Newsletter delivery has been done on his bicycle in the West Derby area of Liverpool,' writes Mike Jones. 'This Certificate of Merit culminates a number of achievements, notably The CF Elias Memorial Trophy for Sterling Service to the club. He was also the first recipient of the John Carline Memorial Plaque, also for service to the club.'

'When we talk of Cyclists' Touring Club in Liverpool, we say Dave Martindale in the same breath.'

Letters are edited for space (if above 150 words), clarity and, if necessary, legality. Please note that if you have specific complaint or query about CTC policy, you should address it to your CTC Councillor or relevant national office staff member. Correspondence for the August-September issue must be received by 30 June 2011.

OBITUARIES

BOB KNIGHT: 1937-2011

A lifelong touring cyclist who had explored most of Europe, Bob joined the Coventry Section in 1995. He led Sunday rides, rode midweek with CTC Rugby, and also rode – at great pace – with the Coventry Road Club. His distances were legendary, taking two days to ride from Kenilworth to Clécy, in Normandy. For his 70th birthday he rode the End-to-End in eight days. Bob was devoted to his family and brought his grandson on a tandem on Sunday rides. He suffered a short, terminal illness. *Bob Tinley*

LEWIS JONES: 1932-2011

Lewis Jones was the most sociable of men. Born on a Welsh farm, educated at Aberystwyth University, Lewis was enthusiastic about his work in agricultural research and his return to cycling. We rode together on Saturdays, before joining Bracknell Section, South Bucks DA then later Reading DA, for whom Lewis was runs secretary. He toured in Scotland, Western Europe and USA. His observations on agriculture and the countryside made for interesting rides. After retirement he became involved in Cycling Proficiency in local schools. *Bernard Williamson*

CYRIL THOMPSON: 1922-2011

A CTC member since 1955, early holidays involved piloting son David on a pre-war tandem loaded with camping gear – a long walk up the Yorkshire hills but quick coming down! Later, with daughter Sally, he followed General Wade's bootsteps across the hill tracks of Scotland – returning for 25 years, despite being woken by a stag at dawn after a night under the stars. Walking with wife Doris on the North Yorkshire Moors was another enthusiasm, which he enjoyed well into his 80s, thanks to all that pedalling. *The Thompson family*

TOM FISH: 1914-2011

Tom was a lifelong, all round cyclist. He rode time trials from 25 miles to 24 hours, gaining VTTA Standard Awards at all distances. He joined CTC in 1929 and rode with the Kingston Section and then the Sunday Section of what is now CTC South West London. After the war he rode with the Family Section, with his wife Lilly, daughter Ann and son Robin. After retirement he rode – until quite recently – with the Midweek Wayfarers. Tom was a great supporter of CTC events, particularly the Triennial and Birthday Rides. He was 96. *Pete Barnard*