

CYCLE LETTERS

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

CARD-CARRYING CTC MEMBER

Having always preached the benefits of CTC membership, I never let an opportunity pass to present a CTC 'business card' when in conversations with cyclists at coffee stops.

I ask them if they're CTC members. If the answer is negative, I hand them a card and urge them to visit the CTC website and join online.

I have evidence that this has worked, and if, say, just a small percentage of the growing membership adopted my stance then CTC would soon be on the way to a membership of over 100,000, making it even more of an organisation to be reckoned with.

The cards, in a selection of designs to appeal to touring, commuting and MTB riders, are available on request from the Guildford office, free of charge.

Brian Morris, ex CTC Councillor and Chair

EMPOWERING NEW CYCLISTS

Continuing the theme of trying to get more people to cycle in the UK: one other reason why I think would-be cyclists are put off is the hills! Unless you live in East Anglia or Lincolnshire, you'll soon encounter hills when you cycle. And novice cyclists find hills hard work. Holland does not have this problem, which is probably one reason why cycling is so much more common there than here.

Those of us who are over 70 also find hills hard. For me, the solution has been to buy an electric bike: a Cannondale with 24 gears and a Cytronex battery (cleverly shaped like a bottle and placed in the bottle cage, so not conspicuous).

Why do you hardly ever mention electric bikes in the magazine? They make ideal bikes for us oldies, and for anyone not used to cycling.

Pat Hallifax

We do feature electric bikes – a six-page bike review in the Dec-Jan issue and an



electric assist kit review in the Feb-Mar issue. Hills may dissuade some potential new cyclists, but you only have to look at the popularity of cycling in Switzerland to see that there are other factors than topography.

KAYAK TRAILER

I was inspired by the idea in the last issue, so I made my own trailer totally out of bits I had around the house. It functions well, has the advantage that, as the kayak itself connects just behind the bike, it is short and easily stored. It can turn around in the length of the kayak.

It's not for high speeds but is ideal for the mile or so that I travel to the pier. It might encourage others to do the same. It was very popular with the guys at the pier, mainly because I no longer require a parking space.

Dave Freeman



CHEAPER BIKES, PLEASE

Reading through your bike reviews, I see two folders at £760-£975, a tourer at £1450 and a racer at £3500 with 'lower budget' alternatives at £1000-£2250.

Given the impoverished circumstances many find themselves in, would it not be more interesting and appropriate to offer other articles than those on premium priced cycles. For instance, the late, great Sheldon Brown has a splendid entry on his website about the customising potential of the humble Raleigh Twenty folder. The idea is the creation of a personalised, nippy folder via some basic modifications.

Or how about organisations such as Recyke Y'Bike here in Newcastle, who rescue unwanted bicycles, refurbish them, and sell them on at very reasonable prices?

There is much more interest, creativity and knowledge gained by utilising what is already present than leaving a shop minus large amounts of dosh, or worse leaving with new debt to pay for something you don't need.

Derek Robertson

There's a bike-recycling article in the pipeline. We have covered different options for buying a bike for £50 in the past, and will likely feature 'hack bikes' like this again. But we'll still feature new ones too.

TOURING ABROAD

The CTC hospitality directory has been running for many years. It's a mutual hospitality list with Swiss, German, French and American cyclists. I use email to contact the members but this year have had many emails come back as undeliverable. If you are, or would like to be, part of this scheme, please get in touch at Neil@Tandem-club.org.uk so that I can update your details.

If you wish to join, details are at <http://tinyurl.com/5sy5hvq>.

Neil Wheadon

CYCLING SOLUTIONS

Cycling has always been important for me, even more so as my spinal stenosis and arthritic knees and hips made walking more and more painful and difficult. Then I bought a Brompton. What bliss: I could take it everywhere. Then calamity struck. Out of the blue I had a stroke, which has affected my balance.

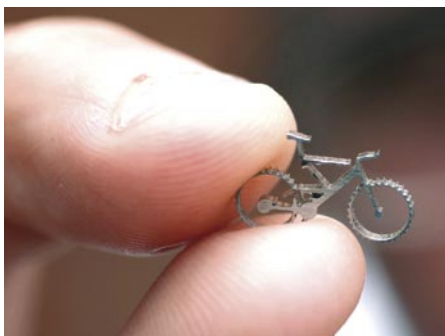
I investigated recumbent trikes and ended up buying an ICE narrow-track recumbent trike. What wonderful comfort. My turning circle was not good, however.

Then I spotted on eBay an old Hase Lepus recumbent trike, which has a single wheel in front. I sit higher and the turning ability is fantastic. While it needed a lot of work, I now have a very

comfortable recumbent trike. Its only disadvantage is the difficulty of taking it on public transport. (I have no car.) I can now be seen every day in Cheltenham, cycling about, shopping and simply enjoying the outdoors.

Barry Lovius

TINY BIKE



This mountain bike is made of stainless steel and is smaller than a coin. It was made with a start-of-the-art laser cutting machine, and is kept by Midlands manhole manufacturer Fabweld Steel Products of Telford. The bicycle has pedals and treaded tyres. The company is considering selling the tiny two-wheeler in a charity auction.

Brian Bould

RAIN CHECK

As a regular cycle commuter, I was pleased to see the article in the June-July issue of Cycle about cycling to work. As I often cycle during the course of my working day, I can't use Lycra for all my journeys, so good waterproofs are a must – arriving at a meeting dripping wet is worse than arriving in shorts! My one bugbear has always been the lack of cycling-specific overtrousers with a full-length zip.

Plenty of these are on the market for walking, but I have completely failed to find any for cycling. Overtrousers designed for walking are not usually long enough or hardwearing enough around the seat. Having struggled and hopped my way into cycling overtrousers on the roadside too many times, I'd love to hear if anyone knows of any such trousers with full-length zips.

Pat Mackie

Overtrousers with a reinforced seat and zips part way up the lower leg are available – for example, the Endura Venturi II and Altura Attack overtrousers. But you might find Rainlegs sufficient for anything

but downpours (www.rainlegs.com). No hopping to get them on or off, either.

CONTACTS CORRECTION

Your report last issue under the heading Event News is incorrect in one respect. Janet Gregory is not the Secretary of Chester and North Wales CTC; she is the excellent Secretary of CTC Two Mills, a subsidiary member group of Chester & North Wales CTC, whose equally efficient Secretary is Lowri Evans.

David Ackerley

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Here's Steve Swanton (left) receiving his CTC Certificate of Merit from Chairman of CTC Wantage, John Tranter.

'Steve was a founder member of CTC Wantage in 1994,' said John Tranter. 'He has held all possible offices within the committee over this time, including Chairman and Secretary. He has shown complete dedication to the cause of making cycling accessible to all. He has been responsible for a number of new initiatives over the years, including the introduction of a "10 Mile Club" of weekly evening rides, specifically tailored to beginners.

'In April 2010, he was instrumental in organising the Abingdon Freewheeling Cycling Festival, which again had the specific aim of introducing people to the enjoyment of cycling. The event was a great success with approximately 200 cyclists registering for the graded rides.'

Steve Boreham, CTC Wantage



Letters are edited for space (if above 150 words), clarity and, if necessary, legality. Please note that if you have a specific complaint or query about CTC policy, you should address it to your CTC Councillor or relevant National Office staff member. Letters and emails for the October-November issue of Cycle must be received by 31 August.

OBITUARIES

JOHN BATTILANA: 1918-2011

John was born in Leeds and joined CTC in 1936, becoming a Life Member, and Secretary of the Leeds Section for 25 years. John met his wife Elsie through cycling, and they rode prodigious distances together. They cycled weekly as a family after the birth of their son, until prevented by Elsie's arthritis in the mid-1960s. John kept his bike in trim and briefly returned to the roads aged 85, after Elsie's death. Their ashes are scattered together at their favourite cycling destination. *Anthony Battilana*

BERNARD WILLIAMSON: 22/8/35-19/4/11

Bernard Williamson, a founder member of Reading CTC, died whilst cycling. He was a lifelong cyclist. We have Bernard to thank for Reading CTC's popular Tuesday rides. He led members on many runs, including the dawn till dusk rides. His enthusiasm for cycling led him to act as Publicity Officer for the Tandem Club for some years. Bernard was a campaigner too, and helped make some local routes fit for cyclists. I'll remember him for his youthful looks and cheerful manner. *Mick Simmons*

ANN DRAPER: JUNE 1940-MAY 2011

Ann started cycling in 1974, mainly to be with husband Philip and children Paul and Helen on Walsall Section Family Group rides. She later became Press Secretary, Social Secretary and Section President. She loved attending the CTC Birthday Rides and York Rally. She rode in five tri-vets, an achievement she was very proud of. Weekends and holidays were spent tandem touring with Philip in Suffolk, Holland and Belgium. Ann was a wonderful carer, especially when Helen – who had 14-month-old twins – had a stroke in 2001. *Philp Draper*

DAVID ALLBUTT: 17/8/48-19/5/11

Died in a collision with a car while cycling, details pending an inquest. Born in Chesterton, Dave joined Crewe Clarion Wheelers following his marriage to Sheila. Dave competed in time trials, road races and on the track. He was the club's BAR Champion in 2004 and pilot of the tandem crew that set the National Clarion 12-hour record of 255.66 miles in 1985. He put a great deal back into the sport, organising races, timekeeping, and encouraging beginners. *Andrew Grace*