

# LETTERS

*This month Palestine and politics; inclusive cycling; defining an end-to-end route in Wales; Brompton camping; and bike-train botheration*

## GET IN TOUCH

**WRITE TO US:** Cycle Letters, CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9JX

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## £1,000 INCLUSIVE CYCLING BOOST

BIKE ACTIVE is a special needs cycling group that meets every Friday, come rain or shine, at Alton Water near Ipswich. It was established by Peter Robinson of Felixstowe to enable people who are physically or mentally challenged to enjoy a ride with their carers around the wonderful Alton Water cycle circuit. Peter is assisted by a wonderful team of volunteer riders, while John Malseed of Dedham helps to maintain these expensive and sometimes difficult-to-work-on bikes.

Suffolk CTC have been linked for some time to Bike Active and recently donated a thousand pounds to the group from events that we have held. Since 2011, Suffolk CTC has given the group £1,900 to enable those who are less able than our regular club riders to experience what we take for granted.

On the 15th August, President Dave Dodds (right of cheque) presented the donation to Peter Robinson (left of cheque). Shortly afterwards, the Bike Active group set off into a really big rain squall. Come rain, come shine, like all good cyclists, they were off.

— Peter Ling

LETTER OF THE MONTH



### PEDALLING TO PALESTINE

First let me say how much I enjoy your magazine and its relaxed approach to our sport. What also sets it apart from other magazines is the high level of content supplied by your readers.

However, a note of caution should be sounded when your contributors' political leanings are broadcast in an article with no context or balance. We all watch despairingly as the humanitarian crisis unfolds in the Gaza Strip in this latest round of a complex war that has lasted many years already, but Mr Gillett's promotion of the boycott campaign against Israel, and his criticism of Israel's actions as she defends her citizens against rockets stored in and fired from civilian buildings, have prompted me to write.

The boycott campaign being pursued by a minority of activists is not supported by a single Western or European Government. It is widely supported by many of the regimes that routinely deny women an education, freely persecute Christians and other minority religions, and wantonly trample over the human rights that Mr Gillett holds so dear. To publicise it in your magazine was wrong.

— Robert Moryoussef

Thank you for publishing the Pedalling to Palestine article by Robbie Gillett in the latest magazine. It was a measured and excellent account of their solidarity visit to the beleaguered Palestinians. It made a welcome change from the usual media blind support of Israel. We also found the account of the Anfield Cycling Club's experiences in WW1 moving. This issue was, generally, excellent.

— Miriam Walton and Alan Goater

**We received a handful of emails for and against the Pedalling to Palestine article. I won't invoke Cycle's get-out clause: 'Views expressed in the magazine are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the policies of CTC.' The article was there because I thought members would be interested in it, and I included Robbie's political views as I considered them**



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**integral to the trip. There is nothing hateful or malicious there – quite the opposite. I regret that I didn't edit the international boycott comment to make it clear that this related to individuals and organisations rather than**



» **nation states. To anyone who was confused or offended by that, I apologise.**

**WALES E2E**

Loved the article on the Dragon's Backbone ride. It makes me wish I'd written up the Wales E2E I did with a friend on Midsummer's Day last year.

Having ridden LEJOG, I was amazed that no one (including CTC) knew the actual E2E across Wales. I worked it out roughly with an OS touring map, and had it refined by the geography



© Steve Rock

faculty at Aberystwyth University, who used electronic mapping. The furthest points apart are: Cemlyn Head, Anglesey (OS grid reference: SH 33300 94039) and St Mary's Well Bay Road, Swanbrook, near Sully (OS grid ref: ST 17222 67441). This is 150.15 miles from Cemlyn Bay. Note that there is a second possible destination on Sully Island, only accessible at low tide: East Point, Sully Island (OS grid ref: ST 16937 66828). This is 150.37 miles from Cemlyn Bay.

As with LEJOG, the given points are only the start and finish. The route, the decisions to rush or dawdle, ride mountains or valleys are one's own.

— **Malcolm Wilson**

**BROMPTON CAMPING**

I was very interested in the letter sent by Mike Perris in the Aug/Sep edition. I bought my Brompton 14 years ago. It is ideal for travel by bus, train and aircraft. In 2006, I cycle-camped for 600 miles in Scotland, and in 2007, 800 miles from Le Havre to La Ciotat. In 2009, I cycled 400 miles of the Danube Cycleway to Vienna, staying in gasthofs and hostels, then flying home.

In 2010, I rode the North



Sea cycleway from Dunkirk to Oldenburg, with a lightweight tent strapped to the seat pillar. I then took the train to Copenhagen youth hostel and flew home to Heathrow. In 2012, I cycle-camped, and using trains toured most of Italy. Last year, when I was 82 years old, I replaced the 50 tooth crank for a 38 tooth one, which greatly improved my wide-ratio 3-speed Sturmey hub, and then cycled the 1,000 miles of the Camino from Le Puy to Santiago de Compostela.

— **Donald Wells**

**BIKE ON TRAIN. JUST**

I recently travelled on the Virgin Trains intercity service from Birmingham New Street to Carlisle with my bike. At New Street, an official directed me to 'the cycle coach' at one end of the train. I waited there. Nothing happened, apart from all the other passengers boarding. I hurried back to the centre of the train and asked a second official – who directed me to the other end of the train! The official who unlocked the cycle coach said someone would unlock the door for me at Carlisle.

At Carlisle, I went to the cycle coach and waited. No one appeared apart from a taciturn cleaner. Fortunately, the driver showed up and unlocked the door. He said that I was lucky that he happened to be passing!

Why does it have to be like this? The train journey was the most stressful part of the trip.

— **David South**



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**Obituaries**

► **Brian Griggs**

Brian met his wife-to-be Sheila on an overnight London to Brighton ride. They then toured by tandem for over 50 years. Routes included Land's End to John o'Groats and many European countries. Brian travelled to France annually for Le Tour, and was delighted when in 1994 it passed his Sussex home. He participated in audax events and rode the Paris-Roubaix route. A CTC Life Member, Brian combined his cycling enthusiasm with engineering expertise as the CTC West Sussex Rights Network Representative, and then as Sustrans engineer on the Centurion and Hayling Billy ways. He died peacefully on 8 July 2014. — *Charlotte Buswell*

► **Daphne Forster**

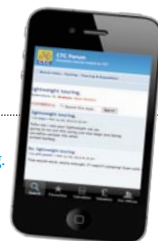
Died peacefully in hospital on 4 July 2014, aged 86 years. Daphne had been a member of the Norfolk DA since the early days. She met her husband, Richard, through cycling with the club. They continued to ride with the club, but switched to motorhome touring when the family arrived. After her husband's death, Daphne returned to the Norfolk CTC, becoming a stalwart of the Easy Rider club rides at the weekend. Over the last two years, she was no longer able to ride her bike but was still very independent. She was one of life's characters. — *Shirley Burrage & Sue Gatehouse*

► **Shirley Wilson**

A past member of CTC, particularly the Eden Valley group, Shirley died peacefully at home on 31 July 2014, aged 69. She was a lovely stoker on our various tandems, with a bright sense of humour. She'll be greatly missed by all who knew her. — *John Wilson*

**Join the conversation**

Get immediate feedback from other CTC members on the CTC forum: [forum.ctc.org.uk](http://forum.ctc.org.uk). Here's an abridged extract from one popular thread before Cycle went to press (see [bit.ly/1qJRLpQ](http://bit.ly/1qJRLpQ))



**WHY ARE BIKES SO EXPENSIVE?**

**aLyrpal:** Any bling draped Mamils here have the answer? Or are CTC Forum members more pragmatic? What would be your maximum sensible spend? Story here: [bit.ly/1mXvmR5](http://bit.ly/1mXvmR5)

**honesty:** Why are cars so expensive? Car use has exploded and this Ferrari is 200k...

**Merry\_Wanderer:** Bikes aren't that expensive compared to some products. A colleague asked me how much my bike

cost and then said it was expensive. His BMW cost probably £40,000. A Dacia Duster does the same job for £10,000.

**OnYourRight:** The maximum sensible spend is around a grand, in my opinion. Anything above that has diminishing or even negative returns. I'm not saying I'd be sensible if I had three grand in my pocket.

**tatanab:** My most expensive was about £4k. This is my 'best' touring machine. When people say that my £4000 machine is expensive, I reply that

the average smoker will spend that much in two years. After two years, my investment continues to give me pleasure.

**townbikemark:** A bike suitable for everyday transport (Dutch & German urban bikes with everything you could want for urban convenience) will cost £500-£1000 and you should be able to get at least 10 years with reasonable maintenance.

**Mick F:** Bikes expensive? Have you costed a career in golf?



**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. Letters and emails for the December/January issue must arrive by 31 October. **Write to us at: Cycle Letters, CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9JX**



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