

Letters

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This month: Off-road access, Cycle's focus, cargo cycling, commuting in Germany, bells and whistles, and the Olympic torch. Plus: what you're talking about on the CTC Forum

Take rough with smooth

I feel I ought to challenge Ian Jukes' complaint about one MTB-themed edition of our magazine. I've tried various forms of cycling – from plastic TdF figurines racing round châteaux de sable on childhood holidays, some youthful time trialling, stints of commuting, and now mostly off-road mountain biking. I don't think I've ever really toured, apart from some local bivvy biking (like Ian Brownhill's Traveller's Tale).

I was inspired to join CTC by the range of topics in a colleague's copies of Cycle, and the fitness of all the cyclists I know (quite apart from the regular mentions of active octogenarian members!). Now I appreciate the magazine also keeping me up-to-date on CTC's inclusive campaigns promoting cycling to the widest range of UK residents. Maybe one day I'll tour, but until I find the time I won't begrudge a range of articles or reviews of other riders' dream bikes!

RICHARD LEONARD



Letter
OF
THE
MONTH



Cream of the cargo crop

In response to your article about cargo cycling, I thought I'd send you an image of my dad selling ice-cream in Lytham from his Pashley trike (which dates from 1948, we think). This summer, whilst the Open golf is being played at Lytham St Annes, he will be selling a 'bunny in a bunker' – a 99 with a surprise flake hidden inside.

Martin Hamblen

Whilst I recognise that your recent article about cargo bikes was primarily focused on business use, there were a number of nods towards personal use. With that

in mind, I'm surprised that the Circe Helios Duo tandem was not included in your list of bikes. Based on your, and another, positive review of the bike a couple of years back, I bought one, equipped for both tandem and cargo use.

Since then it has been used year round, every week if not daily, carrying two children on the rack, children and adults on the tandem seat, and cargo loads as varied as a buffet for 30, building materials, and another bike. It's even done a day's ride with an adult on the back, tagalong behind, and a dog attached on a Springer (reviewed previously). As an all-round family utility bicycle, I haven't seen anything else as versatile.

Simon Blunt

As an all-round family utility bicycle, we held the Circe until this issue. See p52. Editor

Irresponsible madness

I would like to add my voice to those of Paul Denyer ('Stopped in our tracks') and Ian Jukes ('Off-road overdose?'). To argue that CTC should be lobbying to gain the same level of access as pedestrians is irresponsible madness and an insult to the memory of the Kinder Scout trespassers.

MTBs have taken us well beyond the mid-20th century touring bike's capacity on bridleways and green roads, as enjoyed by members of the Rough Stuff Fellowship, who always adhered closely to a responsible code of conduct. Furthermore, Britain's expanding leisure industry already provides adequate facilities for the MTB fraternity.

I gave up my CTC membership in desperation at the growing dominance of the club by mountain bikers, but subsequently renewed. I would urge other members of the Cyclists' Touring Club to reclaim their club.

Harvey Taylor

What a surprise: yet another letter complaining about mountain biking being mentioned in the CTC



magazine. Whilst people have the freedom to express an opinion, it is disappointing seeing continual letters complaining about all other forms of cycling other than touring in every issue.

I am a mountain biker and a member of CTC. I have undertaken the CTC Trail Leader Course and now coach between 8 and 12 secondary school students every seven weeks. Why should CTC not promote this form of cycling along with others?

There never seems to be a definitive response from the editor to support or deny letter writers in this ongoing debate. Where does CTC stand?

Neil Tydeman

I think CTC's position is clear, in what it says and does for mountain biking. Likewise Cycle's. The Letters pages, however, belong to the members; I pick a representative sample of letters received. Some members – a minority, for sure – are irked by off-road cycling. I don't know why (to me, it's all cycling and I'm just as happy off-road as on) but there it is. Editor

Bells and whistles

I read Norman Richardson's letter on avoiding using a bell in the last issue, just after I had spent a weekend cycling in Sussex. As on my own turf in Cheshire, cyclists and horseriders there have similar tastes in quiet country lanes, and shared space requires mutual respect. I've never liked the idea of startling a horse with a bell, and one rider made a point of thanking me for using a gentle voice to alert her and her mount.

With so much new cycling

infrastructure being shared, there is certainly a need to warn slower-moving pedestrians. So long as I'm not drawing too much breath going uphill, I reckon whistling is a friendly and practical way of doing this.

For the record, I find the cadences in Bitter Sweet Symphony by The Verve to be particularly effective! Adjust to taste.

Dave Vaughan

Olympic torch bearer

I thought you might be interested to know that Daphne Edwards from Stroud Valleys CTC was selected to be an Olympic torch bearer. Daphne only came into cycling when she retired and after a friend had invited her to go on a cycling holiday. Since then she has become quite an ambassador for CTC in Stroud.

Brian Griffiths

Ich bin ein Berliner

Great article in the last edition about cycling in Berlin. It reminds me of my own experiences of living for ten years in north-west Germany. The town was so bike-friendly that I was able to sell my car and do without one the entire time, thus saving a lot of money and enjoying excellent health.

Being able to simply hop on a



bike and go wherever I wanted without that sense of doing battle with the traffic enhanced my quality of life in ways which few Brits would understand. Most kids cycled to school and few looked overweight.

The other noticeable difference is that nobody wore a helmet or hi-viz clothing. The emphasis over there was that drivers had to take care in the proximity of cyclists. Cycling was seen as an important part of the transport infrastructure rather than a nuisance.

Les Reay

Obituaries

Chris Bennett

CTC Torbay members were shocked and saddened by Chris's sudden death, aged 55, on a club ride on Dartmoor. A prosecutor at the CPS in Exeter, Chris rode with the Torbay group for 25 years. He rode the Paris-Brest-Paris and London-Edinburgh-London events and often toured abroad. He was a section secretary and rides coordinator, and was planning a new 300km audax in Devon for 2012; his friends still hope to run it. He leaves a wife and four daughters. **Graham Brodie**

Brian Whapham: 1936-2012

Died at home after suffering cancer and a stroke. He was a lifelong CTC member, brought up in Brighton next door to a cycle shop. His first cycle had wooden blocks on the pedals. He progressed to racing, riding to events with his race wheels carried on the fork, and then touring. He never owned a car, touring via public transport – switching to folding bikes when cycle carriage on trains declined. He set up The Wayfarer Cycle Touring Club in 1980 with wife Kay, who died in 1997. His last 100-mile day ride was in 2005. **Brian Wey**

Harold (Curly) Attwood: 1914-2012

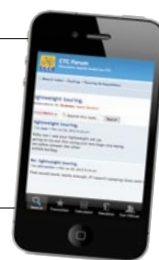
Died aged 98 after a long cycling career. On tour in Cornwall in September 1939, he hitched home in a lorry with his cycle when war broke out. He enlisted in the Auxiliary Fire Service, staying in the fire service in peace time. He won Portsmouth's first regional heat of the British Cycle Tourist Competition, which earned him a place in the final in Yorkshire in 1957. He was later awarded a commemorative medal marking 75 years unbroken membership of CTC. He was still cycling four years before his death. **Michael Moore**

Tom McCarthy: 08/09/1930-23/04/2012

Tom joined the Dublin branch of CTC in the early 1980s, but had been cycling since his teens. He was the proud owner of a 1951 Aniella, which he used as his main tourer all his life. Despite an age gap between himself and most club members, Tom held his own in any company. He loved touring, especially the Alps and Pyrenees. Tom ran his own betting shop, before moving to work for an insurance company. He was predeceased by his wife Elsie. Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís, ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam. **Garry Byrne**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Get feedback from other members on the CTC Forum: forum.ctc.org.uk. Here's an edited extract from one popular thread (see tinyurl.com/bvzjy5c for more).



LIGHTWEIGHT TOURING

Jags: Folks, can I see your lightweight setup? Going to try out this using just two bags, a Carradice Camper and an Ortlieb bar-bag.



DougieB: My favourite topic. This (above) was for Edinburgh to Barcelona & back, with a laptop in the saddlebag as I was working.

Jags: Excellent. So did you want for anything?

DougieB: Only more time away.

jags: Were you camping? The problem I'm having is trying to get all the sleeping gear in the bag.

DougieB: Yes, I camped pretty much every night. I don't take a stove, as it's such a faff and you then really ought to carry food, water, and oil, etc. You can eat cheaply at cafés. Putting the tent up front between the handlebars was a revelation for me. The lightweight thing is well worth trying out. For me, it's all about freeing yourself from the

things that you think you need.

Mercurykev: My lightweight touring setup can fit in a Camper Longflap. Tent: Terra Nova Laser Comp 1 (or Akto) Bag: Western Mountaineering Summerlite Mat: Downmat 7 UL Pillow: Exped inflatable Stove/pans: Snow Peak Ti Solo & GigaPower stove & canister Change of clothes, rain jacket. Multi-tool, tube & puncture kit I wear cycling sandals so I don't need to carry spare shoes.