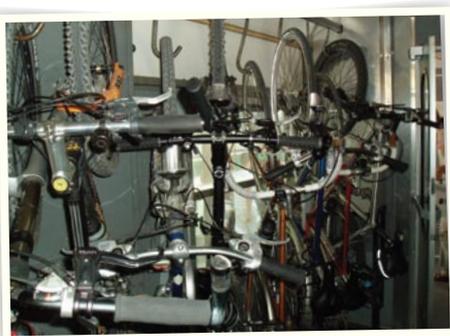


CYCLE LETTERS

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

RIDE THE RAILS



Following on from your article in the Aug/Sep issue of Cycle: Last September we took the train from Bologna to the top of the Brenna Pass. As we started the final climb three or four cyclists boarded at each station. Soon all the hanging space was full (see photo - ours are the ancient Holdsworths) but undeterred the train captain continued to load bikes into the passenger coaches along the train. In total there must have been about 30 bikes on board, and no one was refused admission.

This was an exception but generally we have found that, so long as you study the timetable, you can usually get where you want with a bike in Italy and it is cheap by our standards,

Bob Boughton, Herts

Having tried various ways to travel with the bike to watch the Tour de France – car, 'plane and package tour – my friend and I decided to go by train. Our destination was Avignon so that we could ride to watch the Tour on Mont Ventoux, and could also visit the lovely Gorges du Nesque.

We had read your article 'Bikes abroad' (Dec/Jan 2007-08), so set out from London St Pancras on Eurostar, with our bikes in bags. We were going via Paris, as there were more trains to Avignon than from Lille. We had to go on the Metro/RER in Paris to get the TGV from Gare de Lyon. This was okay because we purchased a batch of 12 Metro tickets at St Pancras and had an hour to change stations. (Coming back, we allowed two hours as you have to go through check-in and customs for the Eurostar to London.) The TGV took only

2 hours 47 minutes to get to Avignon and on arrival you can get the shuttle-bus into the centre.

We did this journey in late July in a peak holiday period, when both trains were packed. But we still managed to put our bike bags in the luggage racks!

I have traveled to Avignon with the bike before, by air from Luton to Nimes, then hire car or taxi or 40km bike ride. On checking prices, the rail journey worked out cheaper door-to-door!

Gordon Fenwick, Thetford

PUNCTURE PROOF

Mr H L Crawford of Edmonton, North London, contacted Cycle to tell us that he bought his first Weldtite puncture repair kit from Woolworth in 1935. In other words, it predates the date shown on in the Tools of the Trade article. He was keen to mention that he hasn't seen a Weldtite repair kit for many years and wondered where they can be found. A lot of Weldtite products don't have their name on them because they're made for someone else. But Weldtite-branded products are available from lots of local bike shops. There's a list online at www.weldtite.co.uk - click the '300 Club' link under 'Retailers'. Or call 01652 660000.



HELMETS AND DRIVERS

As cyclists we are bound to be concerned by the recent judicial decisions mentioned in Cycle. The comments on Mr Justice Griffith Williams in the civil case of Smith v French were obiter dicta; that is, comments that had no bearing on the decision in the case (since the judge had already decided that a helmet would not have reduced the victim's injury, even if that would be a ground to reduce damages). Those

comments therefore have no force in law as precedent.

However, Judge Lowden's suggestion that it was appropriate to mitigate the sentence of the defendant in the case of Regina v Moore because the victim was not wearing a helmet, regardless of whether that contributed to the death of the victim is, in my view, wrong. I assume that the charge was causing death by dangerous driving although this is not stated in the note in the magazine. It is a general principle of sentencing that the vulnerability of a victim ought not affect the sentence. Further it is well established that a defendant convicted of causing death by dangerous driving ought to face an immediate custodial sentence except in a very exceptional case. The fact that the victim wore no helmet hardly makes it very exceptional. I would hope (but, I fear, not expect) that the Crown Prosecution Service would appeal this sentence as unduly lenient.

There is another issue in these cases, which does not appear to have been considered. If the failure of a cyclist to wear a helmet can be considered to be contributory negligence so as to reduce damages or mitigate a sentence surely the same principle must apply to motorists. Racing cyclists wear helmets but so do racing drivers (and have done for a great deal longer). There are many multiples of drivers killed by head injuries compared to cyclists, and in the case of a motorist the head injuries are far more likely to be the only mortal injury. The fact that more cyclists wear helmets can hardly have anything to do with it. Perhaps if it is appreciated that the same principle must apply to motorists if it is correct will assist the courts to appreciate that it is wrong to blame the victim.

**Tom Culver,
Barrister at Law, Cambridge**

Without wishing to ignite the helmet debate on the letters page (since CTC campaigns against helmet compulsion, not usage – see www.ctc.org.uk/helmets), it's nevertheless worth noting that a helmet for everyday driving was produced by an Australian company

RECYCLE YOUR 'CYCLE'
When you've read Cycle, why not give it to a friend – or a doctor's surgery?

in the 1980s. Here is CTC's Chris Peck modelling it. It didn't catch on.



LEGAL LIABILITY

Michael Glanfield believes (Letters, Aug/Sep) that 'To imply that pedestrians and cyclists should not be held liable for their actions is a very dangerous road to follow.' But this is the basis of road liability law in most countries in Europe, where the concept of legal liability is separated from fault, and drivers are held to be liable in all crashes that harm cyclists or pedestrians unless the latter can be proved to have been grossly irresponsible.

Far from being a 'dangerous' principle, it results in safer conditions for cycling, higher cycling levels, and better justice for injured victims than we have in the UK, where vulnerable road users suffer an uphill battle to prove that their injuries were not their own fault. European 'strict liability' law is a road we should go down.

David Arditti, Edgware, Middlesex

SNAP YOUR MAP

Reading your article on mobile mapping devices: can I suggest a very cheap alternative, which we used in France this summer? Before we set off each day my son would photograph the relevant section of the Michelin map with his mobile phone. We could then use it to navigate, zooming in or out as required. Okay, we didn't have GPS but it was a very handy way of keeping track of where we were without having to purchase expensive equipment or lug maps around with us.

Ian King, by email

PINCH POINTS

I have noticed a considerable increase in the number of 'central refuges', which narrow the road carriageway to the width of a single vehicle. Whilst they help pedestrians cross, do other cyclists

find them potentially lethal? With one scenario drivers try to accelerate past the cyclist to get to the refuge first then suddenly cut in to get through the gap forcing one to swerve into the gutter or worse. With the other, one is in the gap and the vehicles behind actually have to slow down resulting in a blaring of horns, various verbal abuse and gestures or in one case something thrown at me from a passenger (in a white van, of course!).

Nick Coleman, by email

They are a problem. However, cycling assertively and 'taking the lane' (riding further out into the road, rather than in the gutter) can be a huge help. See the feature on page 40 for more on this.



MEMBER GROUP GUIDES

I visited Portsmouth recently to dog-sit for two weeks. What would have been really useful was the contact details for someone who would act as 'monitor' and guide me around the places of interest in the city. It's impossible to read a map and cycle around an unfamiliar city. I would certainly be willing to do such a thing around my area. Could this idea catch on amongst other members? I did meet a CTC member at the end of week two and she did manage to show me some delights such as gingka trees and small tunnels around the city. Over to you!

Judith Hitchings, by email

In the meantime, if you're holiday in the UK and fancy a group ride don't forget to contact the secretary of the member group in the area. Details are on page 79.

CYCLISTS JUDGED

I was looking through some old CTC Gazettes when the editorial from December 1942 caught my eye. It read: 'Most cyclists are aware that it is

OBITUARIES

JOHN TAYLOR

Died on 13th July, aged 79, after a long battle with prostate cancer. John was one of Scotland's best-known cycle advocates, active as a volunteer for CTC for over 25 years. His

main contribution in Scotland was to represent cycling interests in the development of access legislation, which saw the launch in 2005 of the Outdoor Access Code. He was also instrumental in establishing what is now CTC Scotland.

At local level John fought tirelessly for cycling in Dumfries and Galloway. In 2003 he established 'Discovery' rides to enable new and returnee cyclists to discover local places of interest by bike. As recently as 2008 he helped set up 'Wheely Easy' rides: short guided rides to inspire novices to 'have a go'.

To co-ordinate local cycling activity, John was a founder member of the Galloway Cycling Group, now Dumfries and Galloway CTC. John was also a founder of the KM Rally, which began officially in 1990 as KM150, a celebration of 150 years since Kirkpatrick Macmillan invented his bicycle.

He was a member of the Rough Stuff Fellowship long before most of today's mountain bikers were alive. From 1991 he was employed by the Forestry Commission to co-ordinate cycle trails in Dumfries and Galloway, and established 200 miles of cycle routes.

He celebrated his 70th birthday by riding the End-to-End. For his 75th, he plotted and rode a Scottish 'end-to-end' (Mull of Galloway to Cape Wrath). His contributions to CTC were recognised in 2005 when he was nominated Volunteer of the Year for Scotland, and won the National Volunteer of the Year Award.

John's achievements are more remarkable in view of his long-term hearing problem (he never complained), and recently, family problems that would for anyone else have taken all their time and energy. His other interests were choral singing and gardening. Peter Hawkins



OBITUARIES

WALTER NASH

Died this year aged 92. He started club riding in 1933 and from 1970 was active in Norfolk DA, serving as a secretary of the rights committee and inaugurating and leading the Norwich Wednesday rides. Even into his tenth decade he was a familiar figure at DA events: calm, kind, genial, and stylish on a bike. Fergus Muir

JACK DOWSON: 1924-2009

A well liked and respected member of the Wayfarers Section of the South West London DA for over 20 years since retirement, Jack will be missed for his sense of humour and gentle manner. Pete Mitchell

GRAHAM SHUTT: 1963-2009

Died while cycling, after a collision with a van in Keighley. He was a careful, strong and determined rider, who had cycled widely in the UK and North America. He was the membership secretary and runs coordinator for Burnley & Pendle CTC. A keen outdoorsman, he was active in the Venture Scouts and had completed the Bob Graham Round. Ian Lowcock

PAT PRIOR

Died 17/6/09, aged 77. A true clubman, Pat joined CTC in the late 1940s, riding first with Warwickshire DA's Coventry Section then, after national service, with Nuneaton Section. He organised many standard and rough-stuff events and regularly led section rides. He was always ready to help, encourage, and advise anyone new to cycling. Alan Reynolds

EDWARD SHINGLER: 11/6/1909-25/05/2009

Died aged 99. Edward was still cycling at the age of 95, after which his daughter Wendy cared for him. A cyclist and a clubman from his early teens, he followed the usual pattern of time-trialling, touring, and camping. He co-founded the Codsall Thursday cycling group, whose rides were enlivened by his Christmas-cracker-standard jokes. Don Trubshaw

KENNETH ELLIOT

Died suddenly aged 80 on 31/5/2009 at Royan, France, while on holiday with one of his beloved bikes. Formerly an official of Barclays DCO, Ken was a keen cyclist from boyhood. He raced

an offence to carry a second person on a bicycle unless the machine has been constructed or adapted for the purpose. It is also generally known that this law was passed solely for the purpose of restraining mischievous and adventurous schoolboys who were prone to indulging in 'larks' that might bring them into danger.

'It is not a wllark to give a war-worker a lift on a bicycle, and when eight adult cyclists recently carried eight land girls to a hostel in South Wales, thereby saving them a walk of several miles, it was silly and vindictive, in our opinion, to drag them into a police court and fine each cyclist 10s, and each land girl 2s 6d. 'Both police and magistrates could have been employed to much better purpose, although in saying this, we have no desire to condone the breaching of the cycling laws in any general sense. That has never been the Club's policy.'

Keep up the good work.

Roy Spilsbury, Penmaenmawr

EMBRACING BOTH LOGOS



'Both CTC logos are still used - sometimes jointly, as in 2003.

Further to the earlier correspondence about CTC's two logos: without trying hard I can think of one other worthy organisation with both 'old' and 'new' logos in joint use. The Royal British Legion use both their old badge and the new Poppy logo according to circumstance. CTC are in good company, but anyway, why should we worry about being different? I think the Winged Wheel shows that we remember our traditions but the new CTC logo represents our forward-looking attitude.

I joined CTC in the mid-Seventies and found a very backward looking organization. It has surely changed for the better over the years, at first trying to lose all its history but now not afraid to embrace both.

Keith Matthews,
www.wingedwheels.info

400,000 & COUNTING

The attached photo was taken this summer. Would it be of any interest for the magazine?

Geoff Mayne, Bungay, Suffolk

Indeed. CTC members are well represented in the 300,000 Miles Club. For more details, contact secretary Graham Kelly: 01568 780936, graham.kelly@sagainternet.co.uk.



CANVASING IDEAS

There are cheap tents and light tents, but what if you want one that weighs less than 2kg and costs less than £20? I inherited - for free - the remains of a friend's Lichfield Viper 3 tent. It had been stored damp and the cotton inner was ruined, but the poles, flysheet, pegs and groundsheet are fine. For summer touring in the UK, they're quite adequate. Contrary to popular belief (especially amongst tent salesmen) a groundsheet need be neither sewn in nor 'bathtub' to keep you dry unless it really is extremely wet.

Added benefits of this over a posh new lightweight? It has enough space to sit upright on a stool, cook dinner inside (out of the rain), fix a puncture, true a wheel, store all your luggage, or to have friends stay the night! In the event that it should get lost, stolen, trampled by cows, well, it wasn't exactly expensive, was it?

You could even forgo the poles and suspend the tent tarp style by fixing the ends of the ridge to handy trees, which would save almost half the weight. To get something similar, try your local Freecycle group (www.freecycle.org).

