



FROM THE EDITOR

Two weeks after the launch of 'the Boris bikes', the London hire bike scheme sponsored by Barclays, I'm cycling across the capital between King's Cross and Waterloo. I see nine of the blue-liveried bikes in use. It's scarcely less than the total number of cyclists I used to see on this journey ten years ago.

And these cyclists look different. No lycra. No helmets. No courier bags or clipless pedals. They look like what they are: pedestrians who have walked up to a bike stand and retrieved a bike.

As we went to press, Transport for London were hailing the hire bikes a success, pointing to half a million journeys in the first six weeks. That's a great achievement – and yet a bigger one could follow: the normalisation of transport cycling in the UK.

For too long practical cycling has been 'abnormal', the preserve of the eccentric, sporty or poor. Like Henry Thoreau, Joe Public distrusts any enterprise that requires new clothes. The Barclays bikes show that you don't need skin-tight shorts and a polystyrene hat for a two-mile trundle across town; that you can just get on and go.

To you and I the Barclays bikes might look pedestrian. But in a way, that's the point. The practical roadster is back.

Dan Joyce



Photos by Adam Coffman and Graeme Fife

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CTC IS ON STAND B5. DROP BY TO SAY HELLO.

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CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX
Tel: 0844 736 8450 Fax: 0844 736 8454
Email: cycling@ctc.org.uk
Website: www.ctc.org.uk

CTC Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

President: Jon Snow

CTC Council Chair: David Robinson

Chief Executive: Kevin Mayne

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Editor: Dan Joyce

email: editor@ctc.org.uk

Designer: Gemma Hancock

Advertising: Louise Collings, tel: 0207 657 1820

email: ctc@tenalps.com

Creative Director: James Houston

Publisher: James Pembroke

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