

# CYCLE LETTERS

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



to causing erosion.

Whilst I realise that mountain biking will never go away, and indeed cannot fault it when carried out on purpose built routes such as on Forestry Commission land or on tracks able to withstand the pressure, is it not irresponsible of CTC to encourage people to use such severely eroded tracks such as this?

Julie Hopley

## SUMMER SINGLETRACK

In his article 'Summer Singletrack' (Cycle, Aug/Sep 2010), Benji Haworth suggests using the Outdoor Leisure maps. These are excellent maps for detail, but it's also worth considering the Harvey Maps series of four sheets covering the Dales. At 1:40,000 they are not quite as detailed overall as the OS series but are specifically aimed at cycling and have better coding on the off-road routes, indicating visibility on the ground and an idea of difficulty.

They manage to include some other details not on the Landranger 1:50,000, such as partial field boundary information. The scale is good for those touring cyclists who take in a bit of rough-stuff as well as for the out-and-out off-road rider. The maps are also lighter and less bulky than the OS series, and have the other great advantage of being waterproof.

Chris Boulton

Your article 'Summer Singletrack' includes coverage of mountain bike routes in the Peak District, in which readers are encouraged to try what are referred to as The Gates routes.

When walking Chapel Gate last year, having been forced off the path by a 4x4, I watched the vehicle tip so far to one side that it only stayed upright because its windows were resting on the upper lip of the rut. Much of the initial damage probably was caused by 4x4s, but once the damage is started it will only be exacerbated by mountain bikes, which themselves can contribute quite severely

All outdoor access causes some wear to unsurfaced tracks. I'm not aware of any research that shows that cyclists riding responsibly (e.g. not recklessly skidding) cause more damage than hikers or horse riders. Being heavier, motor vehicles cause the most wear. Preventing illegal use of bridleways by 4x4s and trail motorbikes is surely the key to keeping these rights of way usable by all legitimate users.

## MTB ANTECEDENTS

Like many pre-MTB or ATB cyclists of my generation, I remember making my own 'tracker' type bike for riding in the local forestry and off-road tracks in the area. It consisted of an old '70s racer from the tip fitted with cow-horn type handlebars and 'knobbles' from the local bike shop.

Around 1980, however, I remember being given a new Vindoc Trekker bicycle by my parents, which was an excellent bike. It had a three-speed hub, fork strengtheners, a sloping frame, wide cow-horn bars and was very reminiscent of the Geoff Apps bike featured in last month's magazine. Could this have been Apps designed? It certainly hooked me on off-road riding.

Steve Knowles

## TOO MUCH MOUNTAIN BIKING

I have always looked forward to the arrival of my copy of the CTC magazine, but over the last few issues that enthusiasm has been dampened! I joined the Cyclists' Touring Club because

## THAT WAS THEN

### Leicester Special!

Marylebone had a reputation for being one of the quietest stations in London – but not any more, the CTC fixed all that! About 180 members advanced, without stealth, upon the 11th Cyclists' Special on the last Sunday in September.

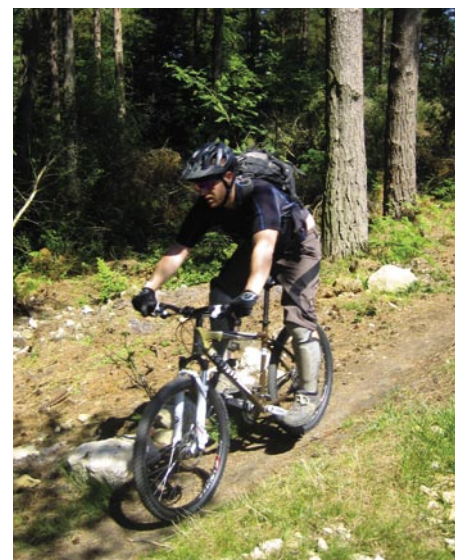
The only stop was at Harrow where more members joined the party. The three hours travelling passed quickly, and seemingly in no time at all we were in Leicester. The party split into eight groups for a varied selection of runs including Charnwood Forest, Foxton Locks, Mount St Bernards Abbey and many delightful villages, while others, myself included, were content just to potter around the lanes. One by one the groups left, until the Sunday silence reigned once more over Leicester.

CTC Gazette, October 1960

I enjoy touring.

The most recent issue of the magazine continues a recent trend. There are 45 pages, excluding advertisements. Twenty-three-and-a-half pages are general club matters, campaigns, and letters, eight pages are devoted to touring, and 13½ are about off-road cycling.

I realise we are a national cycling organisation, and that audax, off-road, commuting, and many other types of cycling are relevant to members' interests, but a balance needs to be maintained. There are plenty of off-road



cycle clubs and magazines, and I am sure they do not devote themselves to promoting and writing about touring cycling.

Please could Cycle redress the balance a little in future issues?

Steven Hubbard

Yes. CTC is a diverse organisation and Cycle reflects that. But rather than trying to balance the content within every issue, we try to do it over six issues – the minimum any member will receive.

Incidentally, most mountain bike magazines do feature touring... except they'll call it something like 'expedition riding' or 'bivvy biking'.

### LOADS BETTER

I read with interest the article on cargo bikes and thought I'd send you a photo of my single-gear trade bike of unknown vintage, which I use for work (gardening) and shopping at least five days a week. The longest outward journey is three miles. The bike is fun to ride and provokes quite a lot of comment in general and in particular nostalgic memories from people who used to ride one on a delivery round.

I'm glad to see that there is a rising interest in cargo bikes again and look forward to seeing more in the future.

Karen Simpson, Herne Bay

Having read your article on cargo cycles, I thought you might like to know about one of the things I get up to in retirement from my job as an English teacher: I deliver library books.

A chance meeting with Valerie Bearne, Community Engagement Manager for Bath and North East Somerset Libraries, has led to my appointment as a Home Library Service Volunteer. Having spent 30 years taking young readers to Jane Austen, I'm now taking Jane Austen to her readers!

My role is to visit housebound people in their own homes and keep them supplied with books of their choice, with my bike as transport. The panniers on my Ridgeback Panorama are perfect for touring – and perfect for book transportation as they are spacious, secure and watertight.

Everyone wins. The Library Service is extending its reach to more readers; housebound library members have the chance to have 1:1 book talk; the Council's



Green and Get Active policies are being supported; and I'm still riding my bike and helping others at the same time.

David Cohen

### DANGER: ONCOMING TRAFFIC

The more I think about Dennis E Hiller's suggestion to allow cyclists to cycle facing oncoming traffic, the less it makes sense to me. Think of the disadvantages, too. Just one example: imagine you're cycling contraflow at 10mph. An oncoming car at 30mph is signalling to turn right, tailgated by another car, whose driver therefore can't see you approaching. Before you can predict it, the second car may swerve into the cycle lane to pass the turning car, and hit you with an impact speed of 40mph. Had this happened with you going with the flow, the impact speed would have been 20mph. Remember that half the speed at impact means 25% of impact energy!

Contraflow cycling in one-way streets is completely different because you're approaching oncoming cars on the driver's side, not the passenger's.

Thomas Schneider, Manchester

For the record, CTC supports contraflow cycling on one-way streets, but not cycling against the traffic on two-way roads.

Chris Juden adds: 'When America began to rediscover cycling in the 1980s, riding to face the traffic on two-way roads was commonplace and even advocated by some road-safety authorities. Experienced cyclists knew better, but were few in number and lacked data. But as more people took up cycling, evidence of the hazards of "wrong way" cycling steadily mounted. The legal and safe way to ride is nowadays reinforced by road signs in USA.

The editorial reply last issue does correctly identify the increased danger from traffic at junctions, when cyclists cross them on the wrong side of the road.

## OBITUARIES

### ALBERT AYTON: JAN 1921-MAR 2010

Albert's interests ranged from sport to music, travel, good food and fine wine. A life member of CTC, he was also a member of The Eagle Road Club for 71 years. He held every club record from 25 miles to 12 hours and was among the top riders nationally, especially on a tandem with Harry Edwards. He held many club posts, including president. In his 60s, he took to long distance touring and randonnées at home and abroad.  
*Peter Smith*

### ARTHUR BARLOW: 1943-2010

A member of CTC and Derby DA Committee for nearly 50 years, Arthur received the CTC Certificate of Merit. For the last three years Arthur was the DA President and always kept members amused by his speeches at functions. Arthur was also president and treasurer of the Alfreton Section, with whom he did most of his cycling. He was a generous person who supported many charities as well as helping to buy the DA wreath for Meriden since 1978.  
*Tom Fox*

### DENNIS SMITH: 1922-2010

A popular figure in West Country cycling, Den rode with Bristol CTC for 67 years. He married Marion in 1958 and they toured far and wide, making many friends. Riding for Bristol Road Club in 1947, Den broke the Western Counties RRA 24-hour record, riding 401 1/4 miles on fixed wheel. Den and Marion cut the cake at Bristol DA's Centenary Celebration in 2008. For Den, cycling was a way of life and the journey was the prize.  
*Hugh Marshall*

### FRANK MACMAHON: 1933-2010

Died peacefully in his sleep at home, aged 76. Discovered cycling in his retirement and was a keen member of the 40+ Cycling Club, riding out with the splinter group 'Potters Heath Potterers'. A daredevil on the downhills with the descent into Whitwell nicknamed 'Frank's Hill' after him. Cycling changed Frank's life – he said it was 'the greatest pleasure of his life'.  
*Sonya Luther (daughter)*



**WRITE NOW**  
Join in cycling discussions online with the CTC forum, <http://forum.ctc.org.uk/>

## OBITUARIES

### JACK BALL: 1915-2010

Jack was a lifelong cyclist, joining Newbury Road Club in 1936, where he met wife-to-be Gwen. During the war, he was an RAF draughtsman, and he joined the Ordnance Survey on demob. He and Gwen became involved with the Crabwood Cycling Club, which had strong connections with the OS, and became CTC stalwarts. Jack was a great organiser and used his Forces experience to good effect in arranging runs, tourist trials, and photographic competitions. *Bob Damper & Martin Napier*

### VALERIE WATTS: 1942-2010

Died of breast cancer. Born in Wimbledon, Valerie learned the bassoon at school and went on to join the Royal College of Music and later the Sadler's Wells Opera Orchestra. Based in London, she was often seen cycling around Marble Arch with her bassoon on a trailer. She loved the countryside too, and in 1978 she took part in the CTC Centenary Relay Ride round Britain, completing the entire course within the year. *June Emerson*

### FRANK N WALKER: 25/12/1919-14/5/2010

An accomplished cycle dealer in Chelmsford before retirement, Frank began, aged eight, by helping at the cycle shop of his disabled uncle, pushing him home in a wheelchair after closing. Frank took over the shop in 1937. After the war (he served with the REME in the Western Desert and Italy) he returned to his shop - where he could instantly find anything. He held several posts with Chelmsford CTC and enjoyed reliability rides, map-reading events, and touring with wife Nancy. *Peter Moore*

### RON MANNING

Ron passed away peacefully in June 2010 in a Gloucestershire nursing home in his 90th year. In the 1940s-'60s he rode with the Luton section of Bedfordshire DA and, with his late wife Gladys, held a number of administrative posts. A very powerful rider, he took part in many BCTC events and inter-DA map reading contests. Business commitments then caused a move to Dursley, Glos, and that, coupled with severe knee problems, curtailed his riding. *Ted King MBE*

For more, see [bicyclinglife.com/Library/riskfactors.htm](http://bicyclinglife.com/Library/riskfactors.htm).

### COMPLETING THE BCQ

I've just finished the British Cycle Quest ([ctc.org.uk/britishcyclequest](http://ctc.org.uk/britishcyclequest)). Not many CTC members seem to have heard of it.

I did it over two years. I did my local questions over long weekends and the others over two big tours. Last year was up the centre of England and Scotland and then coming down the East Coast and doing the South back to Hampshire. This year I caught trains and ferries to the Shetlands and worked my way down the West Coast of Britain to Dorset - doing a John O'Groats to Land's End as a side trip.

*Damian Hill (right)*

### WHAT TO WEAR

David Robinson's column in the latest edition of Cycle recounts Copenhagen residents responding to his cycling talk by asking him if he also gets passionate about vacuum cleaners. Perhaps these utility-minded Copenhagen cyclists would be equally shocked at the Cycle magazine feature entitled Gear Selection, which described the specialist cycling clothing (apparently) needed to commute to work. All the clothing kit listed for commuting exceeded £200 but I sure those canny Danish manage without any of this kit, choosing instead a handbag in a basket over a messenger bag and trouser clips not lycra tights.

*Michael Box*

Those Copenhagen cyclists probably have shorter commutes than our featured cyclists. You're right: you don't need special clothing to ride a moderate distance on the right bike. But if you're riding further or faster or on a less utilitarian bike, specialist cycling gear is often more comfortable.

### SMALL WOMEN & CYCLING

Wow! What a lot of interesting articles in Aug/Sep journal. Robert Wright's article should inspire us all to think outside the box following changes in our life.

Rob Ainsley, Geoff Apps and the What to Wear articles reminded me that I've been there, done that, and got most of the T-shirts to prove it. But the best bit was the letter from Viv Mackay reminding us that the small female cyclist is still not catered for.

Seventeen months ago I decided to



treat myself to a new bike and gear. For 30 years I've used a male saddle, shoes and clothing, and while the saddle has been an easy find I have given up using STIs (my hand span for braking is 10cm), become frustrated with handlebars, and am still looking for comfortable and stylish clothing. So come on, Dan, find the experts who can provide a few articles on cycling for the petite female.

*Jacqueline Mountford-Green, Cambridge*

### BIKES ON TV

Like many enthusiastic cyclists, I look forward to my summer fix of cycling on the box when the Tour de France comes around, even though it's hidden away on the relatively obscure ITV4. When it's over, there are 49 weeks to wait for the next edition. I think it would be great if there were a regular weekly magazine programme covering all aspects of cycling, somewhere on the airwaves. Can we start a campaign to get one? I'd like to suggest a title: Bottom Gear!

*Tim Goffe, Halifax*

*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 December/January issue must be received by 29th October.*