

CYCLE LETTERS

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

RENTABLE BIKE BOXES



I have a suggestion to make life easier for overseas cycle touring. We need a system at airports where a cyclist can rent a sturdy cycle transport box, to provide protection for his/her precious bike whilst in transit.

Airlines or airports would stock quality bike boxes, big enough to securely carry a partly dismantled bike. The cyclist would hire this box at the airport, paying a returnable deposit, stowing the bike inside, then checking it in. At the other end, the cyclist would reassemble his or her bike and return the empty box to collect the deposit. Empty boxes could be re-used on other journeys.

This way, we could transport our bikes overseas quickly, at reasonable cost and without risk of damage, without being burdened by a bike box at the start of a tour. The airlines/airports would make a little more money, so all benefit!

Rob Foster

HELMET CONFUSION

I'm a new member of CTC but I've cycled for years. I'm a tourist and choose not to wear a helmet whilst cycling – although I can conceive of extreme circumstances in which I'd at least consider it.

Reading the 'Safety Factored' article by Malcolm Wardlaw, the evidence seemed fairly clear-cut and is supported by my personal experience. Then I discovered via CycleClips that the Northern Ireland Assembly has approved a compulsory helmet law in principle.

Their vote raises a few questions. Does CTC know what evidence the Northern Ireland Assembly was looking at and, if so, does it view that evidence as being valid or flawed? If, as the article says and CTC's anti-legislative stance would suggest, cycling really is a relatively low-risk activity and compulsory helmet wearing is bad for cycling and for cyclists, why is it that just about every rider pictured in Cycle is wearing a helmet?

Kerry Nash

For the Northern Ireland situation, see the news story on page 6. Pictures of both helmeted and unhelmeted cyclists are shown in Cycle, reflecting CTC's personal choice stance. However, certain types of cycling (mountain biking, sportives) and cyclist (enthusiasts, photoshoot models) have a level of helmet wearing that's way above the baseline. Most cyclists as a whole don't wear helmets; many that you see even in Cycle will.

I'm tired of being told by CTC to stop wearing a helmet and a high-visibility jacket, and that cycling isn't dangerous – most recently in the report on the new Health on the Move booklet. New and prospective members must think CTC is a very strange organisation, to expend so much effort discouraging such simple precautions

Worse still, they might conclude, as cycling in traffic is so obviously hazardous, that if passive safety measures don't make any difference, they had better not cycle at all.

I know, of course, that your real aim is to avert both the risk of compulsory use of helmets and hi-viz jackets in future, and/or any presumption by the courts and insurance companies that they are relevant to the apportionment



THAT WAS THEN

75 years ago: London's problem

One cycle in a London street causes a bigger problem, it seems, than three cars can produce. 'Cyclists, not motorists, are becoming the chief problem in London's traffic,' we were told by The Daily Mail recently.

The evidence for these deductions is also worth quoting: 'Whereas the number of motor vehicles passing important points has increased by only 8.2% since 1933, the number of cycles has increased by 30.4%.' In reality the official figures which so startled The Daily Mail show that motor vehicles are more than three times as numerous as cycles at the selected 'important points,' and, taking the census as a whole, cycles constitute 20.8% of the London traffic, and motor vehicles 72.8%, which is exactly 3.5 times as much.

It is interesting to note that there are now seven vehicles in the streets of London for every five to be seen there ten years ago. A change has also taken place in the composition of the traffic, and whereas motorcars represented less than half the total in 1925 they now form more than three fifths of the total.

CTC Gazette, January 1936

of responsibility for injuries. This is a very sensible and sound aim. Why not develop your policy to address it directly? You could, for example, assert the right of cyclists to be on the road, whether or not there is an alternative, and to be given space by drivers. Then the decision to use or not use passive safety measures (apart from lights) is clearly a matter of preference.

C W Johnston

CTC does campaign on issues like driver behaviour (e.g. Stop Smidsy) and the rights of cyclists to use the roads (e.g. the Daniel Cadden case). Helmets have been a matter of preference, but the threats of contributory negligence for not wearing one or outright compulsion to wear one are real. Those – and not usage – are what CTC campaigns against.

WRITE NOW
Join in cycling
discussions online
with the CTC forum,
forum.ctc.org.uk



GET GORGE-OUS

Referring to the letter 'Grass Roots Goodness' in the Feb-Mar issue, I am sure it is no coincidence that Jane Chapman of Cycle Bristol CTC was praised for her 'help and enthusiastic advice'. She was one of the trio who won CTC Volunteer Group of the Year last spring for their amazing encouragement to new cyclists with the 'Get Gorge-ous Cycle Challenge', to train and encourage new and wary cyclists over six months with the aim of completing a 50-mile cycle from Bristol to Cheddar and up the Gorge in the summer.

This Challenge is still going strong and now in its third year, with many of the ride leaders and helpers being previous 'punters' who have all benefited from Jane's help and enthusiastic advice. Cycle Bristol CTC has also benefited from a new wave of members. Thank you, Jane – and, of course, Sue Hawkins and Sally Pearson!

Kathy Stonham

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

Nice to see James Tanner using the undoubted 'levelling' benefits of the tandem with his son Luke, and Carlton Reid encouraging his son to complete the Phil Liggett Challenge.

I have two boys 10 and 13. Charlie at 10 rides the tandem with me and George, 13, now rides solo. Neither of them are gifted athletes but we go out regularly with a local social cycling group on a Sunday and cover 50+ miles. Additionally, they swim competitively, training for about four hours a week.

They never run out of energy and never complain. I totally agree with the sentiments of the writers of the articles about our 'sedentary mollycoddled society', as I get some real looks of disapproval and frankly amazement when we talk about where they've been and what they do. This is set against a backdrop of peers who spend hours

glued to games consoles and computers.
Barnaby Stackhouse

SUFFOLK HICCUP

Much as I welcome the advertising for the Birthday Rides in Suffolk, it's not the first time they've been there. The Birthday Rides were held in Suffolk in 1974. It was a very enjoyable occasion and an opportunity for the then Suffolk DA members to show off our delightful county.

I believe we were one of the earlier DAs to organise the Birthday Rides, when the event was more low key, participants having to find their own accommodation, although all rides were led by DA members.

I am sure all those who attend the event this year will find the county and the CTC Suffolk members just as welcoming to fellow cyclists.

Maureen Nichols,
Vice President CTC Suffolk

CTC CERTIFICATES OF MERIT



I just wanted to thank you for organising the Certificate of Merit for Richard and Margaret Nicholl in CTC Wessex. Last night we held a lovely celebration – the President and Secretary of CTC Wessex came, together with 30 of the Blackmore Vale group. The Nicholls had no idea; they thought it was a social evening with the local members.

The presentation was excellent. Some people came who knew them 30 years ago in Wiltshire, when they started the Salisbury group. It meant so much to them, and I can tell you the Certificate of Merit Award is held in great respect,

OBITUARIES

PAT KENNY: 1939-2011

Pat threw himself into long-distance cycling after joining Birmingham's St Christopher's Catholic Cycling Club in 1957. He broke his first major National Road Record with an Edinburgh-to-London tricycle ride in the 1960s, also gaining the 24-hour record (431.5 miles). He married Hazel in 1969 and they had three daughters. Pat rode to his well-travelled job as a civil engineer, sometimes a round trip of 100 miles a day. By the late '70s Pat's aim was to break the Land's End to John O'Groats record. In 1979, he and I tried three times on a tandem trike but didn't have any luck with the weather. But in 1980 he broke the solo trike End-to-End record by 21 minutes, recording 2 days, 10 hours and 36 minutes. In the space of 28 years, Pat broke nine National RRA records. He still holds the Birmingham-to-London tandem record with Les Lowe. By the mid '90s, Pat had ridden 600,000 miles and he aimed to be the first cyclist to reach a million miles. Last time I saw him in early January, he had a bike packed ready for a flight to Tunisia and had just passed 910,000 miles. Sadly, on Friday 21st January, Pat was involved in a fatal collision with a motor vehicle in broad daylight. God bless you, Pat.
John Taylor

STEVE HADLEY: 1951 – 04/02/2011

Steve joined CTC Walsall in 1982 and was a competent tourist. He served as runs secretary for many years and eventually section president. In 1988 Steve was a member of the South Staffs DA Committee that organised the AIT International Rally at Weston Park in Shropshire. He toured extensively in Britain and was the first person to achieve the CTC Tourist Explorer Award (now the BCQ). Steve will be fondly remembered for his early morning antics in youth hostels on many a tour when he would be up early packing bags yet still be last to saddle up when we left the hostel! Malcolm Costley

PAT APPLETON

My cycling friend and training partner for 25 years, Pat was a hard rider, a true competitor and a tough cookie. She time trialled with Dursley RC and took part in road races and cyclo-cross events. Her forte was as a cross-country mountain biker: she regularly featured in the national results and one season took the National Lady Vets title. She

so thank you to you and the Awards Committee for approving it for them.

Jill Kieran

Mike Jones was in touch too, to let us know about the Certificate of Merit awarded to Dave Martindale, saying how happy he was to receive it.

WHEEL EASY IS FIVE



This May it's the fifth anniversary of CTC-affiliated leisure cycling club Harrogate Wheel Easy (wheel-easy.org.uk). We have 250 members, a third of whom are women, and ages range from 20 to 80. We were runner up as CTC Voluntary Group of the Year in 2010.

Gia and I always enjoyed cycling but after retiring in 2005 we started using our bikes more. We knew there were plenty of serious cycling clubs around and thought it would be fun to have a club for leisure cyclists like us. We came up with the name 'Wheel Easy', got an article in the local paper, told a few friends and 35 people turned up for the first ride on a wet May morning.

Today around 50 to 70 members meet every Sunday, and about half that number on Wednesday mornings (and evenings during the summer). There are usually five or six groups on a Sunday and three on a Wednesday to keep numbers in each manageable and safe. All have ride leaders and, usually, backmarkers.

Anywhere with access to good places to cycle could have a club that's just as successful as ours.

**Malcolm and
Gia Margolis**

THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Jo Beer's article on 'ride fuel' had some very useful guidance. But it didn't address

the issue of palatability. Over the years I've tried various sports drinks and invariably find they are:

- so sugary they make my mouth fur up (and doubtless rot my teeth);
- strongly chemical in taste;
- give me dreadful wind.

I've given up and use only tap water – and even that can be very chemical-tasting at times.

I've less experience of energy bars because the first few I tried (freebies with a cycle mag) were so unpalatable I never tried them again. I'd be particularly interested to know if anyone makes a natural based energy drink that is palatable, digestible and dentally benign.

Brian Smith

MORE POWER TO YOU – AND ME

Sorry that this comment is a bit tardy, but I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciated your article on e-bikes in the December-January issue. I thought the article was very good and factual. Well done!

I did write and request some comments on this subject six months ago, and this was spot on. I know that this is a little bit off line for most of Cycle's readers, but it was very much appreciated by old timers like me who have been cycling all their lives and intend to keep cycling until they fall out of the saddle, but have physical restrictions – in my case, I am having a knee replacement and anticipate that I will have limitations thereafter.

I will certainly be buying an e-bike in the spring to replace my trusty Trek hybrid, but the choice out there is mind-boggling. I am a cycling instructor and a Sustrans volunteer ranger, therefore my needs are quite varied.

John Mouatt

On that note, if there's an article or review you would like to see in Cycle, do write in. All suggestions gratefully received.

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 June-July issue must be received by 29th April.

OBITUARIES

completed the London to Brighton on a unicycle one year and won the mountain bike bog-snorkelling race at Llanwrtyd Wells. When she broke her back falling from a tree, she had metal framework fitted to her spine. But in a few months bionic Pat was back doing what she loved most, riding her bike.

Gordon Evans

JOHN TAYLOR: 7/1/1911-20/8/2010

CTC life member John Taylor's lifelong enjoyment of cycling began in 1924 when employed as a GPO messenger boy. His pleasure in touring cycling was enhanced by a love of the countryside. He was an early member of the YHA, carrying out voluntary work for them for many years. Following service in the Second World War, John introduced his wife Eileen and their children to cycling. He led them from their Newcastle home on weekend and longer tours throughout the North of England and Scotland. After retirement, John enjoyed more time cycling, especially on his many trips to Ireland and Scandinavia.

Send obituaries, preferably 100 words or fewer, to the usual editorial address. As space is limited, some may not appear immediately.

