

Q & A

Your technical, legal and health questions answered.

This issue: coughing in cold weather, cheaper compact doubles, pedal axle problems, cars in bike lanes, and one way to deal with stripped threads

QUESTION
OF THE
MONTH



● A wheezy cough can be a symptom of asthma, which can develop later in life

HEALTH

CYCLIST'S COUGH

Q After strenuous cycling, particularly in chilly weather, I sometimes develop a wheezy cough that lasts for a week or two. I have no other symptoms of illness, and even the cough seems to abate when I am cycling. I've visited my GP who said my health was good. I blew into a device to check my lung capacity and was told there were no abnormalities. Should I be worried about the cough?

PETER SMITH

A Without knowing your age it's difficult to say, because there's quite a number of complaints that can bring on a cough in older people.

One of the most likely explanations for a wheezy cough is asthma. This usually starts in childhood or early adult life.

Although asthma can develop later in life, other causes of a wheezy cough become more likely with increasing age.

In asthma, there may also be symptoms of breathlessness or having a tight chest when the cough and wheezing are present. Normal spirometry (breathing tests to assess lung function and capacity) does not necessarily preclude asthma.

If asthma is suspected, you may be offered a trial of an inhaler to see if this helps. Your GP may also ask you to measure and record your peak flow rate (blowing hard into a tube called a peak flow meter) several times daily to look for a pattern suggestive of asthma.

Other causes of a wheezy cough can include a chest infection or hay fever (even in non-asthmatics), and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, usually in older people who have smoked).

Asthma is often diagnosed without further investigation but, if the diagnosis is unclear, it may be necessary to do tests such as a chest x-ray to rule out

other causes. Your GP will be able to help decide whether these are necessary.

MATT BROOKS

TECHNICAL

CHEAP COMPACT DOUBLES?

Q In the April-May 2014 edition, Gear Up reviewed a double chainset for touring costing £276. The next issue another was mentioned, available only at great expense from Japan. Can you let me know about any touring double chainsets with inners of around 26T at prices below £100?

MALCOLM FLETCHER

A My first reaction was: there are none. Nor are there likely to be so long as sport remains the primary reason to ride a bike! A member told me about a chainset by PMP of Italy, but it's just as expensive as Middleburn's.

Mountain bike doubles are available at reasonable prices (Shimano Deore FC-M615 can be had in 38-26T for as

MEET THE EXPERTS



CHRIS JUDEN

CTC Technical Officer
and qualified engineer



DR MATT BROOKS

Cycling GP



PAUL KITSON

Partner from Slater & Gordon
(UK) LLP



● An MTB chainset is an option for a cheaper compact double on a tourer. A Shimano Deore FC-M615 chainset can be had in 38-26T for as little as £60

little as £60) and they'll do, but these have much wider chainline and pedal spread than you really want or need on a bike that does not suffer from tyre obesity! Or you can always miss the outer off a triple, which keeps the chainline close but spreads the pedals even wider.

Then I remembered the remarkably cheap Stronglight ST55 single chainsets, sold by Spa Cycles with drillings for a second ring. But this didn't sell. I guess the non-replaceable outer ring was too cheap. But John at Spa is looking to import something nicer. Watch that space!
CHRIS JUDE

TECHNICAL LOOK OUT KEO!

Q I learned something new yesterday: Look Keo pedals with chromoly axles made in 2004-5 were the subject of a manufacturer's safety recall in 2008 in order to have improved spindles fitted. I don't remember reading or hearing about this at the time but numerous websites now reveal the information.

I was prompted to look because, while climbing a local 1-in-6 hill (off the saddle) my right hand Keo Sprint pedal, still attached to my foot, suddenly parted from the crank and hit the road, causing me to swerve to the right. The pedal spindle had sheared 18mm from the crank. Fortunately, there was no oncoming traffic and I stayed upright.



The pedal was manufactured in September 2005 according to the date stamped on the underside. It was in good condition and had not been grounded while cornering. I am 64 and 10.5 stones so unlikely to be able to put high stress levels on my machine's transmission. I can only conclude that the recall was based on a prediction of spindle fracture in normal use.

Since the Keo model was popular, I suspect that there will still be many older ones in service. I would strongly suggest that users of old Keos check the date stamp and stop using any made within the relevant period that have not had new spindles fitted. I do not know whether Look dealers are still fitting new spindles under the recall procedure. I've decided that it is time to buy a new pair.

HOWARD BANNISTER

A It is not unusual for products to be recalled in the USA only. You may speculate as to the reasons for this, I cannot possibly comment. Be aware that your local dealer may not get any pedal replacement joy from their supplier, either because it's US-only or too long ago.
CHRIS JUDE

LEGAL PARKING IN BIKE LANES

Q On one section of road that I use regularly, there's a cycle lane at the side of the road. It's also marked with double yellow lines. Yet cars often park here. If I were to run into the back of one of these cars by accident, who would be liable: the illegally parked driver or me?

GEOFF STANMORE

A In 2001 the Court of Appeal considered the case Foster v Maguire, which involved a cyclist colliding with a parked trailer in a cycle lane on

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● If you hit a car parked in a cycle lane, your prospects of a successful claim depend on the risks the driver exposed you to

» a dual carriageway. Maguire parked his van-and-trailer at the side of the road after performing a U-turn. The nearside of the trailer was 15cm from the kerb so it blocked the cycle lane (which was 1.22 metres wide) and took up about 1.2 metres of the nearside traffic lane. This left about 2.2 metres of the left lane free for traffic, as well as the offside lane.

Maguire saw the claimant, Tracy Foster, riding along the cycle lane both when he was waiting in the central reservation and when he got out of his van. On the first occasion, she was not more than 383.5 metres away from him, and on the second, she was still some distance away.

Foster did not notice the trailer until it appeared in her 5-10 yard, head-down riding vision. She hit the trailer head on. It is relevant to note that it was raining at the time and that both carriageways alongside the cycle lane bore heavy, fast moving traffic.

The trial judge held that the parking of the van and trailer did not present a hazard or danger to other road users, and that the sole cause of the accident was the claimant's own failure to take care of her own safety. The action was dismissed.

Foster appealed to the Court of Appeal. Giving the lead judgment, Sir Anthony Evans stated that Maguire owed a duty of care to other road users, when deciding whether and where to park his van and trailer, and to Foster in particular. Maguire saw her approaching, using the cycle lane, and if he chose to park there she would be forced into the

nearside carriageway unless she chose to dismount and wheel her bicycle on to the grass verge. If she decided to overtake the parked vehicle, with the road and traffic conditions as they were, he said, then she was certainly exposed to some risk of injury if the driver of another vehicle failed to appreciate the situation in good time, perhaps from momentary inadvertence or perhaps because of limited visibility due to spray.

He added: 'Moreover, he [Maguire] was required by the applicable Code of Practice (Safety at Street Works and Road Works and the Clear Way Regulations) not to obstruct the cycle way if it was not necessary for him to do so. I find it impossible to avoid the conclusion that he was careless of her safety, in the face of a reasonably foreseeable risk that she might be exposed to injury.' The appeal was therefore allowed.

However, there was a sting in the tail: Sir Anthony Evans made a very heavy finding of contributory negligence of 70%. As Foster was held to be 70% to blame, she only received 30% of the full value of her claim.

In conclusion, whether or not there are good prospects of pursuing a claim arising out of a collision with an illegally parked car in a cycle lane (or anywhere else for that matter) depends on all the circumstances of the case. The key consideration is whether or not the defendant exposed another road user to a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury.

PAUL KITSON

TECHNICAL STRIPPED BOTTOM-BRACKET

Q I bought my Raleigh Superbe, 4-speed, dynohub bike in 1956. The thread on the chainwheel side of the bottom-bracket has given way. A cycle shop I consulted could not find any cartridge bottom bracket unit with a cotted axle and suggested a replacement frame. Yet I like this bike because it accommodates a large saddlebag and the front fork lock is very convenient.

DENNIS TURNER

A I don't think you need a replacement frame. And I don't think you're likely to find one that's similar, or not at a reasonable price. I think there's more chance of keeping your right-side bottom bracket cup in place.

In that past we'd have dabbled a few blobs of electric weld on the join between cup and shell. But nowadays I reach for red-coloured Loctite Stud 'N Bearing Fit. Next I clean and degrease the threads (what's left of them), apply plenty of the ruby nectar, screw in, wipe off the excess, and leave for half a day. Should you later wish to remove the cup, it'll help to heat it to 250°C, e.g. with a hot-air gun.

Red Loctite comes in small (£9-ish) bottles from good ironmongers and should do the trick. But if the threads are so far gone that the cup simply pushes in and out (rather than screwing in but jumping the threads) it may help to ovalise that end of the bottom bracket slightly: either hammer with cup in place or gently squeeze in a vice.

Should the red stuff fail: there are stronger metal-filled epoxy products, such as Loctite 3472, capable of spanning small gaps that'll secure something the size of a bottom bracket cup, without any thread. This stuff is more difficult to use and comes only in trade quantities. A general engineering repair workshop is a better bet than cycle shops for that.

CHRIS JUDEN

● Stripped some threads on your bike? Red Loctite should sort out the problem



Contact the experts Send health and legal questions to the Editor (details on p3). We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished health and legal queries. Technical and general enquiries, however, are a CTC membership service. Contact the CTC Information Office, **tel: 0844 736 8450**, **Email: cycling@ctc.org.uk** (general enquiries) or **Chris Juden, technical@ctc.org.uk** (technical enquiries). You can also write to: **CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX**. And don't forget that CTC operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, **tel: 0844 736 8452**.