

Opinion Letters

THIS MONTH COINCIDENCES, EASIER HILL CLIMBING, CTC HOLIDAYS & TOURS, BIG CYCLE HELMETS, AND MORE



The Cornish moors are quiet but Cycling UK members still bump into each other

Left: Jon Shaw. Right: Alamy. Below right: Peter Bell

Letter of the month

Small world

Picking up the Aug/Sep issue, one of the coverlines – East to West – caught my attention. Flicking to the article confirmed my suspicions: this was the family I bumped into that day.

I was out enjoying a ride over the Penwith Moors when ahead I could see a stationary group of riders who seemed to be adopting the “we are really not sure which way to go” pose. As I got closer I noted they may have been a touch under-biked for such technical and challenging terrain, and assumed they were looking to get back to the nearest road. I did indeed point out the obvious “it’s a bit technical”, then enquired where they were heading and if could I help.

Surprise turned to admiration as they told me they were riding from Lowestoft to Land’s End, largely off-road. After passing on a bit of local knowledge and wishing them well, I set off home, never expecting to hear of this pleasant interlude again.

One other coincidence: along with my daughter Grace, friend Phil, and Phil’s partner Angie, I had the pleasure to meet up with Sophie and her team for the second day’s photoshoot for the West Kernow Way. I’m waiting with eager anticipation for the release of the route.

Steve Whitehouse

Win an SKS Compit+ & case worth £89.98

The letter of the month wins an SKS Compit+, courtesy of Zyrofisher. This mounts your phone securely to your handlebar and charges it on the go, wired or wirelessly. When we tested it in the Dec 20/Jan 21 issue, our reviewer said: “I was impressed... A rock-solid mount that keeps your phone topped up.” The prize includes a Compit phone case. For more details, or to find your local stockist, visit zyrofisher.co.uk



Get in touch

LETTERS are edited for space, clarity and, if necessary, legality. The Editor reads and acknowledges all members’ letters but publishes only a selection and doesn’t enter into correspondence. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 29 October. When writing, please include your membership number.

WRITE TO: Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ or email editor@cyclingsuk.org



Hills made easy

Thank you for the article on tackling hills (CycleClips, 30/7/21). I would like to suggest there is another way: I have no fear of hills as I’m happy to get off and push. No training needed.

Talking to other cyclists, I’ve discovered some avoid amazing parts of the country because of the hills. I’ve been up the Bealach na Ba in Scotland, Chimney Bank in Rosedale, and many others. Some of the steepest were on minor roads in Cornwall.

The other advantage of walking up hills is that it provides weight bearing exercise in a way that cycling doesn’t.

Ann Davies



To the holidaymakers

I enjoyed reading the latest edition of Cycle, particularly the articles about touring. So I was sad to read that CTC Holidays & Tours is no more.

My first CTC tour was in 1987, an End to End with Tom Race leading. It was the most wonderful thing I had ever done. I’d toured with friends a few times but the CTC tours had me hooked. The wonderful destinations, the camaraderie, and especially the tour leaders who planned and led

such memorable trips.

I'd like to pay tribute to all the amazing leaders I went with: Tom Race, Colin Reeve, The Trubys, Alan Baker, Dave Griffiths, Audrey Hughes, Sue and Neil Taylor, Gerry Goldsmith, Peter English, Pete Jarvis, the Pilbeams, Michael Stainer, and Sheila Simpson. And a special thanks to Heather Evans for all her organisational work.

Thank you all. Wonderful holidays: all memorable, all with good company, they were the best way to see a country and the countryside.

Peter Crook

Touring companions

Sorry to read about the demise of CTC Holidays. I recently came across a 'touring companions wanted' section in the CTC archives from, I think, the 1901 yearbook. Could this help members who want to meet others to tour? It was a thriving element for many years of the monthly Gazette.

Mike Callow

This service is now online at forum.cyclinguk.org. If you're looking for cycling companions for a tour, post on the 'People, Events & Rides' board.



Lycra love

Periodically Cycle includes an anti-Lycra letter. I really can't believe you still find such views worthy of publication. The latest one in the Aug/Sep issue was wrong in almost every sentence. Cycling is both an everyday activity and a sport. If you cycle regularly, then you are a cyclist. I think the recent cycling success at the Tokyo Olympics will encourage a lot of people to cycle both as a sport and a physical activity.

Cycle sport in all its many versions is not a peripheral sport. Holland is mentioned in the letter as an everyday

cycling nation. It is also a highly successful sport cycling country. And no one has yet come up with a better material for sportswear than Lycra. Not that everybody has to wear it; it's personal choice.

Pete Hawthorn



XXL cycle helmets?

I have a size 60-66cm Bontrager helmet. As I have to fully extend the adjuster at the back of the helmet, it has now come apart and is very tricky to put together. This was the biggest helmet I could buy. I cannot be the only man who needs an XXL size helmet. Is a bigger size available?

Simon Chaplin

Bontrager is the only brand I'm aware of that offers cycle helmets to fit heads up to 66cm. So another one is likely to be your best bet.

How much?!

To Alexandra Brewer's letter "Too Sporty" (June/July) and Bob Skipworth's "This unsporting life" (Aug/Sep), I would add: "Too expensive". All too often Cycle makes it look as though cycling is something for the well-to-do. Of the many good reasons for cycling, one is over looked: it is cheap! Not just in comparison with running a car but in real terms. For a few pounds you can buy a secondhand bike that will last a lifetime.

But with all the advertising (useful revenue, of course, for Cycling UK) comes a different message: you need an expensive bicycle, lots of equipment, and special clothing. This is supported by editorial

reviews. Look at what you are offering for "The letter of the month"... I would settle for a puncture repair kit at £1.25. That would do nicely.

Eugene Blackmore

Obituaries

Are published online at cyclinguk.org/obituaries. Contact publicity@cyclinguk.org



Photo of the month

Titanic coincidence

At the end of a week's cycling in Ireland, I pedalled past the Titanic Museum in Belfast (pictured) on my way to catch the early morning ferry to Cairnryan. When I got home this afternoon, my copy of Cycle had arrived. I opened the envelope... only to see the Titanic Museum that I had cycled past on the cover! I nearly fell off my chair.

Clive Parker

CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other members at forum.cyclinguk.org. Here's an abridged extract from a recent thread: cyclinguk.org/cycling-cape



DOES ANYONE STILL USE A CAPE?

Richard of York: Got soaked in a torrential downpour yesterday [despite] decent jacket and overshoes. Haven't used a cycle cape for decades but it struck me that it might have been more effective yesterday. Anyone still use one?

Oldjohnw: I do. Only when touring as it covers my saddlebag etc. You need thumb grips otherwise either you, or it, or both, will take off.

jb: I used to... I got fed up of walking into cafés looking like some colourful spaghetti western character.

tatanab: On a wet tour with days of rain it is invaluable because you really keep dry and, if chilly, you create a micro climate inside it. Add a pair of knee length spats.

slowster: I've been having similar thoughts since seeing a review of a cape on the website:

cyclinguk.org/article/review-weathergoods-imbris-rain-poncho-cyclists

colin54: I got two ponchos from Aldi two or three years back (one as a spare). They were £8.99 from the clear-out bin of their unsold specials lines.

MartinC: I used to use capes many years ago. Everybody did. Ideal for summer thunderstorms. Not good if it's windy. Not good for giving hand signals either. Drivers will certainly notice you though.

gazza_d: I bought a Carradice Duxback waxed cotton cape a couple of years ago for commuting. Absolutely brilliant in rain. As for footwear, I have sandals and the rain just pours out of the holes.

simonineaston: In yesterday's monsoon-a-like, my cheapo plastic jobbie was on in a jiffy, while all around me were thoroughly drenched!