

CYCLE LETTERS

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

CR*P CYCLE LANES



Left: dorsemedia.com

I was interested to hear about the book, *Crap Cycle Lanes*, because it reminded me of a pair of lampposts that have been placed slap bang in the middle of a bike lane in Weymouth. They have appeared as part of an ongoing private finance agreement to replace and maintain street lighting in Dorset. They've been placed at Overcombe Corner in the suburb of Preston, at the end of a long cycle path along the seafront. Here the pavement is divided with pedestrians on one side, cyclists on the other.

Anyone now riding along that section faces a choice: move out into the path of pedestrians or ride head first into a post. The ones at Overcombe Corner are painted a similar shade of grey to the pavement around them. When I was taking this photograph, I spoke to one cyclist who'd just dodged round them. 'If they were yellow, it would help,' he muttered.

Geoff Moore, by email

Crap Cycle Lanes, whose royalties go to the Cyclists' Defence Fund, has recently been reprinted. You can order it from bookshops or direct from www.eyeb-books.com. It costs £4.99.



ENERGY, BY GUM

In answer to David Naylor's letter June/July edition: I would say 26 wine gums should get a cyclist over a 520m high pass. To raise 16 stone by 1 metre requires 1kJ. And, allowing for an efficiency of around 24%, that will use 1 kCal worth of food. Efficiency will drop a bit if you are working really hard, but not by enough to alter the rough equivalent of 1 kCal per metre of ascent.

Another handy rough conversion is 20 kCal per mile, on the flat, with no wind, and an easy touring pace – say 12mph. It might not sound much but a long, hard day in the hills can amount to 4-5,000 kCal on top of sedentary requirements. Dinner becomes an ordeal by food. Pasta and lentils provide a more practical alternative to wine gums.

Efficiency measurements can be made during exercise using gas analysis with a Covox cardiovascular assessment machine. This technique even shows how you gradually go from burning fat to carbohydrate as the effort goes up (carbs deliver more energy per ml of available oxygen).

Incidentally, 24% might not sound

terribly efficient, but for a machine working at a steady 37°C it is a thermodynamic miracle.

For more info go to www.covox.com.

Michael Woodman, Exeter

'PLANE WRONG?'

I am in total agreement with the opinions expressed by Henry Davidson and Rob McIvor in their letters in the June/July issue of *Cycle*. It would seem reasonable for the CTC to campaign for reduced car use, for example, because reduced traffic makes the roads safer for all cyclists. The adoption of an 'anti-flying' stance, however, is totally unjustified. Whatever the pros and cons, I can see no way that persuading people not to fly is going to improve the lot of the cyclist. In fact the opposite could be true because if more people decide to holiday in the UK the roads could become busier.

Reading the last two editions of *Cycle*, it is clear that opinions of the membership and the staff are split on this issue and for the CTC to align itself with either view is to risk alienating a significant proportion of those in the



organisation.

I have my own opinion on various environmental issues. If I feel the need to express these views forcibly or if I wish to engage in debate with those of a different opinion, forums for doing so already exist and these are the appropriate place, not a cycling/cycle-touring magazine.

Similarly the CTC has joined with the 'Stop Climate Chaos' coalition, no doubt because of a number of aims and policies shared with other member bodies. Now however we seem to be getting drawn into championing issues that would not necessarily be supported by the membership and may not be in our interests as cyclists. What next? Can we expect the CTC to express an opinion on low energy light bulbs or on GM crops?

Mike Andrew, Cheadle

Henry Davidson's view (Letters, June/July 2008) reflects the philosophical flaws that have led to the great health and environmental crises of our time. To date the intimate relationships between health, happiness and the environment have not been significantly recognised in Britain. Cycling does not exist in isolation. It is inextricably linked to our well-being and the health of our society at every level.

This is why CTC is an exceptional organisation! By promoting a simple activity we profoundly influence our quality of life and that of our entire society. Recognising these links is not only politically expedient, but strengthens CTC's hand moving

into a modern age with the uniquely destructive prospects of climate change and obesity. Let us formally acknowledge what a remarkable role CTC is playing and continue to develop it in that vein.

George Cooper, Bristol

We should have the results of the climate policy survey ready for publication next issue. Sampling so far suggests broad agreement by members that cycling and environmental issues are sufficiently intertwined for CTC to take a position rather than turning a blind eye.

AIR BREAKS

Mary Hodges asks (Letters, last issue) about members' experiences when taking bikes by air. Some years ago my wife and I flew with our bikes from Gatwick to Verona on a CTC tour. At Verona we saw some of our group's bikes being thrown from the 'plane to the ground. One of our group ran through security doors out to the tarmac to try to stop this. I think that he succeeded, but damage had already been done. On our return to Gatwick more bikes had been damaged, including my wife's. We will never take bikes by 'plane again.

Now when we want to cycle in places such as Italy, Germany, etc. we go by car. It might take a couple of days to reach our destination, but our bikes stay safely inside our car and that is what matters to us.

Roger Pratt, by email

BIKES ON BUSES

We were amazed at the bikes on buses story printed in the letters section last issue. We spent much of the summers in the last two years cycling around Switzerland researching a cycle touring guide and we used Swiss Post buses from time to time. Practically all Swiss Post buses take bicycles either on specially built racks or trailers, or inside the bus if need be. In the Jura the bus driver even supplied a couple of bungees to secure our bikes inside the bus.

In Portland, Oregon all the local buses can transport two bicycles on horizontal racks on the front of the bus. This has been going on for at least 15 years without the streets of that fair city being littered with broken bicycles.

CYCLING CELEBS



Right: Peter Eland/www.velovision.co.uk

MIKE BURROWS Bike Designer

Why do you cycle?

Because I enjoy it. It's work, too, but it's more of a paying hobby.

How far do you ride in a week?

One year I logged my mileage and it came to about 9,000, so whatever that works out to a week.

Which is your favourite bike?

They're all nice. When I'm racing, the Ratracer, when I'm touring the Ratcatcher, and the 8Freight for shopping. The one I'm proudest of, as a design concept, is the 2D, my city bike.

Who mends your punctures?

(Laughs.) Me.

It's raining: bike, bus, or car?

Bike. Always.

Lycra or normal clothes?

Lycra. It's not that we have to wear it, it's that we *can* wear it.

What's your favourite cycle ride?

Touring in France on a laid back bicycle. The roads are lovely, the people are lovely, the food's lovely.

What do you always take with you?

Spare innertube and a pump.

What single thing would most improve matters for UK cyclists?

The UCI connecting its brain. We need bikes and cycle sport to inspire people, even if they're just riding to the shops. As long as we're riding Victorian bicycles, that won't happen.

If you had £100 of bike shop vouchers, what would you buy?

Clothing. And puncture outfits.

Turn to page 15 for Mike's opinions on the York Cycle Show.



What are the Swiss and the Americans doing wrong or is it that the foreign organisations are performance- rather than profit-orientated?

Judith & Neil Forsyth, by email

IMPROVED D-LOCK



After reading the security article in the Feb-Mar issue of Cycle, I asked a local smithy to make for me a lightweight steel box to fill the inside of my D-lock to prevent access with a 'stubby' bottle jack. It is made from thin-gauge steel, MIG-welded, and slips on between bike and locking post as shown.

Howard Yeomans. Bristol

Not long after our article came out, Kryptonite displayed at a bicycle trade show an auxiliary bar that fits diagonally across their U-locks to prevent attacks by bottle jacks and pry bars. I've not yet seen it for sale, but you can see a video of it on YouTube – search for 'kryptonite bottle jack'.

£50 BIKES

Further to the April/May article on £50 bikes, my son and I have just completed a three-day 200-mile tour in Holland, both of us riding on £50 second-hand bikes. One was a 1970s' Eddy Merckx model and the other a 1980s' Raleigh Pioneer. Both bikes behaved well, though the Merckx needed a new derailleur the day before setting off for the ferry!

Only three British cyclists were on the ferry to Holland, so can I take this opportunity to recommend cycling through Holland (few hills and lots of cycle lanes) and the 'Stay Ok' hostels.

Just to note that my varifocal glasses cost far more than my bicycle. Next time I might try an expensive bike and cheap glasses and see where I end up!

Anthony Woods, Morpeth

BIKE MUSIC

Much as I admired several of the top ten cycling songs featured in the June/July issue, I was astonished that the outstanding Half Man Half Biscuit failed to get at least a mention. The Wirral rocksters (for me, the best band currently in existence upon our shores), have had several songs with bike-related titles or mentioning bikes or bike components in the lyrics.

There's the excellent 'Lock up your Mountain Bikes' for instance, or the simply astonishing 'A Lilac Harry Quinn' which as well as featuring the iconic Liverpool bike shop in the title, ends with the immortal lines, 'Sturmey-Archer, Campagnolo. Sturmey-Archer, Campagnolo' repeated several times until the singer, Nigel, finishes by deciding he has 'Sturmey-Archer, Campagnolo on my mind'.

There's also the song, 'See that my Bike's Kept Clean' and several others featuring such things as bike chains, innertubes and the like but part of the joy of the HMHB fan is in deciphering the poetic lyrics and interpreting them for yourself. Trust me, you'll love them!

Paul Brannon, Colne, Lancs

Another one a few of you mentioned was the 1930s' song 'Remember the Bicyclists of Britain' by Ronald Frankau.



OBITUARIES

PETER GRAY

Died in early June aged 63 from pancreatic cancer. Originally from Cambridge, his work in the rail industry took him to Peterborough, York, Doncaster and back to York. He revived the Coxwold church service and co-organised each year's gathering with Teesside colleagues. Peter served on the CTC North Yorkshire Committee, plus its York section where he was successively Secretary and Treasurer. He founded their annual carol service held each December at Tockwith. At York Cycle Show he acted as Chief Steward, and arranged both the church service and the Knavesmire cycle auction in conjunction with York Lions. He was often seen on his High Ordinary, and once on a Thomas the Tank Bike with himself as the Thin Controller. In latter times, between chemotherapy, he helped Sustrans Rangers maintain York's greenways. *Paul Hepworth*

DR ERIC TULL: 1926-2008

A life member of CTC Swindon section of Bristol DA, Eric collapsed in the street of his home town of Purton, Wiltshire, in April. Eric was a lifelong cyclist and related tales of cycling from Purton to University in Swansea in 1947 and then later to Leeds. Eric was involved with several local charities and we continue to cycle past the millennium stone bearing his name. Famous for his old bikes (what was the difference between his winter and summer bike?) his ancient cape and the day he purchased one brake shoe, we will miss his dry sense of humour. May he rest in peace. *Gordon Taylor*

CHARLES BERNARD BLOW: 1926-2008

It with sadness that we report the death of Bernard Blow who died aged 82 on 4th May. He was a true cyclist, a past member of the Pyramid RC, South Lancs RC, Altrincham RC and CTC. He was once secretary of the 300,000 Miles Club. His grand total mileage was 731,449 miles in 72 years a-wheel. He time trialled at all distances from 10 miles to 24 hours.

His love of cycling took him to all parts of Great Britain, staying many nights in Youth Hostels in past

OBITUARIES

years. He began running at the age of 50, winning many awards. He will be sorely missed by wife Joyce, son Ray, and daughter Yvonne. *Joyce Blow*

FREDERICK BRYAN LITTLE

Bryan Little passed away peacefully in hospital in Machynlleth on 6th May. The funeral was on 17th May. Bryan was a very active cyclist during the 1940s, '50s and '60s and was a life member of CTC and Gloucester City CC. He joined CTC while still at school aged 17 and undertook two trips to the French Alps shortly after the war ended. Most of his cycling in the '50s and '60s was connected with getting to work in the Scottish Highlands. He used to borrow cars to take the family around at weekends and only ceased commuting by bike when a move meant that his journey was too long. His enthusiasm ensured that his children and grandchildren took up cycling. *Dr Ian Little and Dr Malcolm Little*

ARTHUR SYKES: 1910-2008

Arthur rode 275,000 touring miles until arthritic knees forced him to swap his stable of 14 bikes for a motor scooter. On this he clocked up at least 11 accidents. He'd skid off pavements due to forgetting that unlike a bike you don't lean into a curve. The police once escorted him off the hard shoulder of the M62 en route home from the local. Yet he had perfect memory and could even remember exactly what he'd eaten at all the B&Bs he used in the 1930s. He will be missed, especially at the Coxwold Service. *Vicky Crossfield*

ROY WALKER

Died 16/3/08. A lifelong CTC member, Roy began cycling in pre-war days with Wolverhampton City CC. After service with the army, Roy returned to cycling with his wife Priscilla and for many years they were keen hostellers and campers and members of the Wolverhampton CTC group. A work move to London meant they then rode with South Bucks CTC. On retirement, Roy returned to the Midlands and Wolverhampton CTC. His cycling life came to an end four years ago when he had a severe stroke. *Don Trubshaw*

STUCK BY THE WEB

I find your magazine excellent and informative but gradually we readers who have no internet access are finding we cannot make further contact with firms or offer voluntary contributions as we are blocked by the three WWWs with no alternative means of contact.

Previously there was a telephone number as well, which was fine, but in the June-July 08 issue there were, in several instances, only web addresses and no alternative. The outcome being that in the case of a firm offering a product, we can't buy, and in the case of an organisation wanting volunteers, we can't volunteer. Their loss but our discrimination. I've lost count of how many cyclists have approached me with the same complaint.

Peter Gibson, Port Talbot



There's one phone number to bear in mind whenever you see a website address relating to CTC: 0844 736 8450. That's CTC National Office. The staff will print off and post the relevant information for you on request.

For external websites it's trickier. Most manufacturers have a website but do not sell direct to the public, only via dealers - such as your local bike shop or CTC Shop. Some only sell online, and similarly some surveys can only be filled in online. We can't control that, but where there is a phone number that the public can use we'll endeavour to include it.

EFFECTIVE HIRE BIKES

On 19th June, the BBC featured a piece on plans to introduce rental bikes in Bristol following the Parisian example. The French motoring organisation commented that the bikes were being



used to replace walking, not motoring. Anything that gets people on bikes is a good thing but it would be better still if we got them out of the cars.

I wonder if the location of the bike ranks may contribute? In major cities commuters can get off the train and pick up a bike, hopefully at the station, and ride to ranks near their place of work, whence day time users can pick them up for use, returning them for the night time commuters. In other cities and towns, perhaps a park and ride system? Drive to the outskirts and then cycle into town centre for the shops etc.

There is also the issue of all the bikes accumulating in the town/city centre. Do some councils have a bike trailer system to 'recycle' the machines back out to the terminus for a second circuit?

Mike Skiffins, Havant

CORRECTIONS

In the June/July edition of Cycle magazine there is a very short piece you put in about the new cycle book produced by Huddersfield CTC and Kirklees Council. You stated the book could be purchased from Sustrans. While this is true, copies of the book can also be purchased (at greater profit to Huddersfield CTC) by sending a cheque made payable to Huddersfield CTC for the sum of £2.99 (per copy) to John Gleadow, Kirklees Countryside Unit, The Stadium Business & Leisure Complex, Stadium Way, Leeds Road, Huddersfield, HD2 2UW, tel: 01484 234077.

John Gleadow, Kirklees Countryside Access Officer

On page 10 of the June/July 2008 issue I am credited as a founder of the NI Cycling Initiative. For the record, this is inaccurate. Andrew Dutton founded NICI. I joined a couple of years later.

Tom McClelland, by email