

CYCLE LETTERS

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

TALKING HEADS



Your article 'Don't put a lid on cycling' and the letter dated 1985 in the Feb/Mar issue of Cycle (about the resistance of the writer to wearing a cycle helmet 25 years ago) are yet further relentless attacks on a sensible piece of safety equipment which most cyclists choose to wear. In the same issue, Dan Joyce tells us that he broke a helmet on icy tarmac. Was his head inside at the time? Did the helmet give him some protection?

I don't expect my helmet to save me in a serious accident involving another vehicle, but I do believe that it will help if I fall off my bike on a slippery road or from accidentally hitting the kerb, etc.

I cannot recall your magazine printing a good word about cycle helmets. Yet we see kids learning to cycle with helmets on, Tour de France competitors with helmets, and most of the cyclists on bikes in your magazine wearing helmets.

Richard Salt, Chesham

CTC's policy – which you can read more on at www.ctc.org.uk/helmets – is against mandatory usage. Note well that word 'mandatory'. CTC's position is not against usage but in favour of choice.

I choose to wear a helmet if it's icy. Often, along with the majority of cyclists (rather than what might or might not be a majority among cycling enthusiasts), I choose not to wear one.

I find the anti-choice position... depressingly Orwellian.

CTC & CHARITABLE STATUS

I am surprised that we are not already a registered charity with a separate trading company, which is a common pattern. Before I read the debate pages in your February/March issue I expected to favour the 'yes' argument. Now I have read them I say: 'no', at least not until we are given some relevant information.

That 'yes' ought to be the right answer is something I expect to be the case. The tax advantages of charitable status should be an overwhelming argument in favour of our main body, whichever company it is, being a registered charity. Mr Legg does no service to his arguments by distracting attention from the real issue of charitable status (the tax advantages) by drawing attention to loss-making contracts and administrative inefficiencies. The matters of which he complains, if justified by the facts, must be dealt with, but he misuses them to attack charitable status.

But please tell us: what is our present structure, what is proposed, and how it will be done. Is it intended that:

(1) Cyclists' Touring Club will seek charitable status; (2) that a new charity company will be formed; or (3), as Mr Legg asserts, that CTC Charitable Trust will take over Cyclists' Touring Club? Option (1) would retain the present membership structure, but (2) and (3) would necessitate every one of us being removed from membership of Cyclists' Touring Club and made members of the new company.

Roderick W Ramage, Copenhall

CTC's Honorary Consulting Solicitor Shivaji Shiva told me: 'We are essentially asking the Charity Commission to recognise that the activities of the Club are charitable in nature.' So it's your option (1), Roderick: the Cyclists' Touring Club will be the charity.

You can find much more information on the website www.ctc.org.uk/charity.

I thought there might be a slew of letters on this topic but – as of late February – there weren't. David Armstrong wrote to complain about Simon Legg's 'very misleading article'. David Barlow said he thought Gift Aid might be withdrawn by a future

THAT WAS THEN

100 years ago...

The Cycle Tax

We have probably heard the last of this frequently repeated suggestion [to tax cycles] but it may not be amiss to point out that in France the reduction of the cycle tax from five francs to three francs coincides with an increase of 700,000 cycles being used. It is true that this may not be a case of cause and effect, but even the staunchest advocates of the tax confess that it looks like it... The cycle trade in this country is not in such a flourishing state that it can stand any further reduction in its business, which is already lessened by the causes of tram lines, motor traffic, motor-damaged roads, the whim of fashion, and the high railway rates. He would be a bold Parliamentary Candidate who, in these days of small majorities, would vote for a tax on what is no more a luxury to the average rider than his boots are.

CTC Gazette editorial, 1910

Government and was concerned the change to a charity might damage morale. And Mike Stapleton said he would only support CTC Council's proposals if he could be sure that 'the infrastructure to be put in place will be adequate to ensure that the Club side of CTC continues to have the support from Head Office that it needs.'

INSPIRED BY ANNE MUSTOE



We were saddened to learn of the passing of Anne Mustoe. We shared her enthusiasm for cycle touring (though not so adventurous as her), and it was she who convinced us to go for butterfly handlebars.

CYCLING TOWNS

I would like to put in a word for Leicester. The centre is pedestrianised but cycling is allowed and there are masses of bike-stands. In some streets we are allowed to cycle against the traffic. And under the Town Hall there is the 'Bike Park', where one can buy bikes and have repairs done, park the bike for a day (for a small fee), and even shower and change. My main criticism is that we could do with more advance stop lines.

I am happy on the roads ('Ooh, you are brave!') but when I want I can go most of the way in on shared use paths, including a lovely old railway line.

Pat Parkin-Moore, Croft, Leicester

I found your feature article on Cycling Towns very interesting, particularly the bit on Bristol, where I live. Steve highlights the disparity between the rhetoric of councillors and council officers and what actually happens in practice.

The council's traffic engineers show a lack of understanding of the needs of cyclists in their liking for narrow cycle lanes marked alongside a car-parking lane. I was recently abused by a following motorist for riding at the outside edge of the lane – to avoid the risk of being knocked off my bike by a carelessly opened car door.

I wrote to the council and received a reply from the Traffic Management department, saying that they accept that this does not meet current design standards, but guidelines did not exist at the time the lanes were put in. What about common sense?

Peter Mathrick, Bristol

Another thing we had in common with Anne was of our age group. Perhaps, as one gets older, a more upright cycling posture is desirable, and butterflies comply with that concept? My wife Metchild had to stop cycling because of a bad back, but a change in bicycles to the one pictured has enabled her to continue. This is from our Ashford to Berlin ride in 2008.

Ted Prangnell

In 2004 I was given Anne Mustoe's 'A Bike Ride' by a friend and the book so inspired me that 18 months later my wife and I, both over 50, had negotiated a year's sabbatical and set off to cycle from Spain to New Zealand covering 15 countries and just over 10,000 miles.

Without the inspiration given by this amazing solo cyclist our lives would not have been so enriched. We have some amazing memories to share, backed up by photos and diaries. I can see the value of solo travel, however, and I take my helmet off to all those cyclists.

Cycle touring: there is nothing to beat it! Thank you, Anne.

**Alan & Anne Lukehurst,
Kingsbridge, Devon**



PEAK PERFORMANCE

Chris Juden's recent article on the Peak is timely. The National Park have just received £2.25m to extend the Tissington Trail to Buxton Station, open up all of the Monsal Trail including five closed tunnels, and to link this to Buxton Station and eventually to Matlock.

The first of the planning applications to make this route has just been submitted to the High Peak Council (Staker Hill link from Harpur Hill to Earl Sterndale Road), and it would be tremendously valuable if CTC members could support this project. Construction should start by Easter, and hopefully much of this long-sought connection will



Experience the ultimate in convenience, power and reliability with the Solidlights XB2. Designed to get the most from modern hub dynamos using power LED technology, it's perfect for commuting, touring or Audax riding.

Weighing just 158g and housed in compact, super-tough aluminium alloy casing, it's seriously versatile. There's a choice of fork-crown mounting or a convenient quick-release handlebar mount. Professionally-made cables are included for easy installation and a neat, robust finish. It will run from hub dynamos or batteries (not included). It has a flashing mode for maximum visibility in town and includes a standlight to give you a few minutes of light even after the bike has stopped.

The XB2 is purpose-designed to light your way on unlit country roads so there's no need to compromise your riding after dark this winter.

For more information
see our website at

www.solidlights.co.uk

email info@solidlights.co.uk
phone 01223 655611
international +44 1223 655611

RECYCLE YOUR 'CYCLE'
 When you've read *Cycle*, why not give it to a friend – or a doctor's surgery?

OBITUARIES

BILL HARMSWORTH: 1917-20/12/2009

Bill paid 10s 6d for his CTC subs in 1934 and in 2007 was awarded a CTC Certificate of Merit for over 70 years service to the CTC and Portsmouth DA, which he guided through difficult times after the war. He was cycling until a year before his death. In younger days he rode tandem with his wife Gwen (who survives him) and they brought up their children on cycles. *Michael Moore*

MERVYN SMITH

Died on 14/12/2009 aged 64 after a diagnosis of leukaemia two months before. He was a committed CTC cyclist of the everyday variety, shopping with a trailer, commuting by bike and train, an enthusiast for the folder, the hub gear, the low maintenance and high-use style of cycling. He did an enormous amount for cycle campaigning in Sheffield for nearly 20 years. Sheffield's cycling renaissance owes him a huge debt. *Alan Moffatt*

MIKE GRIMMER

Mike Grimmer, lifelong CTC member, club rider and good mate died aged 79, on 25/1/2010 after a short illness. Mike started riding with his DA's junior section in Hillingdon, toured Europe with his wife Christabel or clubmates, and enjoyed CTC club rides and audax events. In 1985, Mike was one of the founders of the 'new' Reading DA. After retirement Mike perfected his French language and participated in the gruelling Tour de France Cyclotouriste. *Mick Simmons*

KENNETH HOXLEY 1937-2009

Died 8/12/2009. Diagnosed with prostate cancer four years ago, Ken cycled up to a few months before his death. He was a CTC member for over 30 years, starting with the West Suffolk Wheelers, and edited the Leicester DA magazine *Cycle Chat*. One of his proudest achievements was to join the exclusive 300,000 Club. A local newspaper sports journalist, he got to know Sir Alf Ramsey and Sir Bobby Robson. He and wife Wendy celebrated their Golden Wedding with a traditional style club-run. *Max Scott*

Send obituaries, preferably 100 words or fewer, to the usual editorial address.

be open by summer 2011.

If you have a Buxton or Peak group, they might like to get in contact with me to see how best to boost these routes.

John Grimshaw

If you wish to contact John, email editor@ctc.org.uk and I'll forward your message.

BIKES FOR WOMEN



Women's road and mountain bikes are available off the peg. But not tourers

I've been looking around for a new touring bike for a year or so, and I've not been finding anything suitable. The reason for this was answered for me twice by Chris Juden in the Q&A of the February/March issue of *Cycle*. In 'What size frame' he says: 'assume the manufacturer aims to sell a bicycle to most of the people who may wish to buy one: i.e. 90% of men plus a few tall women.' Later, in 'Women-specific tourer', he is even more specific: 'There are no ready-made women-specific touring bikes.'

So that's why: at 5'3" I'm a small woman. Not many of them around, are there? None of us have any money to spend, do we? And they wonder why there aren't more women cycling! I know not all – or only a fraction – of women new to cycling are going to want to tour, but it's a hint of the general paucity of choice of cycles and cycle equipment for women.

My old tourer is going to get a refit instead!

Karen Fry

RIDING BEFORE THE WIND

Like Neil Mills (Letters, Feb/Mar), I too would recommend the End to End to anyone. However, there is an even more compelling reason than sun glare for doing it from south to north: wind. In 1985 I did it alone in 14 days from

north to south. July 1985 was a wet and windy month. I knew that in the British Isles southwesterlies prevail. However, they prevailed then with a persistence and ferocity much greater than would have been necessary merely to maintain their average. I had to pedal quite hard down Shap Fell to make any progress.

Nevertheless, despite the weather (there were only two days when it didn't rain), those 14 days were among the most exhilarating of my life. Come to think of it, it's about time that I did it again. This time it will be the other way round – but only for a change of scenery, you understand.

Michael Blackstaff

CYCLE MILEAGE

Further to the recent correspondence on cycle mileage allowance you might be interested to know that I have been summoned to appear as a witness at Paisley Sheriff Court in April. Should I be able to travel there by car or motorbike I would get 28p/mile but if I use my bicycle I will be given a measly 7p/mile!

Michael Jacob

THE RECENT ICE AGE



Not a common sight in the south east of England on a winter's day: I snapped these two bikes parked outside Potters Bar railway station on the day of the first heavy snow falls. I left my bike at home and ran to work. I also tried some off-road biking in the snow. Great fun and you don't get hurt when you fall off!

Jim Neville

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.