

Letters

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This month: cycling soldiers, family cycle-camping, Cycle's tarmac bias, a cheap way to video your commute, riding with a disabled child, and how to put on overtrousers without removing your shoes

Off-road brushed off?

I joined the CTC recently as part of my Aston Hill membership and to complement my CTC training at MTB Trail, and then Technical Leader level. I was pleased to receive Cycle magazine but have been disappointed at the coverage that mountain biking receives - a tiny amount in the Aug-Sep issue compared to other disciplines.

I understand that CTC has a strong heritage in road and cycle touring, but the fact that you are strongly promoting a wide range of MTB skills courses and the growing links with trail centres suggest that mountain biking is an area that CTC is keen to embrace.

I am sure this will create a groundswell of mountain biking members, like myself. But the current editorial decisions to exclude or not seek mountain biking articles, to provide a balance of information for all readers, may lead to mountain bike memberships being short-lived.

JASON FALKNER



Bikes at war

Following on from Jeremy Archer's Bikes at War article in the Aug/Sep issue, I thought you might be interested in this photo of my father (far left) who was a despatch rider in the First World War. Unfortunately he died when I was eight, but a few years ago we did a cycle tour of the Somme. We started at the mouth and rode to the source.

My father sent lots of postcards home (with the place names blanked out). We identified several places but were

particularly pleased to find a church in the village of Toutencourt, which he said he cycled past nearly every day. It was exactly the same and it was only 15 kilometres from Hague's headquarters, so who knows?

**BERTHA M GRAY,
TEWKESBURY**

Regarding the photo on page 49 of the latest issue: must have been a bit of a shock when Japanese cycle troops turned up for a PT lesson at Sandhurst.

HOWARD WOODS

Letter
OF
THE
MONTH

I'm sympathetic to your appeal, but also get complaints that there's too much mountain biking in Cycle. Similarly, tourers may want more touring while commuters want less touring, and so on. Balance is hard.

Since not every type of cycling can be well represented in every issue, and since we know that you'll get six issues, we try give one type of cycling extended coverage in a given issue. Last issue focused on family cycling; the Apr-May issue had 16 pages of mountain biking.

The average editorial split (from Dec-Jan to Aug-Sep, ignoring pages that defy this categorisation) was: road cycling 16%, mountain biking 19%, utility cycling 32%, touring 33%. Each group can only have a bigger slice at another group's expense, since in print space is always limited. Online is a different matter, and the new CTC website may address your concerns. Of course, I'd hope you'd get something out of each issue of Cycle too.

Happy families

We enjoyed the coverage of family cycling in the latest issue of Cycle. We are new members of CTC, having joined a few months ago primarily to have insurance.

My husband is a hardened cyclist. Two years ago, after I had been made redundant, he made it his mission to get me (an unfit non-cyclist) and our two boys, then aged four and eight, onto bikes. I could write a book about our journey to roadworthiness, but it has been a great success. It has helped me with my confidence, our eldest son flew through his Bikeability, and our youngest son is ready for his own bike.

This June, we packed up the bikes with our camping gear and set off on our great journey into the wilderness - 11 miles down the road! It felt like so much further! It was wonderful: everyone should do this at least once in their children's lives.

**ELAINE, ANTHONY,
HARRY AND
ARTHUR BROWN**

Every little helps

May I suggest this simple solution to Pat Mackie's problem of struggling and hopping into his/her overtrousers. Place shoed foot inside a plastic bag, the type issued at a supermarket checkout, then step into overtrousers and the foot will slide down like a silk sock! The foot being inside the bag will also ensure that the insides of the trousers stay clean.

DEREK FILER

Driving less, cycling more

I was a fair weather cyclist until I stupidly lost my driving licence and became wholly dependent on my bike. It made a huge difference to my life. I could have had my licence back years ago but chose to stick with my bike.

When my boys were still at primary school, their friends stored their bikes in my car-free garage and we would cycle to school every day, ensuring they arrived at school fresh faced and bushy tailed. This also instilled a love of cycling in both my boys (now 16 and 13). We have ridden the London to Brighton ride, toured the Channel Islands, and cycle-camped from Land's End to Epsom.

I need to be a bit more organised with time management and shopping, but ordering groceries online or getting a taxi back from the supermarket every now and then is far cheaper than a car. I am much fitter (and more slender!) than I was before and I cancelled my expensive gym membership ages ago.

KIRSTY RADLEY

What price cycling?

The letter in the Aug/Sep issue that asks for cheaper bikes made me smile, as we were quoted £1,700 for a child's trike

for our disabled son, and £4,500 for a wheelchair tandem. He is five years old and has quadriplegic cerebral palsy, so he has no sitting ability or functional grip.

He is too big for the Copilot Limo childseat we used to use. We thought about a tandem but would need a more supportive seat, and we didn't see anything either affordable or suitable at the Mobility Roadshow in Peterborough. We cannot store anything large either, as we had to convert our garage into a downstairs bedroom/wetroom.

SHARON KING

I think the answer is a Hase Pino, a tandem in which the front rider (or non-peddalling passenger) sits on a recumbent seat. It's pictured below. Arm rests, headrest, and safety belts are all available as optional extras, and the front crankset could be removed entirely and replaced with strapped leg supports. It's much the same size as a conventional bicycle, so storage isn't a problem. It is expensive, however, at over £3,000, but it could last a lifetime. UK dealers include London Recumbents and Kinetics.

Happy 100th birthday

A group of friends and neighbours met at the Uxbridge home of CTC

Obituaries

Margaret Nicholl: 1943-2011

Margaret and I were cycling on a quiet lane to the start of a club ride. At the bottom of a hill she hit a pothole, crashed and did not regain consciousness. Since 1963, wherever we have lived – West Yorkshire, Cornwall, Wiltshire, Kent, Aberdeenshire and Somerset – Margaret was an active CTC member. Jointly we led CTC tours for 21 years, and founded CTC groups, where none existed in Salisbury, Aberdeen and The Blackmore Vale. Just 17 days before her crash, we were jointly awarded the CTC Certificate of Merit. Margaret was a CTC Wessex Vice President. **Richard Nicholl**

Arthur James Jelley: 5/12/26-19/9/10

A life member of CTC, Jim died in hospital after a sudden illness. He was an enthusiastic cyclist and was surprised to find that I didn't ride a bicycle. For our next meeting, he arrived on a tandem. We rode many wonderful miles together, often with the former Long Eaton Section of the Derby DA. We married in 1955 and continued to cycle and socialise with the club. Jim loved taking runs and is remembered for rough-stuff, mud, fords, and treasure hunts. We owe many thanks to CTC. Written in loving memory by his wife, **Valerie E Jelley**

Henry Owen Brown: 08/02/17-02/05/11

Owen was admired for his stoicism and spirit. Amused at reaching such a great age, he announced from his bicycle that he had spotted an old folk's coach outing, where most were younger than him. He joined Weybridge Wheelers in 1935, soon earning his hard rider's bar. There were many reliability rides with Woking Section, West Surrey DA. He survived WW2 as a driver in the artillery in North Africa, then Italy. He rode the Dorset Downs with West Dorset in his 70s and 80s, and most of the 50-mile Great Dorset Bike Rides up to 2003. **Malcolm (Badger) Howell**

AS Barrett

Died aged 87. My father was a CTC member for over 70 years. Cycling was a great passion with him and he cycled all over England, then on a tandem with his wife, with a sidecar for their first child! He also taught Cycling Proficiency. I wish to thank you for the many issues of your magazine that have given him great pleasure throughout his long life. **Christine Hare (nee Barrett)**

life members Bob and Vi Wood on 29 June to celebrate Vi's 100th birthday. A member of the West London DA, she and husband Bob rode regularly with the Western Section, and then the Loiterers Section, from the mid 1930s to 1993, when poor eyesight forced her to give up cycling.

Vi met Bob on a club weekend to Hayling Island holiday camp in the late '30s. During the Second World War, when Bob was serving with the RAMC, Vi took on committee work

for CTC - which lasted for over 40 years. In August 1945, Bob and Vi married and spent all their holidays cycling in England & Europe.

BOB KYNASTON

Caught on camera

I was interested to read the helmet/handlebar camera review recently. If all you're looking for is



an independent 'witness' on your ride to and from work, then I'd strongly recommend this little gadget (pictured), which is right at the other end of the price scale. It costs about £16 from an eBay merchant in China. See tinyurl.com/3dv3lr9. You'll also want an 8Gb SD card or similar, which are available from Amazon for £6.

The quality of the video isn't HD, but it should be sufficient to support your case should you need it. I've posted a couple of clips on YouTube so you can see what I mean. See tinyurl.com/3dztlm and tinyurl.com/3pt6mrr.

My mounting bracket was damaged in shipping, but the merchant was very cooperative and arranged a generous refund. I mended the mount myself. The camera manages about two hours of recording per charge. Operation is a simple one-button affair and the instructions are actually intelligible!

TIM HOGAN

