

Letters

WRITE TO US AT:

CYCLE LETTERS,
CTC, PARKLANDS,
RAILTON ROAD,
GUILDFORD GU2 9JX,

OR EMAIL:

CYCLELETTERS@CTC.ORG.UK

This month: the best tyres for touring, road and trail, **'road tax' rejoinders**, CTC's Accident Line, **Shetland touring**, CTC's cycling focus, **the club's identity**, and legislating for longer lorries

What tyres are best?

In our local club (Wheel Easy, Harrogate) almost everyone has an opinion on the best bike tyre, particularly for leisure and touring use. I am not biased of course, so the latest tyre on my bike is undoubtedly the best on the market! It is all subjective and ad hoc. Who can say that such and such a tyre has the best grip, is the lightest, or the most puncture proof? Is there any chance of Cycle magazine and CTC leading the way?

Would it be possible to get a university or research body to come up with a series of scientific tests that measure weight, rolling resistance, wet weather grip and puncture resistance for various categories of tyres such as road, touring and trail? Publishing the results in Cycle would settle a few arguments and would lead to more informed choices of tyres.

MARTIN WEEKS



We can do a grouptest easily enough, and can measure weight and rolling resistance. Grip is harder to test the limits of on road, while puncture resistance depends on where and how you ride. But I'll talk to Chris Juden about it.

The toughest pneumatic tyre is easy, however: Schwalbe Marathon Plus. This one didn't puncture! EDITOR

**Letter
OF
THE
MONTH**



Hole in tax argument

The potholes feature reminded me of a series of letters to New Scientist magazine years ago, triggered by a 'cyclists don't pay road tax' remark. The readership of New Scientist were quick to point out that if cyclists were to pay a tax that was based on the amount of damage that they did to the roads compared to the average motorist, it would amount to less than one pence per year!

At the other end of the spectrum, a typical 38-ton truck does 10,000 times more damage than the average car per mile travelled. Which means that the subsidy paid to rail transport is just a tiny fraction of that enjoyed by road freight. And if you were to assume that some 90% of all road damage was caused by HGVs, you would be

as close to the truth as makes no difference.

Mike Burrows

Longer lorries

If longer lorries are allowed on to UK roads, could they be forced to use video equipment to cover some of the blind spots? The cost and installation of this equipment is less than the cost of one new lorry tyre.

The rules could be changed to make the maintenance of these safety devices a part of the MOT for HGVs. This could then be enforced by Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) when conducting roadside inspections. Some coach companies have these devices fitted as standard on new vehicles.

Robert Rowe

Not getting away with it

In November 2009, I was hit from behind by a car. The excuse for the collision was that 'I had swerved to avoid two motorcyclists'. In fact, they had exited the road before I reached them.

The motorist was lucky not to have been charged with careless driving, due to the witnesses not cooperating with the police follow-up. The motorist's insurers fortunately admitted liability. I contacted the CTC who put my case into the hands of solicitors, Russell, Jones & Walker, who pursued the defendants with vigour. This culminated recently in a satisfactory settlement, with all out-of-pocket expenses included.

My grateful thanks go to CTC and Russell, Jones & Walker.

Michael Johnson

Muckle Flugga!

I've just completed my Cycle questionnaire. No radical views – basically, more of the same. You have an impossible job, CTC being just about the broadest of broad churches. However, I thought Joe Sheffer's Muckle Flugga article was wonderful. It cheered me up no end to know that there are still 'cyclists' out there prepared to caress the limits, and editors prepared to publish their exploits. Well done!

Derek Purdy



Picturing Germany

I was in Germany for a couple of weeks late last summer, a trip that included a bit of most pleasurable cycling. I took the attached picture by a lake in a nature park at Schloss Krickenbecker near the Dutch-German border. I thought you might like it.

Ted Prangnell

Touring is club's calling

I have been asked to reply to the letters by Jason Falkner and Brian Griffiths, who complain that Cycle has little to offer mountain bikers or racers. Can I respectfully point out to both of them that the full title of CTC is 'the Cyclists' Touring Club'. I would have thought that before joining any club, you would do a little research into its aims and objectives.

Let no one forget that, not so long ago, the magazine was called Cycle Touring and that many members of the club would like a return to that name, so that their can be no misunderstanding of its main purpose.

There can be doubt that many racing cyclists, mountain bikers and commuters join the Cyclists' Touring Club, but in the main this is for the insurance that it provides. Everyone is welcome to join our club, but please be reminded that our grassroots is touring and its associations.

Peter Brake

The club magazine became Cycle Touring in 1963. Before that, it was The CTC Gazette, and it

featured club business, technical advice, ride reports, letters, and more – as Cycle still does. Recreational cycling is a wider field today and the magazine reflects that, though let us not forget that CTC members have been cycling on unsurfaced tracks – riding off-road! – since 1878. And CTC has championed transport cycling and the rights of cyclists since the early 20th century.

We're analysing the results of our recent survey and we'll include key findings from it next issue – and endeavour to act on them.

The picture on the right is from the 1953 book about CTC, This Great Club of Ours, and shows CTC cyclists on the Larig Ghru. In 2012, they'd probably be doing it on mountain bikes... EDITOR

What's in a name?

As a transport planner, part of my job requires me to attend conferences, and I frequently watch in awe as CTC staff members such as Roger Geffen speak eruditely on behalf of cycling and the cyclist's place in the national transport hierarchy. Roger, after announcing his name, then needs to announce his representation as 'CTC, The National Cyclists Association' – a mouthful and, more seriously to those with no knowledge of our club, a confusing acronym.

The club seeks to (and indeed is the only national organisation that does) represent cyclists on transport issues. Broadly speaking, it does a great job of this. No cycling organisation (other than the London Cycling Campaign) comes

Obituaries

Joe Stansfield: 1917-2011

A keen touring and racing cyclist, Joe rode with the Fylde Road Club and CTC before WW2. In the war, he endured terrible experiences: he was at Dunkirk in 1940 and was later taken prisoner by the Japanese in the Far East. He returned in poor health, weighing five stones. But he was soon cycling again, and he set club time trial records in events up to 12 hours. He was still cycling 20-30 miles several times a week in his late 80s, and he set national age related tricycle TT records in his 70s and 80s. He died aged 94. **Les Cross**

Audrey Fyfe: 1936-2011

Audrey's friends were distraught when she suffered a fatal head injury after being knocked off her bike. Having joined the Lothians DA in 1954, where she met her husband, Ian, Audrey spent her life inspiring new riders. A key member of the organising committees for the Melrose and Haddington Birthday Rides, her hospitality was legendary. A regular at Birthday Rides and Scottish rallies, Audrey's warm, vibrant, generous personality was widely known. Gone long before her time, we hope her family and friends will continue to be inspired by her energy, enthusiasm and commitment. **Aileen Brown**

Leonard Richard Gray: 1917-2011

Died aged 94. Our father was a keen club cyclist in West London before WW2. Army service in 1940 saw him rise to the rank of captain, serving in West Africa, the Middle East and Northern Europe. Demobbed in 1947, he rejoined Ealing Paragon CC and became a CTC life member. Work as a chartered public accountant took him to Oxford. On retirement, he was in demand as an auditor. He was a member of Oxford City Road Club and the Fellowship of Cycling Old Timers (FCOT). **Carey and Philip Gray**

Robert William O'Dell: 19/01/1923-22/06/2011

Bob was a long time member of CTC and the Luton Wheelers. In the war, he was a Flight Engineer on Halifax Bombers, and afterwards joined the 'Air Crew Association'. Bob and his friends toured the Continent in the post-war years. A butcher by trade, Bob was also an accomplished road walker. He was best known for his achievements as a long distance cyclist: he completed 33 North Road 24-hour events, in addition to numerous 12-hour and 100-mile time trials. **John Hall**



CTC members have always travelled off-road too, as this 1953 book about the club shows

close to the work the CTC does in campaigning for cycling. Yet the CTC has a name harking back more to an idyllic age of Albion, camping, and canvas.

Along with our two names, we have a club magazine with not one but two logos on the cover, further adding to the confusion of the role the club plays. An organisation muddled enough not to have a single bold identity or even a single logo is not one that a lot of people in power will take seriously.

Once the charity issue is over, I hope CTC can begin to take a look at itself, and hopefully decide how it should continue to communicate its work as the only campaign group which supports cyclists rights throughout the UK in the 21st century.

Gary Cummins