

LETTERS

This month Cycle magazine for partially-sighted members, café comments, cycling on beaches, campsite bike security, and more

GET IN TOUCH

WRITE TO US: Cycle Letters, CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9JX

EMAIL US:
cycleletters@ctc.org.uk

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forum.ctc.org.uk

TALKING CYCLE

MEMBERS who are blind or partially sighted can request the talking edition of Cycle to be sent to them free of charge. It is also available to anyone who has difficulty reading the magazine, whether because of a physical problem or something like dyslexia. For more than 25 years, this service has been run by David and Wynn Slater, to whom a great debt of gratitude is owed. As the time has come for them to pass on the baton, I am the new contact.

Please write, phone or email me, giving your name, address, phone number and membership number (plus email address if you have one). I'm at: 39 Picton Square, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NN, tel: 01477 544 027 (leave a message), email: cycle@rowlandsoftware.com.

We are also looking for a small number of volunteers to read a few items from the magazine. It doesn't have to be every time, and all you will need is a computer and reasonable quality microphone or headset. Full instructions will be given.

— **Andrew Rowland**

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH



CAFÉ SOCIETY

Cafés and tea-rooms are such an integral part of a CTC ride that it was great to see them finally given some coverage in the April/May issue. Brighton & Hove CTC include traditional tea rooms, garden centre cafés and even an airport café amongst our regular stops, where we meet, chat and have those all important catch-ups.

As well as our village and countryside favourites, we now have our very own cycling-themed café in the heart of the city, recently reviewed in my blog (cafedharma.wordpress.com). Velo is quickly becoming a popular choice for local cyclists in Brighton when following the café's mantra of 'eat drink ride'. It's a meeting point too for the start of some Brighton & Hove CTC rides.

— **Anne Doyle**

The Golden Age of tea-rooms must have been the early '50s, before the world and his wife launched into car ownership. Club runs split into two or three pelotons, to give the motorist a chance to overtake. In summer, a typical run from Doncaster to Bridlington and back, all of 125 miles, also included a bracing

swim and a marathon game of footie on the sands before the long haul back to Donny.

The highlight of the run was the stop (outward and return) at the Holme on Spalding Moor tea-rooms. These were immortalised, in song, to the tune of 'Home on the Range', as follows...

Holme, on Spalding Moor!

Where the tea-urns are working all day,

The tea that you sup, is thruppence a cup
And the buns are like pieces of clay!

— **JG Nunns**



COASTING ALONG

I see that the June/July issue of Cycle will cover cycling on beaches. The 5-mile beach between Brean Down and Burnham on Sea in Somerset is brilliant! Because of the very high tidal range, the area you can ride on is a hundred or more metres wide. The sand is always packed hard and very easy to ride on with a normal touring bike.

Last time I was there, without the bike, the whole surface was glistening with a film of water in the sun – amazing. The wind can work for or against you; the one time I rode it with a group of



» friends we hardly had to pedal.

Most of this section is shown as NCN33 on maps, but be aware that you cannot cross the River Axe south of Weston-super-Mare (by Diamond Farm Campsite) despite what the OS map suggests. The sluice, which has a path across it, is gated off. North Somerset Council is seeking to open it up but there are some issues to resolve.

— **Ben Searle**

HAPPY CAMPING

Here is my cunning idea for locking up a bike in the middle of an open campsite, where there may be nothing handy to lock it to. Buy two corkscrew-style eyed 'dog tethers' from a pet shop and screw them into the ground next to each other. Then put your D-lock through both tether rings and your lain-down bike frame. Neither tether can be unscrewed when locked to the other. It's not secure against some determined digging, but it's pretty good. Other bikes can be locked to the frame of the first. There's more information on my website. See bit.ly/1mUyUJU

— **Charlie Wartnaby**



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

I recently cycled from Cologne to London. The cycle paths in north-west Germany, southern Belgium and the Netherlands were incredible: smooth, straight, and traffic free.

The wake-up call on getting off the ferry in Dover was shocking. We attempted to follow NCN route 1 but found it hard due to:

- 1) Ambiguous signage.
- 2) The route took us down pot-holed roads and gravel tracks.
- 3) The little red squares with

the number 1 in were hard to spot.

4) The paths changed direction so often.

5) Several signs told cyclists to dismount – on a national cycle route!

It really needs to be sorted out with clearer signs. I used the OsmAnd smartphone application (osmand.net) to guide me along the cycle routes. It was invaluable.

— **Ralph Clark**



A SMALLER TOURER

I was very interested in your article on Spa Cycles Steel Touring bicycle. This bicycle is of no use to me as it only goes down to 51cm, and as I am only 1.5 metres tall that is too large. Two years ago I bought a Dawes Galaxy as this went down to a size I could manage. I used to ride a handbuilt bicycle but as this had 600 wheels and I could not get spare parts for it, I had to abandon it.

Part of the problem is that they seem to have standardised on 700C wheels and are trying to allow for this by using a sloping crossbar. I wonder if any other riders (who are very small or very tall) have experienced similar problems.

— **David Rafferty**

It is possible to squeeze 700C wheels into small frame with drop bars – see our review of petite road bikes on p68 – but it requires care to avoid toe overlap and poor handling. The other option for small tourers is to use 'mountain bike' (ISO 559) 26-inch wheels. Parts are readily available, as are bikes – from Oxford Bike Works, Surlly, and Thorn, amongst others.

Obituaries

► Dorothy Cliff: 1933-2014

Dorothy started her cycling in her teenage years, and this continued until the time of her illness, at the age of 80. A native of Chester, she started out with the Cestrian Section and then joined the Chester and North Wales DA. She enjoyed many touring adventures on her bike, at home and abroad, usually camping with her family including Janet and Stephen. She and her husband Bob were joint editors of the DA magazine for 12 years; for the last eight years she has been the co-organiser of the annual Cheshire Cycleway Ride. Her enthusiasm for cycling and her keen interest in the environment will be missed. — *Arthur Miller*

► Don Black: 1951-2014

Don was born in Nottingham but spent most of his working life in Tameside. He was a legendary, though extremely modest, figure in the world of audax riding. His achievements, which he rarely mentioned, included several completions of both Paris-Brest-Paris and London-Edinburgh-London. He also put plenty back in as the organiser of many scenic (hilly) rides in the north-west. Unmistakable on his bike, Don always rode dressed as if popping to the shops. Away from riding, he loved hill-walking, jazz and his allotment. He died in hospital, surrounded by his family. He is survived by his mother Rhona and will be sorely missed by his wife Mary, their children, Martin and Ruth and grandchildren, Rachel and Matthew. His funeral was standing-room only and a peloton of some 40 cyclists followed him on his last ride. — *Peter Bond*

Send obituaries to the editor (details on p3). They are edited to fit the space available and are seldom longer than 100 words each.

Join the conversation

Get immediate feedback from other CTC members on the CTC forum: forum.ctc.org.uk. Here's an abridged extract from one popular thread before Cycle went to press (see bit.ly/1gnfTfC)



HOW LONG DO INNERTUBES LAST?
Horizon: Innertubes last more or less forever. And they can be repaired. So why are millions sold each year? What is to stop you from using a tube for 25 years, and how many repairs can a tube take?

mjr: I'd discard them when a puncture is: under or near a previous patch; very near the valve base; a slow puncture; or bigger than a patch.

The Mechanic: Since an innertube is made out of some kind of rubber-like material,

it is likely to perish if kept in the wrong environment. Apart from that, my tubes usually last until they get a puncture. Then they get binned. Life is too short.

Mick F: Narrow tubes like I use are a devil to repair. Only the smallest patches will fit, so unless the hole is tiny the tube gets binned. Punctures happen so rarely, tubes last for years.

Bicycler: Maybe the people throwing them out could wait until they have a few and offer them up to someone on the

forum for the postage cost?

mig: After they puncture once, I find other uses for them – chainstay protectors, mudflaps, etc.

Brucey: Skinny tubes are more awkward and stress the patch more too. Then there's the issue of consequences should the repair fail. Having said that, I do most of my riding on patched tubes, but I've found out the hard way what works well and what doesn't. Environmentally, chucking repairable tubes is pretty bad.



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. Letters and emails for the August-September issue must arrive by 30 June. Write to us at: **Cycle Letters, CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9JX**



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