

Your opinions

LETTERS

THIS MONTH URBAN CYCLING, THE BENEFITS OF FLAT BARS, WOMEN'S SADDLES, THE PRICE OF BIKES, AND THE WORST PLACE FOR POTHOLES



Space for Cycling

CYCLING TOWNS

THERE HAS been some debate recently about bicycles being prohibited from town centres. If a touring cycle route passes through or near to a town, it has the potential to attract travellers to spend money on accommodation, lunch, coffee, cycling equipment, or just ice-creams on a hot day.

The picture was taken in Minden, Germany. I understand from the Tourist Information Office that the Weser Radweg attracts 20,000 touring cyclists to the town each year, who generate a tremendous boost to the local economy. So surely there are commercial advantages in allowing bikes into town.

Ted Prangnell

There's a commercial advantage in attracting utility cyclists too. Transport cyclists are more likely to use easier-to-get-to town centre shops than out-of-town retail parks. The more cycle-friendly a town centre is, the more that existing and potential cyclists will use it. Evidence from towns and cities that do admit cyclists to pedestrianised centres – such as Leicester (p42) – is that cyclists and pedestrians can coexist happily.

Write to Cycle

EMAIL: cyclinguk@jppublishing.co.uk **POST:** Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ. The letter of the month wins a Gorilla Cage or a Monkii Cage plus extra Monkii cleats – your choice. Each is worth £20.

For more about these innovative bottle/bikepacking cages – and many other products – go online to cyclemiles.co.uk



An off-the-peg flat-bar tourer



my head up to see properly and ended up with a sore neck. I much prefer a more upright riding position for this reason.

I have just bought a new Cube e-bike hybrid and it is perfect. Like your reader Richard Nisbet (Aug/Sep, Letters), it has made me enjoy cycling again. I have painful knees but now I can get out for longer rides again and not dread the hills.

Finally, thank you for the article on saddles for women – very interesting and helpful when buying a ladies' saddle for my new (gent's frame) bike.

Sue Halsall

DROPS V FLATS

Poor old Alan Harding (Letters, June/July). He writes in, giving his perfectly reasonable explanation for switching from drops to a straight bar and you print not one but two letters telling him what a mistake he has made.

I bought my first road bike last year, after almost 30 years riding mountain bikes, and I couldn't get on with drops. So I did a switch to a flat bar setup, using a 580mm bar, a longer stem (130mm) to try and retain the right reach, and Ergon GA3 grips with bar ends. To me this feels right and I enjoy my riding more, which is surely why most of us cycle. The only compromise is aerodynamically at times, e.g. into a headwind.

Philip Davis

I got rid of the drop handlebar on my Dawes Super Galaxy years ago, partly because I only ever used the top part but mainly because, as I wear glasses, riding on the drops meant I was looking over the top of the lenses. As I am short-sighted, I had to tilt

SADDLE SURE

As a female rider who suffered from saddle soreness for many years, I admire Thomas Henry's courage to write about what appears to be a taboo issue (June/July 16). But I think that sufferers like myself can also share our solutions. I recommend:

1. A leather-covered gel saddle with a central cut-out like the Selle Italia Diva Flow or some of the Terry saddles.
2. Careful positioning of the saddle, not too high, adjusted



Selle Italia Diva Gel Flow saddle

forwards or backwards for your reach, and with the nose of the saddle tipped below the horizontal.

3. A sheepskin saddle cover. Keep it fluffed up. I bought my first from St John Street Cycles more than 20 years ago.

4. Pay close attention to hygiene and use a good barrier cream – the kinds used for babies' bottoms are suitable. Use at least twice during your cycling day.

Christine Collin

DRINK UP ON THE DOWNS

It was not mentioned in your article about the South Downs Way that there are drinking water fountains every 20 miles or so. On hot days the heat reflected from the exposed chalk can be uncomfortable but being able to cool off under running water is a welcome relief.

John Vrubleviskis



A cassette – of sprockets

about expensive equipment but also review what is out there at a real entry level, e.g. bikes for around £150-200.

Brian Taylor

THE HOLE TRUTH?

Having just taken a bad tumble as the club rider ahead of me took a helmet-breaking fall, I am reminded of the favourite cycling conversation in Buckinghamshire: potholes: are they really the worst in the UK? I ask because recent experience suggests that areas differ greatly. A 100-mile sportive around Warwickshire was on almost perfect roads.

Can Cycling UK determine any way of ranking road maintenance expenditure per mile by county? Can members help? After recent experiences I really do feel that authorities who can be shown to be neglecting our roads should be named and shamed.

Neil Dury

Not quite what you're after, but the Fill That Hole website has a league table that shows how good or bad highway authorities are at fixing potholes. See fillthathole.org.uk/league-table. Don't forget to report potholes there too, either online or via the smartphone app.



Ruined roads cause crashes

Left: by Darren, Flickr Creative Commons



South Downs refreshment

Right: Malcolm McHugh / Alamy

BEGINNERS ON A BUDGET

Having got back on a bike after 70 years, I joined Cycling UK on the advice of my brother. He had already given me a pile of bike magazines to read and I have enjoyed Cycle and CycleClips.

Yet I find both frustrating, given Cycling UK's aspiration to widen the uptake of cycling. First there's the extensive use of jargon, such as cassettes (VCR?), tubs (pots of ice cream?), etc. Then there's the price of products reviewed. In the latest issue, there was a review of a chainset costing £417. Even the 'entry level tourers' in the June/July issue cost £500-£600. I am not suggesting you stop telling us

Obituaries

CHRIS BELL: 1950-2016

Died 5 August. Chris (Highpath Engineering) was well known across the cycling community, manufacturing his bespoke 'EGGrings', adapted cranks for disabled riders, and other specialist cycle components. His chainrings were used to success in four Olympics and by a number of round-the-world cyclists. After being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer in 2004, Chris cycle-toured all over Europe, raising awareness of prostate cancer and funds for cancer charities. – Ben Searle

PETER LUXTON

Died 1 July, aged 83. He had been ill for some time but still supported Cycling UK and AUK events. A lifelong member of the Exeter Wheelers CC, and an accomplished time triallist and time-keeper, Pete was born in Egypt where his father was in the RAF. Together with his wife Eugenie, who died in 1997, they ran the Exeter Mad March Audax events for years, and supported and organised many other events for CTC and Audax UK. – Graham Brodie

RODNEY WILLIAM MACE: 23/7/41-14/6/16

Rod rode with the Doncaster Wheelers in his teens, meeting the cycling greats of the 1950s, including Beryl Burton – who called him 'a cheeky chappy'. He served an engineering apprenticeship and moved to London before finally settling in Dorset, where he cycled with Dorset Cyclists Network and Bournemouth CTC. When hills became too much, he fitted a motor to his bicycle. He cycled until a few days before his sudden death from a heart attack. – Jeanette King

Join the conversation

CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other Cycling UK members on the Cycling UK forum: forum.cyclinguk.org. Here's an abridged extract from one recent thread bit.ly/cyclinguk-hardestukclimb.



HARDEST UK CLIMB

ukdodger: I heard a race commentator describe Box Hill as 'the hardest climb in the Surrey Hills'. It isn't – it's one of the easiest! I wondered what hill would be your candidate for the UK's hardest? **Mick F:** The hardest climb I've done is Bealach na ba in the West Highlands in Scotland. Long, steep and tiring. 2,000ft in 5 miles. **Brucey:** Bwlch y Groes, from the

south side. **foxyrider:** My current bogey would have to be the only climb I've walked up in over twenty years: High Hill Lane, Settle. **landrider:** Hardknott still fills me with dread. It's not on its own either with Wrynose Pass not far along the same road. **Ben@Forest:** A couple of weekends ago, I went down to West and South Yorkshire to knock off a series of climbs in the '100 Greatest Climbs' book. Of the

seven I did, I think Shibden Wall was the hardest. **TrevA:** I'm surprised nobody has mentioned Winnats Pass. **mattscm:** Might I suggest Ffordd Penllech in Harlech? Supposedly the steepest road in the UK with a touch of 40%! I found walking up it on a wet day nigh impossible. **David_S:** It's the final climb of the day when your legs are tired, you are hungry, you are thinking of food and a warm shower.

How to contact Cycle



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 Cycling UK policy, you should address it to the relevant national office staff member. Letters & emails for the Dec/Jan issue must arrive by 31 Oct. Write to: cyclinguk@jppublishing.co.uk or Cycle Letters, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

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