

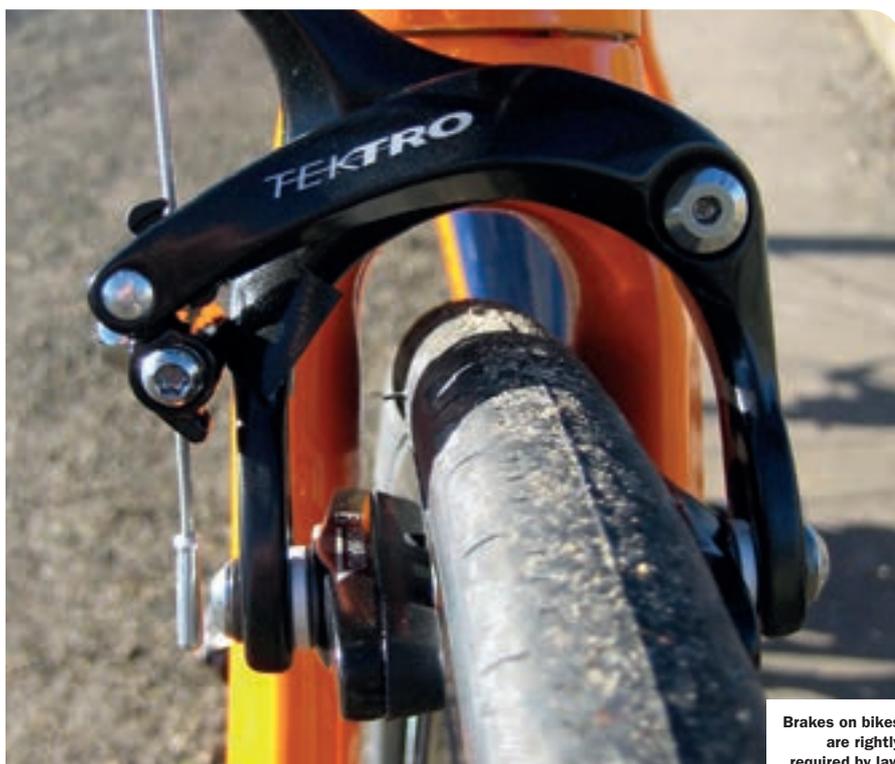
Chief Executive

A BRAKE ON HYSTERIA

Cycling UK was the calm centre of a media storm in August, politely informing frothing presenters about cycling and safety. **Paul Tuohy** considers cycling prejudices and cycling promotion



PAUL TUOHY
Chief Executive



Brakes on bikes are rightly required by law

SUMMER IS DRAWING to a close, and what a brilliant time it's been to cycle in the UK for transport, touring, and fun. We won't be hanging up our wheels at the approach of autumn and we know you won't either.

It is more challenging to promote cycling when the days grow shorter and more unsettled. It doesn't get any easier when there's a court case about an ill-informed young man on a brakeless fixie who had the rare misfortune to collide with a pedestrian with fatal consequences...

Cycling UK was at the forefront of the ensuing media storm, condemning the

“I was dismayed by the vilification of cyclists in general”

actions of the rider and calling for a review of *all* road traffic offences, not just archaic laws relating to cycling dating back to the 19th century. Our Head of Campaigns, Duncan Dollimore, did a sterling job of politely trying to educate media reporters in umpteen interviews from morning to night after the trial had concluded, including dealing with a farcical Richard Madeley (channelling Piers Morgan) on GMTV.

I was angered and dismayed by the media vilification of cyclists in general. After all, a fool is a fool, whether on a bike or in a car, and I can assure you that when a fool kills someone from behind the wheel of a motorised vehicle, you are unlikely even to hear about it. There are so many fatalities caused by irresponsible people in cars that it's 'not newsworthy'.

The derogatory terminology used by some in the media to describe this case ('lycra

louts' etc) perhaps says more about their prejudices than it does about the incident. Using a public platform to tar all cyclists with the same brush is unhelpful, and it undermines our work to make cycling open to all.

INSPIRING CYCLING

As the national charity for cycling, Cycling UK works to encourage people to ride bikes where and when they can, safely and courteously, and in doing so enjoy cycling's fabulous benefits. We struggle to get positive publicity to promote cycling, which in turn could bring in much-needed revenue, supporters and members, thereby helping more people lacking in confidence and commitment to try cycling and join us.

It goes without saying that all charities can only operate within their income limits. We do exceptionally well, punching well above our weight for our cause. This year, we have again more than doubled our income from membership fees thanks to grants and donations. Over 85% of our £5m income is spent on member services and our charitable remit, placing us as one of the UK's best-performing charities. With more money we could do even more, and there's an easy way for you to help.

Enclosed with your copy of Cycle are the raffle tickets to the most lucrative prize draw in UK cycling. Our Grand Draw is bigger and better than ever, with over £8,000 worth of prizes – cash, holidays in the sun, and an Orbit tandem to name a few. Help us fight the good fight for cycling by purchasing your tickets or getting your family and friends to buy them from you (having nabbed a few for yourself – you've got to be in it to win it!).

Please don't discard your tickets. They are a brilliant fundraiser for us and we need your support more than ever. If you have any queries, contact the membership team on **01483 238301** or email **membership@cyclenguk.org**.

Good luck in the Grand Draw, and happy cycling this autumn.