

Road safety

# WANTON & FURIOUS REPORTING

The media's reaction in the Charlie Alliston case couldn't go unchallenged. Cycling UK's **Duncan Dollimore** brought some balance

**I**F YOU'VE MANAGED to avoid reading or hearing about the Charlie Alliston case in recent weeks, you'll be in a minority. For those who've been on media blackout, the brief but tragic story is that last year Alliston was riding a fixed-wheel bicycle without a front brake in Central London. Kim Briggs walked into the road. Alliston saw her, shouted twice, and collided with her, knocking Kim to the ground. She died from brain injuries a week later.

Alliston was charged with and acquitted of manslaughter, but convicted, after trial, of an archaic offence dating from 1861 of causing bodily harm by wanton and furious driving. The latter offence was drafted in the days when the horse and carriage was the



Treatment varied: the BBC let Duncan speak, GMTV didn't

peril on the roads, but the Crown Prosecution Service weren't able to charge Alliston with causing death by either careless or dangerous cycling, because no such offence exists. Kim's widower Matt Briggs has now launched a campaign, with significant media support, to change that and bring in new cycling offences.

## DAANGEROUS CONCLUSIONS

A review of road traffic laws and penalties, and specifically how the judicial system deals with irresponsible behaviour on our roads, is something Cycling UK has consistently campaigned and lobbied for. Admittedly, our focus has been on the greatest source of risk, namely motor vehicles, which account for 99.4% of pedestrian deaths. The fact that people cycling present such a minuscule risk of harm to others compared to those in metal boxes will be of no comfort to Matt Briggs, but surely we could rely on the media to maintain a sense of balance when reporting on the risk that cyclists pose to others?

Alas, no: it was too inviting for many in the media to condemn all or most people riding bikes, rather than Alliston's irresponsible behaviour. Adam Boulton's Sunday Times piece about the wheels coming off 'our senseless worship of bicycles', epitomised much of the coverage. Boulton's plea to 'forget about zombies and North Koreans: the cyclists are coming' reflected the joint-the-dots media frenzy: cyclist kills pedestrian; why aren't they accountable, paying road tax, insured, licensed?

## REVIEW ROAD TRAFFIC OFFENCES

Such click-bait media coverage is infuriating, misleading, and dangerous in equal measure, and it's vital that we correct misinformation, present the true facts about road danger, and champion the case for cycling and ordinary cyclists. We do ourselves no favours

however if we don't say, loud and clear, that riding a fixed-wheel bicycle on busy roads without a front brake is illegal, stupid, and endangers other road users, especially pedestrians.

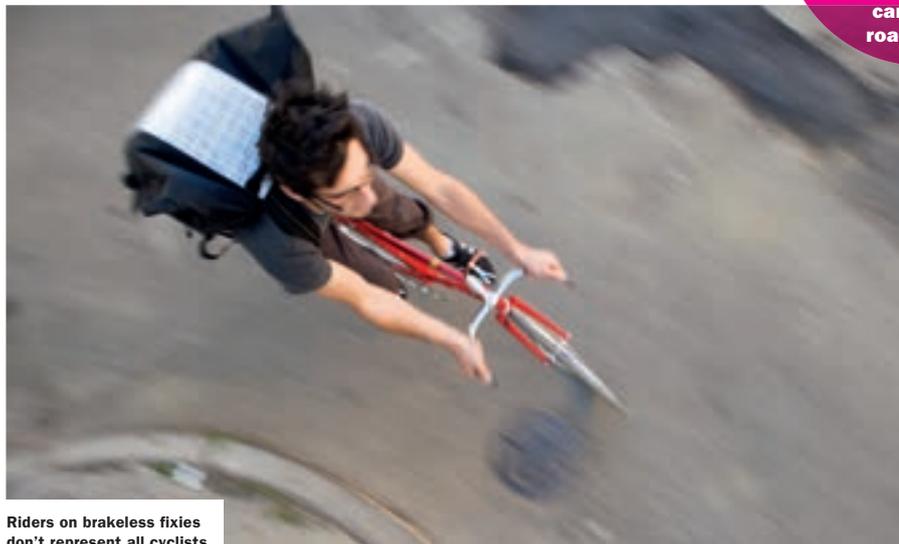
That's the message we put out in our press release and media interviews, with a call for

the Government to finally get on with the full review of all road traffic offences they promised back in 2014. They need to look closely at how we legislate for and deal with mistakes, carelessness, recklessness and deliberately dangerous behaviour by all road users, not just cyclists in reaction to one high profile case.

**“Motor vehicles account for 99.4% of pedestrian deaths”**



Right: Aurora Photos / Alamy



Riders on brakeless fixies don't represent all cyclists



Pedal Power, a Community Cycle Club in Liverpool

### Cycling development

## COMMUNITIES JOIN THE CLUB

Cycling UK's Community Cycle Clubs are bucking national trends in getting bums on bikes – particularly those of people who usually cycle least. **Laura Hales** explains why

**C**YCLING LEVELS AS a whole in the UK are only ticking along, with the National Travel Survey for England showing a modest rise in the average distance people are cycling, and Cycling Scotland's Annual Cycling Monitoring Report revealing that just 1.2% – up from 0.8% – use a bike as their main form of transport. But there are pockets of improvement, and there's been a quiet revolution in terms of Cycling UK's efforts to get Britain cycling.

It's been two years since the launch of Cycling UK's Community Cycle Club programme. Each club is a unique project, which introduces cycling to people in a way which suits them, is tailored to their needs, and, above all, enables them to have fun and keep on cycling.

### MORE THAN 200 CLUBS

We now have 226 clubs, from Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides to Plymouth in south Devon. Clubs cater for people from all walks of life and tackle a range of issues and challenges. It all starts with a Cycling UK development officer working with the community to find out how cycling could help them to achieve their goals. Whether it is improving mental or physical health, increasing employment prospects, or reducing isolation, there is a Community

Cycle Club catering for almost every need and purpose across the UK.

The people engaging with clubs buck the national trends too. In England, men still cycle three times as many trips as women, and only 25% of Cycling UK's members are women. For Community Cycle Clubs, 45% of those attending are women. Over half of participants are from deprived areas and over half are not meeting physical activity guidelines when they first join, while 36% are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

This is good news for Cycling UK in terms of bringing the joy of cycling to a whole new audience. It could also be very good news for the UK. With over 50,000 people engaged each year, imagine what we could achieve if every city, town and village in the UK had a community cycle club of its own.

For more information on Community Cycle Clubs, see [cyclinguk.org/project/community-cycle-clubs](http://cyclinguk.org/project/community-cycle-clubs)

**“45% of those attending Community Cycle Clubs are women”**

### Quick releases

#### BIG BIKE CELEBRATION

Cycling commentator and Olympian Chris Boardman MBE and Lee Craigie of The Adventure Syndicate are among the speakers at Cycling UK's annual members' get together, which this year is in Birmingham on Saturday 7 October. There are two rides taking place in the morning before the event, providing a great opportunity to see some of the city's excellent infrastructure for cycling. Awards will also be presented to Cycling UK's Volunteers of the Year. For the latest details and to register for this free event, visit [cyclinguk.org/join-us-annual-get-together-big-bike-celebration](http://cyclinguk.org/join-us-annual-get-together-big-bike-celebration).

#### TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

It's election time again for Cycling UK's Board of Trustees. You'll find statements from the shortlisted candidates, as well as a voting form, on one of the separate inserts included with this issue of your magazine. All details for voting are on the form. If yours is missing, please contact Cycling UK's membership team during office hours on 01483 238300 or alternatively email [membership@cyclinguk.org](mailto:membership@cyclinguk.org).

#### AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

As Cycle went to press, Cycling UK member Mark Beaumont was nearing the end of his attempt to ride 18,000 miles around the world in 80 days. He was due to finish the Artemis World Cycle in Paris on 21 September. He'll have ridden around 240 miles a day if he's successful. Beaumont set the record for circumnavigating the globe by bike in 2008, taking 194 days to do it. The record has been updated several times since. This time, Mark was travelling with a support crew. We'll have an interview with Mark next issue. In the meantime, visit [artemisworldcycle.com](http://artemisworldcycle.com).



The Gridiron 100:  
read more at [bit.ly/cycle-gridiron](http://bit.ly/cycle-gridiron)

## Member Group rides

# ROADS TO AUTUMN

It's getting cooler and the clocks will be going back soon, but there's still plenty of cycling to do before winter.

**Natalie Parsons** has some suggestions

**S**UMMER MAY be ending, but there's plenty of cycling left to do this autumn. The Gridiron 100 is an old favourite – a circuit of the New Forest featuring many cattle grids and local wildlife. As it's one of our Challenge Ride Series events, finishing it gets you a medal, a Cycling UK goodie bag, and a certificate. All the best to anyone riding on Sunday 8 October.

The Golden Beeches is a wonderful weekend of cycling in the glorious Chilterns. On the 20-22 October, you could find yourself enjoying a series of quiet routes along forest tracks. There's a choice of rides each day with plenty of refreshments and autumn colour to keep you going. All cyclists are welcome. Visit [southbuckscycling.org.uk/events/](http://southbuckscycling.org.uk/events/).

The Dartmoor Devil is a 60-mile road ride through the hills of Dartmoor on 29 October, just before Halloween. It sets off from Bovey Tracey, and features a climb up Widecombe

Hill. Mudguards are advised and lights are essential. Book your place at [bit.ly/cycle-dartmoordevil](http://bit.ly/cycle-dartmoordevil).

Emitremmus, the annual ride from Stevenage to mark the end of British Summertime, also takes place on Sunday 29 October. Emitremmus is the last event in our Challenge Ride Series 2017. You have two options – the Emit Lite and the classic Emitremmus Desrever, at 67km and 101km respectively. Book early at [stevenagectc.org.uk/emitremmus.php](http://stevenagectc.org.uk/emitremmus.php).

## OTHER AUTUMN RIDES

If you can't get to any of these rides but love the idea sharing your autumn cycling with others, see what your local Member Group is doing. You can find your nearest group here: [cyclinguk.org/local-groups](http://cyclinguk.org/local-groups).

If you'd rather cycle alone or with a few friends, our new County Guides provide information about cycling opportunities for every county in the UK, giving National Cycling Network routes, events, and cycling groups in each area. See [cyclinguk.org/county-guides](http://cyclinguk.org/county-guides).



Emitremmus riders set off in autumn mist

**“The Golden Beeches is a wonderful weekend in the glorious Chilterns”**

## Quick releases

### BRITISH CYCLE QUEST SUCCESS

Derek Heine of Cheshire has become the latest member to complete all 402 checkpoints in the British Cycle Quest, Cycling UK's nationwide 'treasure hunt' for touring cyclists. Participants visit particular destinations within each county and answer questions to prove that they've been there. It's a great way to motivate yourself to explore by bike. For details, visit [cyclinguk.org/british-cycle-quest](http://cyclinguk.org/british-cycle-quest).

### MEMBER GROUP AGMs

Autumn is the time to find out what your local Cycling UK Member Group has been up to during the past year, and perhaps look at how to get involved. All groups have AGMs in October or November and all Cycling UK members are invited. Many groups include the AGM as part of a ride to a local tea shop, pub, or village hall. To find your nearest AGM, see the map at [cyclinguk.org/cycling-uk-member-group-agms](http://cyclinguk.org/cycling-uk-member-group-agms).

### SCOTLAND DOUBLES FUNDING FOR CYCLING AND WALKING

Cycling UK has welcomed the Scottish Government's announcement to double the annual level of funding for active travel (cycling and walking) by £40m, bringing the total to £80m. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon made the announcement as she presented her Government's plan to the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood on 5 September. Doubling funding for cycling and walking will help encourage active travel choices through a combination of behaviour change initiatives and the building of physical infrastructure. Cycling UK believes the level of the Scottish Government's funding for cycling and walking shows a commitment lacking in the other UK nations. More details at [bit.ly/cycle-scotsdoublefunding](http://bit.ly/cycle-scotsdoublefunding).