Driverless cars could usher in a new era of road safety for cyclists, with cars programmed to overtake cyclists safely and give adequate road space to cyclists, especially at junctions and roundabouts.

However, it could go the other way: driverless car manufacturers could lobby for more cycle-free roads, on the grounds that cyclists are difficult to spot and are ‘unpredictable’. Additionally, features designed to improve energy efficiency and road utilisation such as platooning (whereby wireless networked vehicles drive very close to each other) and autonomous intersection management (whereby traffic lights are removed and vehicles drive directly between gaps in the traffic) could make roads unusable by cyclists. These measures combined could effectively force cyclists off the roads.

Is Cycling UK looking at the opportunities and threats posed by driverless cars, so that the former rather than the latter scenario comes to pass?

Martin Budden

We’ll have an article on driverless cars in the not-too-distant future that I hope will answer your questions. It’s something Cycling UK Policy Director Roger Geffen and I have been talking about for a while.
CENTURY RIDER

One of our Lifetime Members in Fife and Kinross CTC recently attained the age of 100. John Elder was a time triallist, and I think he started attending CTC group meets when his racing days were over, more than 50 years ago. He was also involved with the Dunfermline Cycling Club, the VTTA, and the SCU.

John still lives on his own and has only recently sold his last cycle, a trike he kept in his spare room. He helped the guy who bought it carry it downstairs. A mention would be good as he still reads Cycle as soon as it arrives.

Linda Body

BREAKING VIEWS

I read with interest the article on ‘broken leg recovery’ in Q&A in the June/July issue.

Whether or not the X-rays of a repaired tibial fracture were those of the inquirer or stock radiographs for illustration purposes, my eye was drawn immediately to the far right image, where there is a clear failure of the plate over the fracture site. I would also suggest that the plate is too narrow and too short, allowing the excessive bending forces that have caused it to fail.

Martin Atkinson, vet

BIKES OFF TRAINS

A few years ago, you would have seen a number of cyclists waiting for trains at Leicester station as they commuted to work. Since then many have been driven away by East Midlands Trains’ rigorously enforced two-bikes-only rule. Now cyclists are largely restricted to those, like me, who use folding bicycles. With the introduction of the new timetable at the end May, the company have become even more cycle unfriendly, due to the introduction of some services using shortened HST sets with no space for bikes at all.

East Midlands Trains trumpet their cycle hubs at stations like Leicester, but these are of no use to those of us who cycle at both ends of our journeys. Surely we should be seeing more room for cycles on trains, not less?

Without it, the benefits of combining train travel and cycling that East Midlands Trains trumpet are largely restricted to those of us who cycle at both ends of our journeys. Surely we should be seeing more cycle unfriendly, due to the introduction of some services using shortened HST sets with no space for bikes at all.

John Elder in his racing days

If these radiographs do indeed belong to the person in question, the repair requires an immediate review. If, on the other hand, they are designed to illustrate the importance of not over-weight bearing too soon, they are a graphic demonstration of that, but also highlight a questionable technique by the surgeon, one I would be concerned about if it was one of my canine patients let alone my own leg.

Martin Atkinson, vet

MIDGES IN SCOTLAND

Banks: I know that the midges in Scotland build in numbers from spring into summer but could someone advise when they cease to be an issue? I am thinking of touring West Scotland from mid-September or later.

feefee8: It can depend on the summer but they start tailing off in September, probably not much biting after mid-September.

gloomyandy: At the moment, it would seem that Glencoe is a good place to avoid... smidgeup.com/midge-forecast/ In general, they seem to be well in decline by the end of September.

Greystoke: Awful! Pitch your tent in the wind away from water and you’ll be ok. Take spray deodorant and spray inside the tent at night. That kills them.

mercilla: Do the midges carry any diseases like Lymes? feefee8: None that I’m aware of. Just the ferocious eating and spoiling of outdoor activities of an evening! You won’t see them much in direct sunlight but once that starts dipping in the west, and usually the breeze goes with it, that’s when you become fodder. Clegs are pretty bad this year too. I’m not a fan of midges but I really, really don’t like clegs and their bites.

pjclinch: Clegs aka horse flies. Big flies with a nasty bite that will go through a thin top quite easily. They don’t come in clouds like midges do, but a bite is a clear ‘ow!’ rather than slowly building irritation.