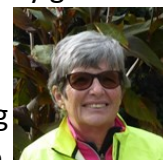


Hallo everybody

Here we are with another edition of Winged Wheel which I hope you enjoy. My grateful thanks to all of you who have contributed. Well, I must be doing something right as, on return from holiday last month, I received an email telling me that I had been awarded the 'Club Personality of The Year' trophy for keeping the Winged Wheel going. Thank you so much to everyone who voted for me, I feel very honoured.



I particularly hope that you enjoy the article by Paul Jordan which is well worth a read. Unfortunately Microsoft upset the spacing of the photographs which I have been unable to do anything about despite lots of trying, apologies to Paul. It is always a bit difficult to get photographs lined up properly in articles. I just love it when it works!

Are you all enjoying this lovely weather? We certainly are and have had some lovely cycle rides and a trip to Holland. Are you planning something great for this year or, have you already done it? If so, why not write an article about it for the next edition? It doesn't need to be particularly long and it could be just about the part of your trip that you feel that other members will be most interested to read.

Happy cycling

*Judy*

### **Presidents Ramblings**

It's been a while since I banged on about cycle cameras and reporting issues to the Police, but I continue to do so. This issue was brought into sharp focus recently when a member was knocked off their cycle by a car driver. They chose not to report this incident, however what was disappointing was that it seems nobody noted any details of the incident. No One on the group ride had cameras fitted to their cycle, so even if there had been a desire to report the incident, there would have been insufficient information/evidence for the Police to act. The Police's unwillingness to act is a very sorry situation for some of the most vulnerable road users.

I don't want to labour this point, but it seems Police resource are such that they only act if the reporter has submitted all the necessary information, thus enabling them to simply act from a desk and not have to do any thinking or investigating. I base this on a number of examples I have had recently. In the first instance the car registration was a hire car, so they said no action because they felt the hire company could not identify the driver!

*I felt that they could have asked as the car was a big expensive Mercedes probably on a company contract and therefore would have been assigned to a director or similar, and therefore without much effort the driver could have been identified.*

The second incident involved a motorcycle; in this incident it was on false plate (a Citron van). The Police response was they couldn't do anything because they couldn't identify the rider.

*I felt they could have checked out the Citron van owner to see if they also owned the motorcycle. Although I was reasonably certain about the registration, they could have tried a few alternatives to see if a match could be made.*

After this last experience I realised that I could do a rudimentary registration check myself by using the "Check My MOT" government website. This site doesn't give owner details, but it gives the Make Model and Colour for the registration input. A useful tool given that sometime the speed of the vehicle and vibrations on the camera, sunlight reflections and spots on the camera lens, can make it hard to read the registrations.

At this point I am contemplating sharing still images of some near misses I have experienced, but I don't want to put anybody off cycling.

Since July 2023 up to 19.06.2025, I have covered I have covered 2016 miles and reported 57 incidents. The results show 24 drivers have been prosecuted, 18 have received letters giving them advice about what their responsibilities are with regard to vulnerable road users and giving them notice that should they be reported for similar offences they will be prosecuted. I am still waiting for feedback on 3 incidents. No further action was taken with respect to 12 reports where for various reason of identification (such as outline above) or for reasons that the officer felt the incident didn't warrant action.

It is clear to me that Police officers are not permanently assigned to the task of dealing with these reports, and from time to time some officers who are assigned are perhaps less aware of the vulnerability issues faced by cyclists and others who do not have the luxury of "crash protection" found in modern day vehicles.

Suffolk CTC group have recently been contacted by the EDTA group newspapers, and I will be talking to Jude Holden about my experiences, both on the roads of Suffolk and with the Police and reporting incidents. Hopefully an article in the press will help create greater awareness for the future and lead to safer cycling. Watch this space in the next Winged Wheel.

Take care and enjoy your cycling. Maurie.

PS – Its already happened in time for this issue of Winged Wheel.

# Don't get so close to me, warns cyclist

75-year-old sees 51 drivers prosecuted

A Suffolk cyclist has had more than 50 drivers prosecuted for driving too close to him while out on his bike.

Maurice Parish, president of the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) Suffolk, has personally reported 114 incidents to police since 2023.

Of those, 51 drivers have been prosecuted and 36 were sent letters giving advice and being

**JUDE HOLDEN**

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warned of prosecution should they commit other offences.

Mr Parish, *right*, spoke as new figures revealed that 747 close call reports have been made to Suffolk police between 2022 and 2024. The 75-year-old, who has been cycling since he was 15, said: "My competency is high but

I am still shocked and angered by some incidents. When this happens, I am left shaking and unable to continue peddling as normal."

A police spokesman said: "Close passes can be frightening and dangerous, and we take reports of unsafe driving seriously."

**Full story - Page 2**





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Maurice Parish has been left 'shocked and angered' by cars passing too closely

Image: LUCY TAYLOR

## Cyclist 'shocked and angered' by repeated close calls on road

JUDE HOLDEN

[jude.holden@newsquest.co.uk](mailto:jude.holden@newsquest.co.uk)

**The leader of a Suffolk cycling group has described how he has been left "shaking" by drivers passing close by at high speeds.**

New figures from the charity IAM RoadSmart show in the last three years cyclists have reported close passes from cars to Suffolk Police a total of 747 times.

The numbers for the years 2022, 2023, 2024 are 243, 252, 252 reports respectively and the number of prosecutions or follow ups for those years is 77, 157, 124.

Maurice Parish, President of CTC Suffolk, a Cycling UK group, said: "I am an experienced cyclist,

my competency is high, but I am still shocked and

angered by some incidents. "When this happens, I am left shaking and unable to continue pedalling as normal and often control of my cycle is affected."

He added: "More inexperienced cyclist or those new to cycling might well wobble or even fall from their cycle."

"Often vehicles follow each other too closely and can't see a cyclist hidden by the



vehicle they are following. In these circumstances a wobble could end in injury or worse."

Mr Parish himself has reported 114 incidents since January 2023.

He told this paper that 27 have resulted in no further action, 36 received letter giving advice and being warned of prosecution should they commit other offences and 51 were prosecuted.

Despite the numbers of follow-ups by police Mr Parish does not feel officers are doing everything they can to help.

He added: "There is no investigative element. They rely on

the person reporting the incident, to provide all the relevant information they need, otherwise they take no action."

For example, if you get the registration wrong even though you have everything else like car make model colour, they seem not to make any effort to review footage and try alternative registrations.

"Often the speed of vehicles, camera vibrations and reflection make it hard to read number plates."

A spokesperson for Suffolk Police said: "The safety of cyclists on our roads is a shared responsibility,

and we urge all motorists to pass cyclists with care, allowing plenty of space and time."

"Close passes can be frightening and dangerous, and we take reports of unsafe driving seriously."

"We encourage members of the public to submit any action-camera or dash-camera footage they capture of close passes, or other motoring offences, and we have a dedicated officer who reviews this and can then take action against offending motorists, where there is sufficient evidence to do so."

Mr Parish said he felt the solution to the issue required a complete shift in the mentality of drivers: "I think the first step is to invest in driver education, not just lip service."

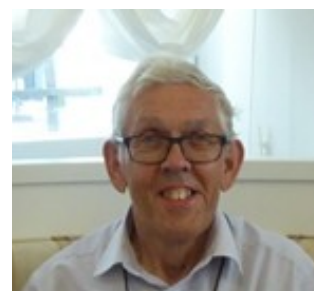
"Drivers need to undergo an attitude adjustment. I am a driver, and I have an attitude, but it is influenced by my knowledge and experience of 60 years of cycling, somehow this needs to be instilled in all drivers."

"I would suggest that although drivers of twenty or so years of experience are better than new drivers, they may not be so aware of changes in the law and may not appreciate the dangers that come with modern day vehicles."

"Perhaps a regular online refresher test module might help address these deficiencies."

### Sunday Rides Ramblings

Summer has arrived and we appear to be in the middle of a heatwave. I hope you are all taking advantage of the good weather to get out on the bike as often as possible. I have recently had cataract surgery for both my eyes so my cycling activities have been limited a bit but I think I am now up to scratch again and looking forward to riding regularly.



My piece this time is taking on rather a serious note. In my annual report to the AGM in May I expressed concern that average attendances on Sunday Rides had dipped a bit from the previous year. There was a general discussion after the AGM when various views were put forward. Our President has suggested we need a full scale review to determine whether our club rides meet the current needs of our members, particularly those who are not regular riders, and potential new members. If not, then what needs to be done to make our rides more attractive. I am sure this will be high on the agenda for the next committee meeting so any comments you may care to make to either myself or any committee member would be welcome.

On another serious note, I intend to step down as Sunday Rides Coordinator with effect from the next AGM. I have fulfilled that role for six out of the last ten years, with a stint as President in the middle, and I feel the time has come for me to take a back seat and enjoy my club rides as an ordinary member, while I am still able. Obviously the search is on for someone to step into the role so if anyone may be interested in taking on the role please get in touch with me and I will be glad to explain what the role entails.

Enjoy the summer and any holidays to come

## Michael Scott

Sunday Rides Coordinator

### A Thursday Ride!

By Judy Scott

On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April Michael and I went on the ride, starting from Kesgrave, to the Diner at Rendlesham for coffee with John Bryant leading. It was a beautiful morning with less wind than have experienced on recent rides. After coffee, we were riding into Campsea Ashe when John took a left turn and, like the good cyclist that I am, I started to follow him not realising that, due to the fact that he was suffering from a cold, he had handed over the route to Dave Wake. Anyway, it was all sorted and we continued on and turned into Brick

Kiln Lane only to be faced with an enormous flood across the road which was surprising as it hadn't rained for ages! It must have been caused by irrigation problems. The general consensus of opinion was that we couldn't attempt to ride through it as there was no way of telling what was lurking underneath it so we turned back and went up the road leading from Hacheston to Easton only to find that it was blocked due to roadworks with no footpath left round it so we had to push our bikes up the bank to get round it which I found really tricky as I was having problems with my shoulder but, what a lovely bunch we have to ride with and help was at hand! Then it was on to Crettingham for lunch where, as always we were made very welcome and we sat outside in the sunshine. It was a very enjoyable, if eventful, day.

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### ***Summer Cycling***

*"July. The hillside horses flash their tales, the white cat bakes on the wall, her eyes emerald slits. The oaks haven't the energy to rustle. All is burning and still".* I am reading Ronald Blyth's 'Next to Nature – A lifetime in the English Countryside', it's raining on the windows, and I am frustrated, for isn't this supposed to be the best (or for me second best) month for cycling?

Cycling plans made in the new year come to fruition, get nearer, or still fresh in the memory. We are at our fittest – everything seem easier, lighter, more supple. Long days. Cool refreshing early morning rides after sultry nights. Short evening rides to enjoy the sunset and those special times when we see a rising mist over meadows or a Barn Owl. The smell of hot ripening wheat and musky bracken in shady woods enrich our senses. Later the rolled bales of the hay harvest provides new textures and perspectives – the subtle changes of shade and shadow enriches the landscape. Life is good when we are free and on the bike we are free indeed.

For the 3 months June to August our cycling becomes the apex of our year. For us dedicated obsessives most other priorities are set aside – life is short enough. There are 'Breakfast rides' to take us a little further from our usual routes, the occasional short break tours to cement friendships. 'Fair weather' cyclists' turn up more often and welcomed back into the fold. Of course there is a downside - the evening sun across the living room bleachers out the TV for the Tour Highlights yet again!

The countryside has subtle changes. The frothy bucolic roadside vegetation of May has spent its reproductive force and is dying back. Grasses have reached their extraordinary towering heights. Hedges have also reached their limits, the blossoms now giving way to first signs of fruiting. There is less birdsong but more bobbing and searching along the hedgerows as late fledglings start their new lives on their own. Green corn turns swiftly



blonde, surprising us. The gorse cracks as the yellow fades. Watering havens hum and buzz and the dragonflies hover and spread their gossamer wings to the sun.

The skies too are different. On clear days the intense sun of mid-day bleaches the light and the blue to a paler shade. Shade itself is more intense - cooler, a welcome haven or relief as we pass through. High cirrus clouds streak through the blue on high zephyrs. Instability in the air mass is witnessed in the cumulus clouds which sometimes tower into extraordinary spectacular mountain landscapes of their own. Summer storms are spectacular! The slate grey cummulo nimbus heralds an imminent drenching which can be an amusing and refreshing experience when we splash through not bothering to 'cape up' on hot days knowing that we will soon dry out as we ride on.

Roads themselves change character. If we are lucky the potholes of Spring have been generally repaired leaving more of our concentration on the countryside around. Beware the loose gravel on resurfaced sections, and the sandy drifts from light soils washed from irrigations and those recent storms! Very occasionally – perhaps twice a year in a good year, the soaring temperatures of a heat wave brings us melting tar to contend with and fuel memories and tales for the future.

Our riding becomes easier as we carry less 'gear' on our best bikes. (There's also less bike cleaning!) Warm airs reflect from the road surfaces making legs more supple. Lighter clothing gives us a freer feel and mood. We revel in the dip and swoop of wind assisted riding. The suppress spinning of the 'pro' in our imagination fuels our ego's which are stretched as we become 'Merckx' in our heads. Conversely the relentless headwinds from afternoon heat thermals makes for tiring returns home. If we are on the front we can pretend to be the 'roulliers' of the Tour. Pub gardens become dining norms. Ice with the cokes or fruit juices. Blonde beers are enjoyed under umbrella shade.

The harvest moves into full swing. The blonde corn has bleached to a biscuit colour. The tall proud ears of wheat lower their heads - their day is done. Combines are engulfed in dust as swathes are cut through the fields presenting us with new patterns and shadow lines. Rabbits and mice run for cover! The drifting dust coats all in its path and we quicken through.

All too soon the days shorten as we head through August. The evenings become cooler, the sea warmer for the occasional swim. Perhaps more rides with the family on the annual break and school holidays. Cycling festivals to visit tend to mark the beginning to the end of the best of the year. The late harvests are frustrated by the untimely downpours and the pale late corn begins to turn grey and spoiled. The natty farmers having gathered in, start the early discing. An extra layer is carried for early starts or the cooler days. We move into fruiting. Early apples ripen for our scrumping from hedgerows. The plastic tub is saddle-bagged for blackberry picking. In late summer we become a little less active as afternoon

BBQ's become more attractive. Perhaps a late camp or an Autumn tour takes our fancy. In 'Tour' parlance, we descend from the high mountains of the summer towards the cooler forests of the lower slopes of autumn. September the wind-down month approaches with its own joys of the season of *'mists and mellow fruitfulness'* to look forward to.

*"In the cycle you have simplicity wedded to speed, frailty joined with reliability, inexpensiveness linked to durability. The cycle is the producer of real joy without complication – without worries. It is a wonder machine of infinite possibilities."*

Anon – (from 'On your Bike' – BBC Radio 4, 14/2/11).

**Paul Fenton.**

### CTC SUFFOLK TROPHIES

Here is an update following on from a piece in the September 2024 Winged Wheel regarding the future of the CTC Suffolk trophies. The Ipswich Transport Museum were not interested in taking them because firstly, they have an interesting display of Ipswich Bicycle Club Memorabilia and secondly, do not have storage space for anything that is not on display. There have been no other suggestions put forward so we are left with no option but to dispose of them.

However, before doing so, it was felt that members should be given the opportunity to claim any trophy, listed below, in which they have a personal interest e.g. as a previous recipient. Please get in touch and we will gladly pass them on to a good home.

Wilkinson Memorial Attendance Trophy  
Junior Attendance Trophy  
Ladies Attendance Trophy  
Alan Peppercorn Trophy  
The Coleman Cup  
Oldest Bike to Sports Day/President's Picnic  
Winner Suffolk Heat British Cycle tourist Competition  
Graham Buck Tandem Freewheel Trophy  
Solo Freewheel Trophy

Judy & Michael Scott

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## Velorama

By Judy Scott

In April this year Michael and I had a wonderful holiday in Holland with Anne and Dave Dodds. We took our bikes in our cars and sailed on the ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland with the idea of cycling on some of the days that we were there. Our first full day was, to say the least, very wet so we agreed that it wasn't a day to cycle and, as we all wanted to visit Velorama, National Cycle Museum in Nijmegen, this was the day to do it and what an experience it turned out to be! There are over 200 cycles dating from the 1800s to the 1960s on 3 floors of an old warehouse



beside the river. I don't think I have ever come across such a

well cared for and beautifully displayed collection of cycles. This is one of my favourite pictures. It seems strange to think that the bike had to look a bit like a horse.

There was a professional photographer there who was taking pictures of different bikes against a white background and without any other bikes overlapping. Despite my best efforts, I wasn't able to get in on the act but Dave got chatting to him and this is the result. Well done Dave!



## Comfort Stops

Nicola Halton has kindly provided some information about possible comfort stops which riders may well find useful. Hasketon, Grundisburgh and Laxfield churches have toilets Great Glemham's toilet is always open by access through the outside wall of the church and Bredfield Village hall has a toilet which is available in daylight hours through the main door towards the entrance to the bowls club. Both Framlingham and Debenham have public toilets.

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## Bike Active North Suffolk

### By David George

"Bike Active North Suffolk" are moving from strength in their first "full season" of adult disability group cycling in North Suffolk. Since Spring/Summer 2024, the BANS team has moved from concept, through "construction" (i.e. establishing a volunteer and client base, becoming a CIO and establishing the required Governance, significant fundraising and engagement work, and equipment acquisition), training, and then commissioning early group rides. One of our major achievements was our storage facility (with associated planning approval) for the growing equipment fleet. We have had a huge amount of help from Hannah Johns and the team at Wheels For All, not just with advice, guidance, pointers and training, but also with great donation of bikes for our initial fleet.

Our volunteers come from a radius of up to 20



miles, and we're always seeking more adults to help us with this important Community on



Halesworth's beautiful vehicle-free Millennium Green, using a short section of Sustrans NCN1. Our clients range from south Norfolk to the Suffolk coast (we've even had a visitor from Guilford!) and vary from those lacking confidence or balance, through visual impairment,

to more complex needs. It's great to see all the hard work transition into session delivery and the joy experienced by our clients, and their carers.

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## 100 years of the Cyclists Touring Club By Tim Edmonds

### Introduction

On August 5<sup>th</sup> 1878, in Harrogate, 50 people voted to form the Bicycle Touring Club (BTC) and membership was invited at an annual subscription of half a crown. 144 people paid their money, attracted by the objects of the BTC which were:

- to promote touring by bicycle;
- to help tourists to secure companions; and



- to protect its members.

By July 1880 membership had grown to 2,629. The CTC was up and riding, becoming incorporated (i.e. with legal status) in 1887.



'Winged Wheel' by William Oakley, is a history of the CTC's first 100 years (1878 -1978). I read it and sometimes wished I hadn't. Often it was dull and boring – accounts of meetings, biographies of long gone ex-Presidents and Club 'worthies', debates over subscriptions etc. However, in the margins, were interesting snippets of cycling life, controversies and challenges. Some sound fresh, others are of their time and now seem baffling or incredulous to modern ears. This article describes some of these. Pictures are from the book.

### Membership

At the recent Suffolk CTC AGM, the committee worried aloud about declining membership. Such worries are not new.

At its birth, membership worries could scarcely be imagined. The Rover Safety bicycle, which appeared in 1888, avoided the dangers and required athleticism of the 'penny farthing'. A few years later John Dunlop contributed to cycling comfort with his pneumatic tyre. Roads were generally empty and the bike was the fastest thing on them. On its 21 birthday, CTC membership stood at 60,449. Oakley writes:

Cyclists were virtually kings of the road. Everybody wanted a bicycle. The lure of the highway, the call of the countryside, the adventure of travel in foreign lands – all could be indulged in without any serious impediment ...The distraction of a swifter, easier way of locomotion had hardly peeped from the wings.

By 1918 membership was down to 8,546. Oakley continues:

Motors were the immediate cause. Cars became more reliable, more comfortable and with better protection from the weather...The middle and upper class – business



men, doctors, lawyers, parsons, civil servants- who had formed the majority of CTC members were turning to motors: they could afford them.

Paid holidays were not yet available to the obvious replacement – the working classes- so their appetite for touring was in the future. Strangely, Oakley doesn't mention the war, which one might have expected to have had some impact!

Incredible as it might now seem, as a way of boosting membership, it was proposed to admit motorists. It was approved by the Committee, only to be blocked at the High Court hearing to change the CTC's Memorandum and Articles. Displaying commendable wisdom, Mr Justice Warrington refused the application on the grounds that one organisation couldn't 'protect equitably the rights and interests of cyclists and motorists'. A close run thing.

Membership trends waxed and waned. Numbers increased by 30,000 between 1941 and 1953, only to fall to nearly 1941 levels in 1959. Why? The reasons are complicated and, apparently beyond the best endeavours of the Committee to control. But they didn't always make it easy for themselves.

At times, the impression is that CTC only wanted the 'right' sort of member. But, becoming a member wasn't straightforward. If you thought that you just sent off your half crown and joined, think again: membership had to be applied for.

In 1896, 3,045 'candidates' put themselves forward for membership. Described much later as being a 'Carlton club' ritual, candidature came to be seen as so much 'Victorian lumber'. Candidate lists had to be published in the monthly *Gazette* to allow for objections. This had practical and financial implications. For example, in 1947 the list took up four, rationed, pages of 'very small type'. It also made the *Gazette* more expensive to produce and for an organisation which only sporadically achieved financial security, every penny mattered.

The candidate system was also ineffective. Since 1920 only one objection to membership had been made and then the 'blackballed' candidate simply gave another address and joined anyway. The publication in the *Gazette* of candidates' names was abolished in 1948, but, like all good clubs a list was still put up for inspection at the Registered office for a month.

There is no mention, however, of how many new members were recruited via the scheme, approved in 1941, to give free membership to prisoners of war! Perhaps the *Gazette* made its way behind enemy lines and gave hours of entertainment on a lonely night in Colditz.

Young people were also problematic with their 'pace and pranks', however, in an attempt to encourage the youth the CTC introduced affiliated status membership (at reduced rates) for organisations such as Scouts, Guides 'and any group of scholars at a *responsible* school'.

The YHA was established in 1930. The CTC was divided on the desirability of involvement. Were the hostels a competitor to the CTC's network of approved B&Bs, which reduced the value of membership, or were the young walkers of today the cyclists of tomorrow? Later, the CTC became enthusiastic supporters of the new DoE scheme.



## **Bike thefts**

The only Suffolk-specific reference in the book is in connection with bike thefts. Wartime restrictions on motoring made bikes valuable and hence thefts soared. In 1943, a voluntary bike ownership registration scheme began in Portsmouth and spread nationwide despite its lack of statutory backing. Oakley again:

In order to register, a cyclist gave his name and address and the make and frame number of his bicycle. In East Suffolk the police had 'great filing cabinets' recording 68,000 bicycles.

Other cities and areas had similarly large numbers registered. But the reduction in thefts was tiny compared to the vast amount of police time expended, and the scheme withered much to the delight of the CTC, who saw it as another wedge-end to compulsory registration, taxation and number plates. Motorist organisations were disappointed for the same reason.

## **British Cycle Tourist Competition (BCTC)**

Something completely of its (1950s) age was the introduction of the BCTC. Smelling faintly of ginger beer and wet cycle capes, this was designed as a test of all round cycle touring proficiency. It included map-reading, the negotiation of difficult terrain, intelligent use of machine and equipment, road behaviour general cycling, and touring knowledge. 400 took part in the first year, 652 in the second. The heats, held in 35 areas, and the final saw C.S. Comport of Hornchurch beat 31 rivals to be crowned champion for a year.

## **Traffic**

Road-rage preceded cars. Cyclists, it was claimed, frightened the horses and cart drivers took unkindly to the new-fangled machines. As early as 1899 a Gazette article on 'automobilism' appeared.

After WWI, the number of traffic accidents rose alarmingly. A *Roads Advisory Committee* (1919) was set up by government included no cycle groups despite their great efforts to do so. They did better with the *Royal Commission on Transport* (1928) and many of the things the cycling lobby wanted – driving licences, speed limits, compulsory third party insurance, hours of driving – featured in the subsequent Road Traffic Act (RTA) 1930.

The RTA also established the Highway Code. Although not legally binding (it still isn't) the Code was used extensively by the CTC when they defended members in Court or sought redress from motorists for harm caused. Consequently, there is a long history of CTC lobbying for changes to, or modifications of, the Code's wording. Notably the first Code addressed the thorny question, and the continuing battle, over riding two abreast with its peremptory "Make the passage of other traffic wishing to overtake you easier by getting into single file except on very broad roads".

At the heart of an enormous amount of CTC political lobbying and active court representation, was the battle it perceived between cyclists and 'the rest'. In its view, the government and local authority reflex to the fact of more accidents was to get everyone off the road, except cars. This right to exist, as first determined by a Court in 1888 which confirmed that bicycles were 'carriage' and therefore of equal legal status as other road users, formed the defence and touchstone of the CTC through its first century, and beyond. But this first principle had some bizarre consequences.

Not least of which was the CTC's active opposition to cycle paths. The first cycle path was constructed along two and a half mile stretch of Western Avenue, London in 1935. To the CTC, cycle paths were but another wedge shaped dart aimed at restricting bicycles from major roads by making cycle path use compulsory. Oakley writes:

Many coroners, magistrates, chief constables, and journalists had publicly pronounced cyclists as a 'menace', a 'confounded nuisance' – and the idea of segregating various forms of road traffic occurred as a way of getting them off the public highway onto separate paths 'for their own good'.

In September 1946 'The Fallacy of Cycle Paths' was published. This detailed the continental experience where cyclists had lost the right to choose where they rode and where path maintenance was neglected and they fell into such a bad state that, in places, pleasure cycling had virtually ceased to exist. Hence, with its now customary 'don't trust the buggers' attitude, the CTC antennae whirled when it read paragraph 74 of the 1947 Highway Code – 'If there is a cycle track, use it' – and later when a Transport Minister warned cyclists that

failure to obey the Code would 'count against them' in any subsequent legal proceedings. In 1948 the CTC stated that it:

approves the construction of special roads for cyclists and the taking over of existing roads for the exclusive use of cyclists, while at the same time maintaining its opposition the segregation of cyclists on separate tracks alongside public highways

And the CTC had good reason to worry. Attempts to prevent cycle access popped up all over the place. There was a long battle to secure use of the Mersey tunnel for example. A similar fight was fought over the Dartford-Purfleet tunnel and the threat to access existing ferry services. As traffic increased, competition for road space did too and the CTC were always on the look-out for (particularly) local authority by-laws that might impinge on cyclists' rights.

### **Fighting for cyclists' rights**

From the very beginning, the CTC was involved in lobbying for greater rights for cyclists or taking legal action to protect members who had suffered while riding. Such a tradition continues to this day. The battles fought remind one how far we have come. Reductions in bridge tolls; access to Royal Parks and canal towpaths; hazardous tramlines; and locked level-crossing gates were only a few of the battlegrounds.

The CTC was active in the courts too. A typical case was the car door opening collision. When one Member was found guilty of careless riding when they crashed into an opening door, the case became a cause, ultimately won by the introduction of a specific offence, by Regulation, in 1963. Of the CTC's suggestion of sliding doors for cars, we wait.

### **Lights**

It is hard to exaggerate quite how much Committee time was spent arguing and lobbying on the subject of bicycle lights and the desired combination of lights and reflectors. One might assume that lights (more specifically rear lights) would be thought of by the CTC as being a 'good thing'. Well up to a point, but in its wisdom CTC seemed to see requirements for red lights and reflectors as a manifestation of cyclists' inferior status to car drivers. They were in favour of just front lights 'to fix the onus on avoiding accidents on the overtaking vehicle'. That many of the calls for compulsory rear lights came from motoring organisations simply deepened its suspicions.

Even as late as 1950 the CTC were arguing *against* proposals that bikes should have rear lights and a reflector on a white background. In 1957 it was lobbying against a Private Member's Bill that sought to promote amber reflectors on pedals. Baffling.

### **Railway 'specials'**



This is something probably lost forever. The CTC had been active, from its inception in promoting rail-cycle travel, waging war on what it saw as unreasonable charges for bicycles and campaigning for the safer storage of bikes in luggage wagons.



The 'specials' were organised in conjunction with British Rail and were contemporary with the designation of National Parks and AONBs, often favoured destinations. The first was in 1955, from Willesden to Rugby. It was filmed by the British Transport Commission and the film, 'Cyclists Special', was shown nationwide. 360 cyclists went from Euston to Coventry and 150 went from Leicester to Worcester in May 1956. For a £1 fare, 350 people went from London to Burton on Trent in the September. Expediting these trips were the new luggage wagons which had hooks hanging from their ceilings – the culmination of the CTC's campaign to improve storage which began in 1888. Like many other things the 'specials' did not survive Dr Beeching's axe and an entire generation of 'jolly japes' were cut short.

### **Touring abroad**

Most of us now take for granted (even after the 'B' event) the ease of travelling abroad. Here in Suffolk we can hop on the ferry and are away. But just before WW2, the *CTC Touring Service*, in one year, prepared

- 1,823 Continental routes;
- 5,686 triptyques (?) and Customs tickets to the Continent and Ireland;
- 1,541 reduced fare vouchers for the Continent; and
- 286 passports applied for.

In addition, the Annual *Handbook* had a full section on Customs regulations and other information on the admission of cycles into foreign countries.

### **Conclusion**

At the end of the book I came away with a deeper affection for the CTC and greater respect for its work, particularly all those unsung heroes manning the committee front lines. In many ways we are much better off than our touring grandparents, better equipment, more established rights and infrastructure etc. Glad too that we are unlikely to breach some obscure Customs regulation if we get on the Harwich ferry, but one can't but help feeling sorry that there is no longer a railway special to whisk you away, with 250 friends, for £1.

As I have tried to show, many of the battles CTC fought are enduring ones and the challenges we face, like declining memberships, may not be terminal, we just wait the next inexplicable wave of enthusiasm for keeping the wheels turning.

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### From Estuary to Ocean: The Orwellermen's Singing Voyage to Falmouth

There's a certain courage that stirs in the soul when the sea calls—an adventurous spark that can take even the most sensible landlubber and set them adrift on a merry tide of mayhem. So it was that The Orwellermen, Suffolk's jolliest shanty crew, took to their bicycles and voices to pedal and sing their way across the country, from the muddy waters of the Orwell to the salty breezes of the Cornish coast—all in the name of cycling, camaraderie and charity.

It began, as many fine follies do, with a message in a bottle—well, a WhatsApp message from skipper Gareth one blustery weekend in October 2024: "Is it ridiculous to cycle to the Falmouth International Sea Shanty Festival?" What began as a fanciful notion soon gained wind in its sails. Gareth, fresh from a cycling holiday in Italy with his wife Ruth, fancied a fresh challenge. And perhaps, just perhaps, others might join the voyage.

By the end of the weekend, a crew had formed—ten brave souls rallied by optimism, madness, and a fondness for song. A meeting was held at The Dove Street Inn, where the beer flowed, the

singing echoed, and plans were laid in pencil rather than ink. Could a crew of amateur cyclists and enthusiastic shanty singers really conquer 447 miles across England? Only one way to find out.

Route planning became a delicate dance between the shortest, safest, and most scenic path. Accommodations were booked—with cancellation options, just in case common sense prevailed! Instead, the calendar turned, the training rides grew longer, and Richard began slotting gigs into the diary, one pub at a time—from the Green Dragon to the George and beyond.

As spring warmed into summer, the crew took to the roads with pedals and pitches, busking for the RNLI, Prostate Cancer UK, and the Selig Suffolk charity. The target? £1 for every mile—£4,500 in total. Legs were tested, harmonies rehearsed, and panniers packed.

They launched from a near-deserted cricket pitch in Ipswich under Suffolk skies, Johnno from local shanty crew Ships Rations presented the team with a Suffolk flag to proudly fly at the parade in Falmouth. The BBC counted them down, and just like that, The Orwellermen were away—wobbling westward on two wheels, bound for distant shores.

## Through Cities and Songs

Their first leg ended in Harlow, and the next few days brought more than their fair share of lessons and laughter. Cramped muscles, shared breakfasts, and hotel rooms occupied by both singers and steeds. Cycling



**The Orwellermen**  
*Falmouth International Sea Shanty Festival 2025*

<b>Sat 14th June</b>	<b>Sun 15th June</b>
<b>4pm Palacio</b>	<b>1.30pm Falmouth Hotel</b>
<b>8.30pm Green bank Hotel</b>	<b>4.30pm Falmouth Rugby Club</b>

### *Before a storm at Hyde Park*

through London proved less perilous than feared: quiet canals, hidden parks, and a memorable evening gig at the Swan Inn in Isleworth that left the team buoyed by applause and ale.

### *Before a storm at Hyde Park*





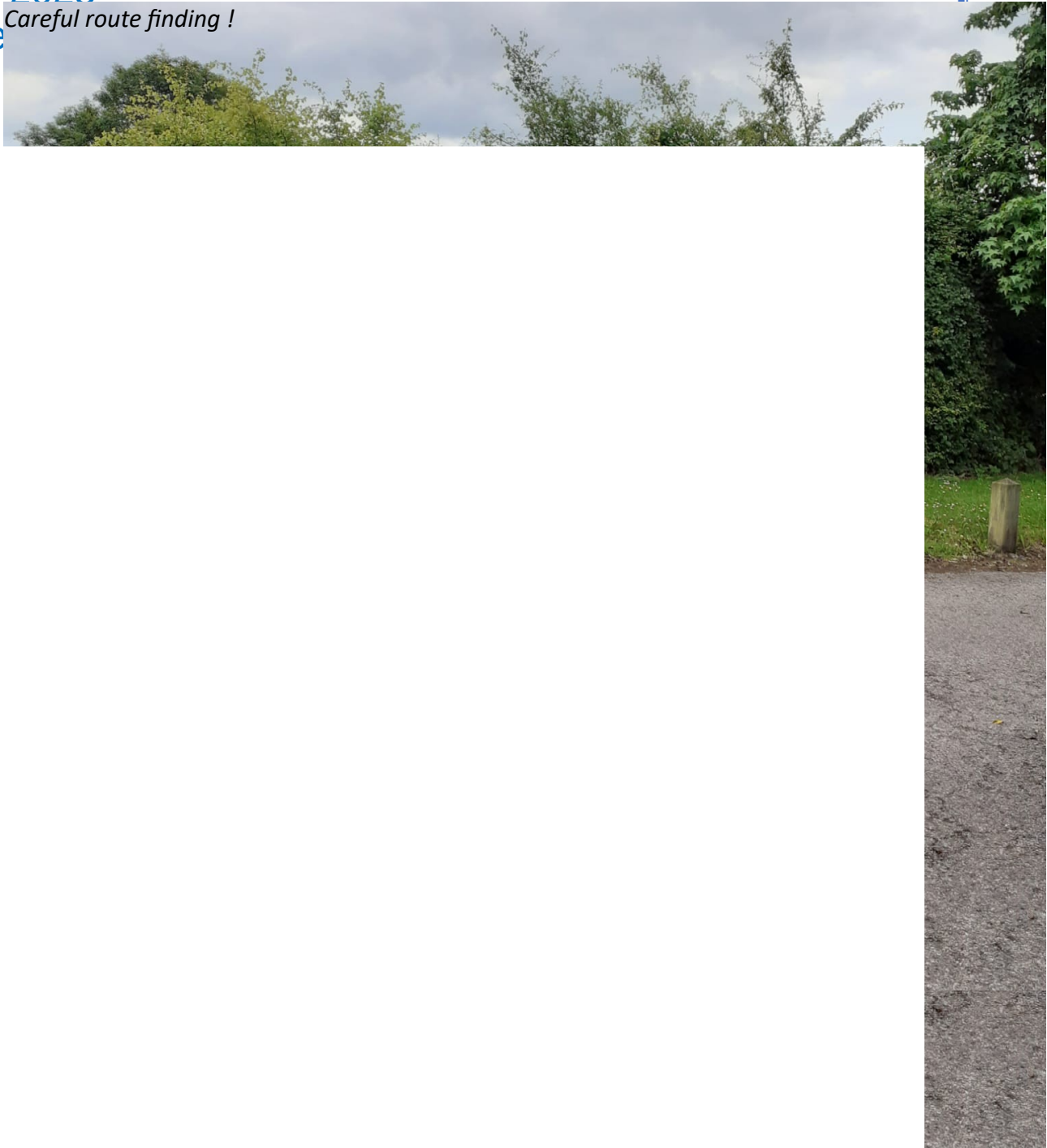
Westward they went, with sunshine on their backs and ever-louder choruses on their lips. Windsor Great Park, Newbury Racecourse, and sleepy Somerset villages each gave up a bit of hospitality, a bit of cheer, and sometimes a slice of cake. At Tucker's Grave cider house, they sang for beef stew and local cider, while in Devizes, the mystery of the missing tenth roll became crew folklore.

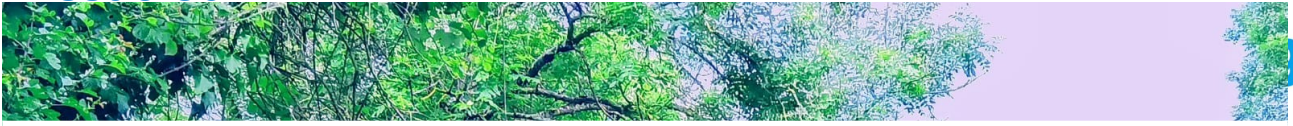
# Winged Wheel

June 2025

Issue

*Careful route finding !*





Birthdays were celebrated with cake, chocolate, and lardy cake - or, in Phil's case, a birthday puncture before breakfast. Yet the hills were rising, and so too the challenge. Devon's steep climbs were matched only by its generous welcomes. One coaching inn in Hatherleigh even stabled their bicycles in a grand old function room where horses once trod.

### Wind, Rain, and Revelry

The rains came hard across Bodmin Moor, sending rivers down lanes and morale down with it. But warm reunions, ginger pudding, and the laughter of old friends kept spirits afloat. In Bodmin, a Thai buffet and a packed house raised £275 for charity in a single evening—proof that even a bunch of drenched singers on soggy bikes can bring people together.

By the time they reached Falmouth, The Orwellmen had weathered storms both literal and emotional. BBC Cornwall welcomed them once more, and local



cycling club The Falmouth Wheelers led the final approach. As they arrived at the Princess Pavilion, rain-drenched and road-weary, Suffolk flags fluttered proudly. They had made it.

## Festival Glory





Falmouth greeted them with parades, platforms, and a sea of shanty lovers. From Palacio Lounge to The Greenbank, The Orwellermen sang their hearts out—sometimes to packed rooms, other times to curious crowds they had to win over. One performance saw them cycle into the venue, bells jingling, Roger announcing their arrival like a pirate town crier. It worked—the marquee filled, the crowd swayed, and the energy soared.

On Sunday, at the stately Falmouth Hotel, the crew sang beneath scudding clouds to an appreciative audience on the lawn. One man left his mobility buggy to climb the treacherous grass bank on walking sticks to shake their hands. “You made my weekend,” he said. They heard that more than once.

Their final gig, a quieter affair at the Rugby Club, was no less heartfelt. Tight harmonies, confident leads, and newfound poise marked the end of a musical voyage. And of course, they closed it all at The Seven Stars, Penryn- with cake, chorus, and local beer.

### Anchored, but Not Ashore

In total: 447 miles, £3,000 raised, three punctures, one fall, and a thousand memories. More than just a musical tour, it was a lesson in grit, joy, and the power of community.

Now the tide draws them back to Suffolk, to familiar creeks and cosy pubs. But something has changed. The Orwellermen have found more than their sea legs—they've found their stage legs, their voice, and camaraderie.

The Orwellermen Sea Shanty Crew are a community based group of singers welcoming all comers to their twice monthly meetings at The Steamboat Tavern in Ipswich. Details of their meetings and events can be found in their website site [www.orwellermen.org.uk](http://www.orwellermen.org.uk).

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