a spanner as it's an Ergotec pedal. I've laid the bike on the side, sprayed WD40 over the bolt/axle and tapped the crank with a hammer to perhaps assist the fluid in penetrating into the thread. Any advice would be welcome. Otherwise I suppose it's a trip to the bike shop.
Blackredgold1964, on the Cycling UK Forum

A If you can't get a decent grip of the axle via the damaged hex socket, you may be able to remove the pedal body and grip the axle in a vice, although this is likely to damage the axle beyond further use.

Stuck pedal axles are a common problem but really should not be. The axle thread must be greased before installation, and the axle done up snugly but not over-tightened. As someone once said: pedal spanners have long handles so you can undo the previous mechanic's efforts. Unless greased, the pedal axle and crank threads will micro-weld themselves together thanks to the tiny movements in the same precession effect that keeps pedal axles from unscrewing, even when lightly done up.
Richard Hallett

Legal

Drivers throwing things

Q I was riding along a cycle path that runs adjacent to a single carriageway bypass with a 40mph speed limit when I was hit by a full 500ml plastic bottle from a car travelling in the opposite direction. The impact on my 73-year-old left knee was both a shock and very painful.

I am grateful that the bottle did not hit me in the face. I will now invest in a helmet-mounted camera! I wonder how frequent such incidents are and whether anyone been successfully prosecuted for assault in such cases?
Gerry Davies

A If the bottle were deliberately thrown or released from a car, then that is an action which would carry a foreseeable risk of injury. It may have forgetfully been left on a bonnet, roof or boot.

The relevant law is The Environmental Protection Act 1990, s87, on which Rule 147 of the Highway Code is based. The Highway Code says: "You MUST NOT throw anything out of a vehicle... this can endanger other road users, particularly motorcyclists and cyclists."

Had you, for example, been knocked off your bike and sustained a serious injury, there would have been a potential claim to the Motor Insurers' Bureau under the Untraced Drivers Agreement, which doesn't only cover 'hit and runs', 'fail to stops' and crashes resulting from diesel spills and lost loads. It is necessary to establish, on the balance of probabilities, the involvement of a motor vehicle and a negligent act by the driver or the occupants for whom the driver is responsible.
Paul Darlington

Technical

Tandem headset

Q The 1 1/8in Aheadset on my Viking tandem has had a hard life for the last few years. It gets ridden two or three times a week on potholed roads. The fork race looks worn out and brinelled to me. Although the balls are in good condition and the steering is surprisingly smooth, I feel a replacement of this 14-year-old component is overdue. I was considering something chunky like the heavy FSA Pig but wondered if you had any recommendations? Ideally for something reasonably priced, robust and easily serviceable.
zenitb, on the Cycling UK Forum

A There are plenty of 1 1/8in pressed-in headsets on the market at prices from around £10 to over £100. As ever with cycle components, a higher price indicates lighter weight. The lowest-cost headsets also use basic bearings, perhaps with caged balls that are shielded rather than sealed from the elements and cups pressed into their shells. More expensive headsets use angular-contact cartridge bearings.

Which is the more easily serviceable? Headset cartridge bearings are easily removed from their cups for replacement but can't readily be 'serviced'; replacement at a cost of around £10 to £15 per cartridge, depending on make and model, is the only option when they wear out. Caged bearings can be cleaned and greased as required but are more exposed to the elements.

Generally, if a budget headset wears out, the whole assembly must be replaced, which means removing the cups from the frame's head tube. If you are happy doing this and servicing the bearings regularly, such a headset may be the preferred option. Otherwise, a mid-range offering with removable cartridge bearings will do the job, provided the bearings themselves are easily obtained.
Richard Hallett

Get in touch

EMAIL your technical, health, or legal questions to *editor@cyclinguk.org* or write to Cyclopedia, Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX. Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished queries. But don't forget that Cycling UK operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, **TEL:** *0330 107 1789*.