

LETTERS

Write to: Cycle Letters, CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX, or email cycleletters@ctc.org.uk

CITY SLICKER

Your February/March issue contained a very positive review of the Dawes Super Galaxy on its home territory of touring, an area in which it is well known to excel.

As a satisfied Galaxy rider, it always puzzles me that touring bikes are not the default choice for city riders too. I do thousands of miles a year round London on mine, and wouldn't – now – use anything else. It's faster than a mountain bike, much tougher than a road bike or hybrid when it comes to negotiating potholes, and ideal for carrying shopping, briefcases etc. as most London cyclists do.

Best of all, perhaps, as you point out in your security feature, 'nobody down the pub wants a touring bike', so it is unlikely to be stolen.

Matthew Wright, London



PRACTICAL CYCLING

As a new member of CTC, I heartily endorse the views of Paul Hayes (Letters, Feb/Mar) on the need to reach out beyond the Lycra and cleated-shoe brigade to more utility cyclists. We know all too well that not everyone has our enthusiasm for 'serious' cycling. A bike is many things to many people; that's part of its appeal. It is also a great leveller, not in a downward mode of course but by embracing the broadest possible constituency and developing a classless cycling culture form which all will benefit.

In the Oct/Nov issue, Simon Legg appealed for councillors – 'the kind of people that we're not'. Such persons are essential; new perspectives and ideas geared to widening the appeal of the organisation and building for the future.

The article on bike/train integration reminded me of how disparate this

still is, each Train Operating Company having its own regulations on permitted numbers, pre-booking, charges and time exclusions. It makes a cycle/train journey a logistical nightmare. What we actually need is simplicity – uniform provision of two metres of carriage space or equivalent on all trains at all times. That gives room for six to eight bikes stacked end on end. When not occupied by bikes, it would provide space for standing passengers rather than them travel draped over seated ones.

Everyone would benefit, including TOCs. So simple and effective; an ideal way to make cycling as accepted a part of everyday life, as it needs to be in an increasingly carbon-conscious world.

Terry Stanley, West Bromwich

LEARNING TO RIDE

Several years ago you published an article on getting youngsters a-peddalling. The gist was to take the pedals off, put the saddle down and get them scooting hobby-horse-like on the bike, until they feel comfortable with that. As a new grandparent I made a mental note of that gem.

We are presently lucky enough to be able to look after our two grandchildren one afternoon a week. I felt the 4 1/2 year-old should be getting some bike practice, so spent 30 or 40 minutes with her scooting the pedal-less bike up and down the road. It's been pretty cold recently, but I did manage four or five such sessions over the last few weeks.



on, no tears) the smile went right around her face three times without stopping! We now have another cycling enthusiast in the family and, like her Dad, before her fifth birthday. So thanks for that superb advice. How encouraging to know it works a treat.

Ian Hewitt, Rowlands Castle, Hants

Last week, after an initial scoot or two, I put the pedals back on, pushed her for 10 yards and – wow – we had lift-off – and after one topple (gloves

Balance bikes or leaner bikes, which we reviewed in the Dec/Jan issue, use the same hobby-horse philosophy with the same ultimate result. For more or teaching children to ride, choosing suitable bikes, and riding with them, see the new CTC Guide to Family Cycling. Details on page 40.

TOURING WITHOUT TAKING OFF

It's always inspiring to hear about big tours, but it's a shame that Al Humphreys felt the need to fly when he clearly had two perfectly decent wheels. Many of us ride because we like the world the way it is, and are a little miffed that the car and aviation industries are so intent on boosting climate chaos. The science is clear – we have to kick the 'plane habit if we're to get our carbon footprints down to a safe level.

So when are CTC going to stop promoting cycling holidays that involve flights? It's far more fun to ride properly. If you want proof have a look at www.tour-de-world.co.uk. Tabs and Claire set out last spring for New Zealand, and have reached Cambodia using nothing but their bikes, their legs and the occasional train. And yes, oceans can be tricky but www.seat61.com is a great place to start looking for boats and alternative routes.

Liz Snook, Cornwall

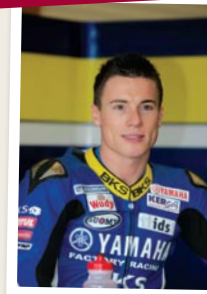
See the head-to-head article on flying on pages 46-47 for more on this. And don't forget that CTC's Campaigns Dept wants to hear from members regarding the formulation of a policy on climate change. For details on how to contribute, see page 13.

GO GROUP RIDING



Having seen my photo in last issue in the article for South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire CTC, I would like to urge members to make use of their local groups. I was a keen cyclist and had the basic stamina for covering 40 or so miles in one ride but this can be lonely and I was tending to cover the same 'close to home' routes. I needed to expand my horizons. My father in law (now sadly deceased), said 'Join the CTC, son. You'll find places hereabouts that you never knew existed.'

CYCLING CELEBS



JAMES TOSELAND

WORLD SUPERBIKE CHAMPION

Why do you cycle?

To maintain my fitness while

maintaining my size. I have a gym routine but don't want to build too much muscle this year because the power-to-weight ratio on the MotoGP bike is important. Cycling is a great sport and unlike the gym it remains interesting.

About how many miles do you ride in a week?

I cover about 20-30 miles in one session. I go out two or three times a week and cover about 100 miles in total. Now that the MotoGP season has started I don't get to go out as much.

Which is your favourite bike?

I was presented with a Pinarello Prince by my motorcycle sponsor, Bennetts, to help with my training regime for this year and congratulate me on my 2007 World Superbike Championship victory. It was totally unexpected and exactly what I wanted, so that's my favourite.

Who mends your punctures?

Me. Unfortunately I can't get a team of mechanics to follow me like when I'm on my motorcycle.

It's raining: bike, bus, train, or car?
Car, I'm afraid.

Lycra or normal clothes?

When I'm doing a long run or cycle ride I prefer to wear full Lycra. If I'm doing a short run or cycle ride I'll just wear normal clothes.

What's your favourite cycle journey?

The Isle of Man TT course, but it would be a lot easier on a motorcycle.

What do you take when cycling?

Usually Monster energy drinks and Science in Sport energy bars to keep me going. I'll sometimes take my mobile phone but I try not to.

What single thing would most improve matters for UK cyclists?

The government could improve safety issues such as how close vehicles are when overtaking, especially large trucks.

If you had £100 of bike shop vouchers, what would you get?

I would buy a more comfortable seat. Sometimes on a long ride I would enjoy a little more comfort.

It was with some trepidation that I made contact with Doncaster section just over two years ago. One Sunday morning in November 2006 I made my way to the meeting point for the day's ride, thinking 'Will my bike be good enough? Am I wearing the right gear? Will I keep up? Will they speak to me?'

I arrived for the start and these thoughts were soon put to rest. The group – of a dozen or so – were all keen to welcome me and we set off for the day. I was amazed at how quickly the miles seemed to pass as we rode quiet lanes that I never knew existed. New friends rode beside me and all were kind and helpful, teaching me the etiquette of group riding. Staying in the middle of the group I found the pace comfortable and the pace good. Dinner stop was at a roadside café and then it was back on the bike for more miles. It didn't seem long before we were heading back to Doncaster and members were leaving the group for their own rides home.

I arrived back having covered over 50 miles feeling a little tired but having had a really good day. I was hooked. In the two years since I have become a regular and rarely miss the 'Sunday run'. I have progressed within the group and now am sufficiently confident to lead the group for rides. My last one took in three counties and over 60 miles with two café stops.

Group riding is fun. You'll make new friends who share your interest. The pace is always moderated for the group and there are always volunteers to help with any punctures or breakdowns. No one is ever left to fend for themselves and the wealth of cycling experience is astounding. Contact your local group.

Eric Flatman, Doncaster

LIGHTWEIGHT TOURING @

Thank you a great magazine. The 'You Ride' piece by Steve Grady (back in April 2006) was particularly interesting. I wonder if you could persuade him to describe in more detail how he manages to get his total load (including bike) for a two-week tour down to 30lb (13.6kg). That is amazing. I'm sure there are many in the club who are trying to lighten their loads and we would all benefit from his experience. He sounds like a very interesting bloke.

There seems to be a growing interest in ultralight cycle-camping in the club judging by a discussion on the 'Touring' messageboard at present. The tips on camping/cooking have provoked a lively debate. It's good to hear of people trying to move away from the 'over-loaded' style and perhaps this could be encouraged in

the magazine from time to time.

Jack English, by email

There's room for all kinds of touring in the magazine, from heavyweight cycle-camping through to credit card touring and all points in between. Look out for an article on travelling light shortly.

SECURITY MEASURES @

Why was I not surprised that in the article on locks in the Feb/Mar issue there was no mention of the lock inbuilt to the Batavus cycle I bought in Holland six years ago? This is the clamp lock on the back wheel that is activated by removing a key from the frame. No, it doesn't prevent the cycle being lifted and removed but it does very effectively stop the back wheel turning and with the cable-type lock that can be bought with it, it can be fastened to a stand, etc.

Patricia Fort, by email



In the article on bike theft, numbers of thefts are given which purport to be 'Home Office figures'. They aren't: they are police figures and do not purport to be a measure of crime. That is why the Home Office publishes estimates from the British Crime Survey alongside the police figures. The latter show that in 2005/06 only 36% of cycle thefts were reported to the police and not all those were recorded by the police. The BCS estimate was 482,000. This suggests that less than one quarter of cycle thefts ended up in the police figures.

It would be good if CTC could take the initiative in exploring with the Government and police ways in which theft could be reduced. There are various schemes for tagging bikes and recording details such as frame numbers. Such schemes can help the police restore bicycles to their owners and make it easier to prove that a cycle has been stolen and thereby catch the thief. In doing so it should also help deter potential thieves.

A quick Google shows that there are various schemes involving tagging and registration, some free. Having had such

a depressing piece on bicycle locks it would be good to have an article about the various schemes aimed at tackling cycle theft that do not rely on locks. What schemes are around? And what evidence is there as to the effectiveness of each?

David Moxon, by email

Wheel locks or 'nurse's locks' are something we've reviewed in the past. I can't think of one that Mr X and Mr Y wouldn't be able to cut or smash. However, they have the excellent advantage of being on your bike at all times, so you can clunk-click every trip.

As for registration schemes, I agree: it would be useful to know how effective they are. Expect a feature at some point.

COVER STORY

Regarding the winter cover photo of the Dec/Jan issue, I feel your correspondent is missing the point. Surely the only pertinent issue surrounding that rather lovely photo is whether (as I suspect) or not, its subject is American mountain bike racing legend John Tomac, who straddled the disciplines of the international scene in the 1990s with Merckx-esque brilliance, and now lends his name to fine range of cycles.

Geoff Wood, by email

RUBBER SOLUTION

On having to mend yet another puncture (despite having PRS tyres) I decided that I'd have a new innertube – 10 patches being enough for any tube! I was wondering which of the many recycling receptacles this item should go in when I struck on a great new life for the tube.

Last year, after back troubles, I took up pilates – brilliant, but my home exercise routines lacked the long strong rubber strip we use at the class for resistance work. Need I say more? It is the perfect piece of equipment. So the old innertube is helping to build up my core strength – my new innertube!

Sarah Davies, by email

WINGED WHEELS WEBSITE



I have finally completed the re-build of the www.wingedwheels.info website. I hope

I have incorporated all the updates and sightings that people have sent me over the past year and which have just been held on file for the time being.

So, I'm back in business and if you have additional information, some of you promised new photos, then I'd be grateful to receive anything. A picture of the new CTC HQ with its 'Headquarters' wheel would be nice too!

Keith Matthews, by email

SPAIN AGAIN

I am the author of the article 'An Iberian Coast to Coast', which was published last summer. I would like to sympathise with Larry Clarke (Letters, Dec/Jan) for his need to dismantle his bike and pack it in a bag for his coach trip to Santander. I have only ever done this once when I took the bike by air – and thoroughly regretted it. The bike has never been the same since.

In all my trips on Spanish coaches I have never been asked either to dismantle my bike or to pack it in a bag. The Spanish 'autobus' network is very fragmented and different companies may have different policies. However, all the buses that I have used (which are of the style that we call coaches) have happily let me place my bike upright in the very large luggage compartment underneath the seating area. It was never treated as an inconvenience or refused.

Larry was unlucky. I hope his experience does not dissuade too many people from taking their bikes by public transport to Spain. The ferry journey to Santander is a pleasure and the Spanish mountains a wonderful cycling challenge. Perhaps the best answer is simply to cycle all the way!

Cecilia McCabe, Oxford

THANKS, CTC

I have been a member of CTC for three years now and I just wanted to say a quick thank-you for putting me into contact with Russell Jones and Walker after a bus crashed into the back of me last year. I have just received confirmation of a payout to cover damages, etc. Russell Jones and Walker were excellent from the start and the whole process required very little effort on my part.

Tom Collier, by email

CYCLIST BATTALION?

Whilst visiting the War Graves Commission site in Poona, India, I came across a monument to members of the London Cyclist Battalion. This was from WW1. I have not heard of this battalion before and would be interested if any CTC member could provide more information.

I presume that it carried messages, but

OBITUARIES

JOHN WAY

The death of John Way at the end of January, shortly before his 91st birthday, will recall for many older members the difficult days of the 1960s and '70s and the resultant falling fortunes of the Club's magazine to meet the Council's demands for economy. Having become Assistant Editor on joining the headquarters staff in London shortly after the war, John worked on the then flourishing Gazette, taking over as editor in 1959. The ensuing years, however, brought a decline in interest in cycling, and a consequent drop in advertisement revenue as old firms and manufacturers faded away. The magazine shrunk in size, only to return to larger format when in 1964 it became *Cycletouring*. Whatever the changes, John Way's editorial skills never faltered, always ensuring a high standard of written content and layout. Awarded the CTC Merit Medallion in recognition of his service to the club, John retired in 1980. John was a popular leader of CTC organised tours abroad and author of the series of 'Good Companion' touring guides to various parts of Europe. His illness at the end of the year was brief; his life fulfilled. *Les Warner*

ALAN MASON: 1940-2007

Alan died as a result of a fall from his bike when descending a rough track. Throughout his life he had been a keen sportsman – an international orienteer and runner, and latterly a strong cyclist. As a project engineer he travelled the world participating in sport wherever he worked. Since retiring he had been a regular rider with the Birmingham Southern Wheelers and enjoyed several CTC tours. *John Bennett*

DENNIS TEALE

Dennis served on the Committee of the Hull and East Riding DA for many years as Treasurer, a post in which he excelled. He was a first class organiser and keenly interested in audax rides, as well as acting as front rider for the Beacholme Blind tandem group. His death, at the age of 63, was a great shock to all who knew him. He will be sorely missed. *Peter Wilson*

OLIVER PATRICK PLUNKETT

Died peacefully at home, aged 78, on 16th December, following a long illness bravely borne, while

OBITUARIES CONTINUED

surrounded by his loving family. A Superintendent City of Dublin Division, St. John Ambulance Brigade of Ireland, long time member of CTC and life-long member of An Óige, he will be greatly missed by his family and friends. Donations, if desired, to St. Matthew's Church Refurbishment Fund. 'Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam dilis' ('There will not be the same again, may he rest at God's right hand'). *Garry Byrne*

BILL HEYWOOD: 1914-2008

Bill, president of East Lancashire DA, died in January after a short illness. Bill joined CTC in 1931 and rode regularly with the club until shortly before his death. He was awarded a certificate of merit in 2006. A kind and generous man, Bill loved riding on quiet lanes and tracks. An active man, Bill was also president of Colne FC, as well as being a talented pianist. Bill regarded every cyclist as his friend. Knowing him was a privilege. *Ian Lowcock*

RICHMOND STEPHENS: 1923-2007

From the age of nine, when he was given a bicycle, Steve was a passionate cyclist. He became a life member of CTC. He and his wife Margaret, who died in 1991, led many CTC tours around Europe – Austria and Norway being great favourites. When the age limit prevented him from leading, Richmond continued making 'moving on' tours for two around Europe until he was 80. These, and his Sunday forays over and around Exmoor were a great pleasure to both of us. His heart condition restricted him to short rides in 2007, and he died on 12th December. *Mrs EM O'Shea*

ARTHUR GEORGE HAMES

Died on 18th February, aged 88. He and I were not able to cycle of late years, but what pleasure we had when we did. Arthur had been a staunch CTC member since January 1940. After the War – when I joined, aged 18 – we became friends. In those days we rode with the Intermediate Section. Love blossomed and we were married in 1951. Club cycling continued and I came to know the highways and byways of Leicestershire like the back of my hand. We later helped to form a Family Section. Arthur was a quiet, very dependable and practical man. He will be missed by all. *Mrs JS Hames*

Send obituaries, ideally 100 words or fewer, to the usual editorial address (p84).

what else did it do? When was it formed? Did it see active service? If so, where? (Note that the cemetery covered several theatres of war.) When was it disbanded? Who was recruited and on what basis?

Any further information would be most interesting.

Frank Rhodes, Uxbridge



Cyclist battalions were a feature of WWI but huge numbers of cyclists also served in regular battalions. The Meriden Memorial in Warwickshire was erected in 1921 from public subscription to commemorate the many cyclists who died. A visit to the Meriden Memorial Service on 18th May as part of the Heart of England Rally is an important part of the cycling calendar – see page 73.

READERS RESPOND

I was delighted and astonished at the great response to my appeal for sighted readers of Cycle for the benefit of blind and partially sighted CTC members. Up to now we have had 22 offers of help and two volunteers have already provided recordings for the next issue. We now have a reserve list, from those who have agreed to read for us if needed.

Many thanks for your help. Thanks too to all the kind people who responded so readily.

David Slater, Penicuik

PHILBROOK FRAMES

In the Feb/Mar issue of Cycle, I read a letter about Bill Philbrook (not Phil Brook). As I knew him well but have never read anything about him published in this country, I thought I would add a little to Mr Flinn's letter.

Bill worked in a small shop in a run-down part of Gillingham, Kent. When I first met him he had a reputation in the cycle trade for the excellence of his work and his interest in innovation. (When I first knew Bill he was building an aeroplane for a customer to attempt man-powered flight!) But the public's interest in cycling was declining and he spent most of his time repairing industrial refrigerators. This was probably in the 1970s, and business picked up.

In addition to building his own frames to order, he made small batches of Grandinis for Youngs. Meridian was mentioned but as far as I remember, he had started frame building at Claud Butler. I don't know why but his work was better known in America and in Italy, and articles have been published about him in Italian cycling magazines. At one time an American frame builder who had read about Bill came to work with him in his shop in Gillingham. This shop was only open on Saturdays and was more workshop than shop.

If more information on Philbrook is required, he was obviously a well-known figure in North Kent and his widow may well still be with us.

Colin Manghan, Crawley

OBSTRUCTING PROGRESS

Further to Tim Henney's letter (Caution, cyclists, Feb/Mar) the cyclepath 'crush' didn't suddenly become a dangerous feature. It was a dangerous feature from the start. It is badly designed, having small surface areas where contact may occur. The hazard is not highlighted, being painted in a dull colour (the same as the bridge) and there are no warning signs on a path that is designated a shared cycle/walking path. I wouldn't like to have a five year old or an OAP cycle through this type of crush as if anything happened they would hit solid metal.

I was unaware the crushes were



being put in and didn't see any official applications for comments. Tim Henney's comment is like saying that potholes should be avoided as the cyclist doesn't have to ride into them but could go around them. Indeed, in my daily journey there is a barrier where you have to get off to go around as depicted in the Oct/Nov 2007 magazine.

Alistair Whybrow, by email

We reserve the right to edit letters for space and clarity. The editor reads all letters and emails, and all are acknowledged, but we cannot guarantee that yours will be published or that you'll get a detailed reply.

You can use the letters page to comment on any cycling topic, but if you have a specific complaint or query about CTC policy that you want answering, you should address it to the relevant councillor or National Office staff member.