

# CYCLE LETTERS

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

## SCHOOL-RUN CYCLING



I enjoyed Alix Stredwick's article 'School-run cycling' last month and her interesting examples of good practice in Scotland. Whilst on holiday near Oban in September I was fascinated by a bike-and-ferry school run I discovered. The photo shows schoolchildren boarding a local authority-run ferry home, with their bikes, having donned lifejackets, for the 200m crossing from the Isle of Seil to Easdale, the smallest, permanently inhabited, Inner Hebridean island. Easdale has no vehicles or roads. So much easier for encouraging cycling!

David Hurdle

I wish to take issue with you over the choice of photograph used to headline the otherwise excellent article entitled 'School-run cycling' (Cycle Oct/Nov 2010). I am amazed that: a) parents would allow their children to cycle to school in flagrant breach of basic safe cycling practice; and, b) that this magazine published such a photo.

Over the past few years we have become accustomed to seeing photos and film clips of our now prime minister cycling into the Houses of Parliament with his cycle helmet dangling from the handlebars, thereby setting a very bad example. Now this! We all know that carrying anything on the handlebars can lead to an accident through loss of control. Shame on all concerned!

John Curry

## RIDING OVER RUNWAYS...

You recent article on cargo bikes (or trade bikes) was

very interesting. Back in the 1950s, when still at school, I delivered groceries on a trade bike from a shop in Ashford, Middlesex. Two of my Saturday morning deliveries were to airlines at London Airport (then known as Bath Road).

I just used to ride across the airfield, over runways, into hangars etc. Crossing a runway was just like crossing a road: check nothing was coming and ride across. Aircraft then were much less frequent, and of course smaller.

I sometimes wonder what would happen if a teenager were to try riding a trade bike with a large cardboard box on the front across London Airport now.

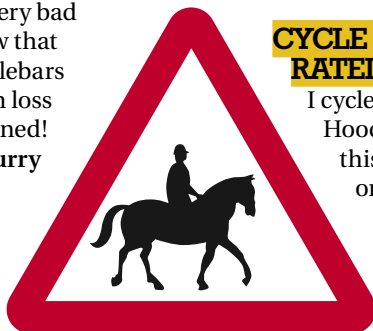
Phillip Matthews, Brampton

## HORSE SENSE

My wife, a horse rider of many years experience, read the legal query from David Robb (Cycling Answers, Oct/Nov) with interest. Her points were:

- When a cyclist nears any horse (not just race horses) the horse is often 'spooked', especially when it is approached from behind.
- A 'quiet cyclist' passing a horse can make even the most 'bomb proof' horse spook.
- The main reason for this is that a horse is a 'flight animal' and its basic instinct is to escape from 'predators'. What can cyclists do to avoid this happening?
- If you see a horse ahead (and before you get too close) call out 'Hello', 'Good morning' or whatever. Please speak normally.
- Cyclists should take special care especially on bridleways and in forestry plantations.
- It is important to give horses plenty of room when overtaking.

Terry Ratcliffe



## CYCLE ROUTES RATED

I cycled from Robin Hood's Bay to Inverness this summer, mostly on NCN Route 1. I found it a curate's egg. In some places it takes the sensible

## THAT WAS THEN

### 'It's only a cyclist'

As a victim of a 'I did not see you' driver [mentioned in previous issues of *Cycletouring*] I would like to advance a slightly different idea.

Having stopped at the 'Give Way' lines the driver allowed me to travel about 50 yards until I was in his sights, then just ran me down. My theory is that having seen me, and realising that I presented no danger to him, I was not recorded in his scheme of things. I'm sure that had I been a recognisable pint of nitro-glycerine, then I would not have finished up in hospital.

I must add that my claim for compensation after the accident was successfully handled by the Club's solicitors at no cost to me, a benefit of membership one hopes one will not have to use – but who knows?

Stan Wills, Waltham Cross  
*Letters, Cycletouring, December 1985*

See [stop-smidsy.org.uk](http://stop-smidsy.org.uk) for today's take on this.

route. But there are other places where avoiding main roads becomes obsessive, no matter how steep the hill might be. Detours can be substantial – Stonehaven to Aberdeen is nearly twice the distance of the A90 route. Surfaces are also very variable.



I think we need two kinds of network: a set of A routes that are optimal cycling routes between urban centres and B routes that cater for the need for scenic byways for recreation alone. We need cycle tracks as part of new trunk roads when these are built, like the Netherlands.

We could also do with signs that distinguish routes that need MTB capabilities from those that are suitable for even a road bike.

Dr John Heathcote

## STAY VISIBLE

I am encouraged to see your new campaign on cyclist-lorry collisions. But I was surprised that you fail to mention high visibility clothing. I have cycled in traffic and on country roads for over 35 years, and have never had a 'sorry mate I didn't see you' moment.

I've always worn a high visibility vest, and I find that if car and lorry drivers see you in good time, they give you plenty of room. I feel all cyclists should be advised to be highly visible – much more important than wearing a helmet!

Andy Mulley



## GOING OVER THE MOTION

CTC, The Cyclists' Touring Club, was founded in 1878 as a membership organisation with the aim of 'promoting the use of the cycle and supporting the users of cycles'. This applies more than ever today when traffic congestion, pollution, global warming and concerns about health all point to the benefits of using a cycle. In recent years, the CTC has achieved phenomenal growth in terms of membership, activities and groups. Now we need to become a charity in full so we can go forward as a unified organisation.

Members supported this at 2009 and 2010 CTC AGMs. Another 'yes' vote to the charity merger is essential to prevent us being dragged backwards. The public trusts charities more than any other organisational structure in the UK. This will bring about an even stronger CTC voice to lobby national and local government for improved safety for all who cycle and to bring about changes to the public's perception of cyclists

and the use of the bike as a means of transport.

Brian Morris

Conversion of our club to full charity status is a contentious subject with committed members, particularly since this year's AGM at Loughborough. Being one of some 600 members who recently signed a petition that will give every member the opportunity to vote on the subject of changing the CTC constitution, I was disappointed that the matter was mentioned only in passing in the October/November edition of our magazine and not at all in Cycle Clips.

The fact that there is little or no awareness of the pros and cons by active members of the club was illustrated by our Chairman's conversation with 29 members at the Eureka cafe as he commented on page 6 of our latest magazine.

Unless at least half our club's membership vote in favour of conversion in the forthcoming vote, I fail to see how our Council has the moral right take our membership into the existing charitable arm of the CTC.

David Aylett

It's disappointing to read the Chair of Council's latest instalment in the 'Charity' campaign; I did a similar survey with the opposite outcome! Whatever one's view, it clearly divides many members who of course joined the Cyclists' Touring Club as a membership organisation. Personally I don't think my club deserving of tax payers' money and have no wish to see the committee in a position that conflicts with members' interest. The Cyclists' Touring Club was formed to support cyclist independence and it's my view that charity conflicts with this ethos.

Martin Brain

There are more details of the poll on page 8. Cycle has to abide by CTC rules, which means publicising the poll in this issue of the magazine. I referred the specific points in these letters to members of CTC Council, who said: Those rules will also carry over to the new structure because it is the Club that is to become a charity and take over all CTC functions. All members are encouraged to vote, but as with any democratic decision it will be determined either way by a majority of those voting.'

## OBITUARIES

### MICK ANDREWS: 5/8/50-17/4/10

Passed away suddenly at home, leaving a huge gap in cycling in the Ashford area. When Mick and wife Julie moved to Ashford in the 1980s, they became involved in the then Ashford Section of the East Kent DA, building the section up and in 1992 masterminding the merger of Ashford and Shepway Sections to form South Kent DA. When cycling, Mick loved the hills. Riding on the back of his tandem tricycle down a long, winding hill was an experience not to be forgotten. *Roger Burchett*

### ERIC BRUMHEAD: 1947-23/1/10

Eric collapsed and died while riding his bike. A lifelong cyclist in East Yorkshire, he was involved in all branches of the sport and a good clubman, always ready to help anyone with mechanical problems. We first met him, Athena, Theo and Jodie at the Carnac Tandem Club Rally and have ridden thousands of miles with them since. Eric was a stalwart of the York Rally, arranging the cycle jumble on Sunday, and was part of the well-oiled team that gave us the 1995 Beverley Birthday rides. *Simon Larbey*

### PETER TINDLEY

Died 1st July, aged 76, as the result of a tragic accident in a time trial. After careers in the Navy and British Aerospace, Peter achieved his aim of cycling 100,000 miles in 10 years, many with CTC West Dorset. Time trialling with CC Weymouth, he won the club Vets on Standard every year. He toured on the continent, and across America, parts of Australia, and Vietnam. After mountain biking in the Dorset Dirt, and the Vias Verdes in Spain, he decided that would interfere with his time-trial training and his piano playing. *Malcolm Howell*

### ALBERT E JARMAN: 1930-2010

For many years Albert kept Hertfordshire CTC functional, bringing the Club through some difficult times. He joined CTC in 1944 and served on the Committee for almost 60 consecutive years; as Secretary for 36 years and President for the following 11 years. He also performed a variety of roles on the Lampard Road Club Committee for 57 years, despite never

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## OBITUARIES

racing. He received a CTC Certificate of Merit in 1988. His wit, friendship and wisdom will be missed. Our thoughts go to Anne, his daughters and all the family. *Brian Jackson*

### ALBERT MAURICE PURSER: 1918-2010

Maurice packed a lot into his life, once working as a butler in not only one but two stately homes, as well as living for ten years in Pakistan where he cycled the Himalayas on his trusty bicycle, teaching English to pay his way out and writing articles for English newspapers. He also spent two years cycling in Italy on the home front. Maurice wrote over 600 articles entitled 'In the Saddle' for the Lichfield Mercury, often illustrated by his own sketches. Maurice tirelessly promoted CTC and cycle touring, causing many to take up cycling due to the enthusiasm and interest he portrayed on paper. *Fred Dolman*

### JOSEPH MILFORD BLAKELOCK: 22/3/16-1/6/10

Milford was a lifelong member of CTC and an ardent tourist. With his family he camped and hostelled all over Great Britain, in all seasons. If you showed him a photograph he would know the area. Milford and his wife Phyllis cycled until they were in their 80s. He served on the Birmingham and Midland DA committee, organised the annual Remembrance Service on the Green at Meriden, and the Christmas carol service in the church. Milford did not agree with the new form of CTC. He liked our Club as it was. He was a true tourist. *Harry Child*

### JANET WILSON: 1934-2010

Died unexpectedly on 17th October, a great shock to her family. Over the years she rode with the Crosby Cycling Club, Aintree Phoenix CC, and the Mersey Ladies, for whom she was treasurer. Moving to Cheshire with husband Peter, they rode with the East Lancs Road Club. Settling in Bath in 1982, they joined Bath CC and CTC. Janet then enjoyed racing successes with the VTTA, becoming four times Ladies Best All Rounder and taking the National 24 age record in 1993. She was Secretary of the VTTA (West) for 14 years. Her humour, charming smile and genuine friendliness will be missed. *Ted King MBE*

## LAST POST



In September I passed the Royal Mail sorting facility at Shrewsbury and saw this bicycle funeral pyre. I have read the CTC campaign articles with interest and I am a firm believer that there is a future for cycling in the Royal Mail.

I would like Royal Mail to tell me:

- What are the bikes doing in a dumped heap?
- Are they all beyond economic repair?
- Are they going to be recycled?
- Have replacement bikes been delivered to Shrewsbury?

The move away from cycling is another mistake by Royal Mail management – just like the move away from mail by rail, now being replaced by hundreds of lorry movements instead.

Keep up the good work.

Mike Dodd

## BIKES FOR WOMEN

I am 5ft tall and for many years rode a bike too big for me. I managed and had child seats front and rear, and later a trailer as the children got bigger. Then luckily, about 10 years ago, somebody was selling a small Specialized Rockhopper through the local bike shop. I bought it and it felt immediately better.

More recently I bought a secondhand racer (advertised for a child or very small adult) and realised that what I really wanted was a touring bike with drop handlebars. It became apparent that such a thing does not exist, but a very helpful shop assistant came up with a Specialized Sequoia – a beautiful light bike to which I had a rack and mudguards fitted.

Clare Isherwood, Devon

The Specialized Sequoia is a sportif bike that would handle light touring, given lower gears perhaps, but it's no longer listed. I'd have suggested the Trek Pilot 2.0 WSD that appeared in Cycle to anyone looking for something similar, but that's also

disappeared for 2011! (You may be able to find 2010 versions.) If you spot any off-the-peg women's touring bikes, do let us know.

## BIKES AND EROSION

Like Julie Hopley (Letters, Oct/Nov), I am a walker as well as a cyclist. I am not anti-MTB and understand that CTC has to embrace changing styles, but the Editor's defence of 'no research' showing MTBs cause erosion is a bit lame. This year I have been walking in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Dorset and the Quantocks. In all those places, I have seen the same problem: bikers seeking the least rocky, most comfortable passage. This almost inevitably means pushing to the very edge of the path or finding a passage parallel to the path. This is widening routes in delicate upland eco-systems.

Bikers are usually friendly and I don't begrudge anyone (except 4x4ers) enjoying our uplands, but this is a problem, and is happening on footpaths as well as bridlepaths. If CTC is to promote off-road biking it needs to give a clear and consistent message about this!

John Larcombe



*Letters are edited for space (if above 150 words), clarity and, if necessary, legality. Note that if you have specific complaint or query about CTC policy, you should address it to your CTC Councillor or relevant national office staff member. Letters and emails for the Feb-Mar issue must be received by 24th December.*