

YOUR OPINIONS, YOUR CYCLING,  
YOUR IDEAS

# Letters

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**This month:** Club riding, coast-to-coast alternatives, touring luggage, fast food, lollipop spacers, maps, ice, and **Bob Dylan**

## CLUB RIDE REWARDS

I joined the midweek section of East Sussex CTC fairly recently. I initially found it difficult cycling in a group rather than alone, but the welcome that I received helped immensely. I have enjoyed riding with the tourist group but have, on rare occasions when weather and fitness combined, joined the energetic group for a more strenuous ride.

When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer (which required removal) the support from fellow club members was tremendous. Similarly, when I broke my elbow in a non-cycling fall, the support was very heartening.

The photo on the get well card I received (pictured) sums up all that is good about cycling and CTC membership generally – companionship, physical activity, access to lovely countryside and, above all, cycling. I can't wait to get back in the saddle even though this will probably be some gentle turbo-training in the first instance.

**ANDY CACKETT**



**Letter  
OF  
THE  
MONTH**

## C2C OVER THE BORDER

I enjoyed the article on the six northern England C2C rides by Rob Ainsley in the last edition of Cycle. Another coast to coast route that members might find interesting and challenging is just over the border, the South of Scotland Coast to Coast, from Portpatrick on the west coast and finishing in Berwick upon Tweed.

The route, which can be done in seven days if riding around 30 miles or so a day, uses mainly quiet country roads (and part of NCR7) passing through many towns and villages by the Solway Coast and through rural Borders countryside.

In May this year, I did the route with four other Dumfries and Galloway CTC members, doing

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Photo: Joolze Dymond

## C2C'S EASTERN GLORY

I'd take issue with a couple of sentences in the article by Joolze Dymond on the C2C route, in case they give potential visitors the wrong idea of the eastern end.

The Waskerley Way stretch is the last portion of the north Pennines, 'the last wilderness' in the country. Apart from the beautiful countryside, there is industrial history, the fantastic Hownsgill

Viaduct, and the Terra Novalis sculpture (giant theodolite) at Consett.

If Joolze had taken the northerly route to Tynemouth, she would have passed through the stunning Derwent Valley, again with viaducts, with views across to the Gibside estate and sightings of red kites. It ends at the wonderful Derwenthaugh Park, rescued from an industrial wasteland. The stretch along the riverside of the Tyne gives stunning views of the famous bridges. The option from Consett to Sunderland is equally rewarding.

**Carol Attewell, CTC member and  
Sustrans ranger for C2C (Washington)**

the 233 mile in four days. We recommend this route to other coast to coast baggers.

**Robin Hogg**



## SCOTTISH E2E

I have entered the Scottish End to End route that I wrote about in the Oct/Nov issue of Cycle in the CTC routes directory under the title 'Scottish End to End – MoGDun' at <http://www.ctc-maps.org.uk/routes/route/2471>

We used some Sustrans cycle routes around Troon to Ardrossan, which are not shown on the map. They were sometimes a bit slow. Otherwise I think it is a correct route record.

May I suggest that you require any contributor of a tour article to do likewise, and include a reference to it in the article?

**Mark Hagger**

## MAPS FOR TOURING

While planning another CTC holiday tour to the Highlands, member Simon Lawrence contacted me to tell me that OS had quietly withdrawn their useful 1:250k Road Map series of the UK, one of the maps I recommend to participants. However, Nicolson's have obtained the OS mapping rights and reprinted it under their own name, so the series still exists under their branding. A link to the site: <http://www.nicolsonmaps.com/acatalog/nicolson-tourist-maps.html>

**Gary Cummins**

## DIG IN!

Now aged 70, I have been a cyclist all my life, as my father was before me. He was a time triallist and I often heard him use the

expression 'dig in!' As my cycling horizons widened, I came to learn its meaning first hand: you're still an hour from home, it's raining, there's a strong head wind, and your legs have had enough. Whether you're racing or touring, it's down to you to 'dig in': you only have yourself to rely on.

This self-reliance stands you in good stead in the most unexpected circumstances. Last year I was diagnosed with cancer. The treatment lasted seven months and was successful: I'm back on the bike. Yet there were some very low periods during the treatment. This is when, without realising it, I was calling on the same determination that we have to call on so often on the bike. I told myself often that I must 'dig in', which made me smile and think of my father.

**John Spry**

## McDISAPPOINTED

Regarding the Dec/Jan issue of Cycle, I surely cannot be alone in wondering why the final picture, on page 41, appears as if an advert for a fast food outlet, in the article 'Eight nights north'. The bicycles are largely reduced to shadows at the bottom while the company name dominates above. I can understand Olympic organisers bending over to accommodate the organisation being referred to, despite public outcries, but was disappointed that CTC allowed this one through. Alternatively, why did you not crop the photo?

**Peter Sercombe**

**It was included, uncropped, as I felt it was part of the story. The cyclists were riding all night and that's where they stopped to eat. I've done the same thing before, albeit at Little Chefs. If you've ridden a long way and it's an unsociable hour, you just want somewhere that's open and that serves food.**



Photo: Ian MacSparran

## Obituaries

### John MacDougall: 1927-2012

We've said our last goodbyes to 'CTC Mac', who joined the Northumberland & Durham DA in the early 1950s and led the intermediate section on rides all over the north of England, as well into Scotland. He was an excellent photographer and put on slide shows in our clubroom during the winter. Thank you, Mac, for all your help, advice and companionship. Mac's wife of 48 years, Jean, died two years ago. He will be missed, although he wasn't able to cycle for the last 8 years. **Bruce & Pat Graham**

### John Ellis Rudd: 1944-2012

John started cycling in the Prestwich and Whitefield CTC in the early Sixties. He enjoyed time trialling, touring, and roughstuff and was an excellent photographer. For years he was section secretary and a stalwart of the Manchester DA. In the Seventies, he married Judith and they had Jennifer and Matthew. They were happily married for over 35 years. John was an engineer and draughtsman. He later used these skills in the construction of cycle frames and frame-building jigs. He died in August after an illness. **David Edge**

### Geoff Clarke: 11/7/1927-27/10/2012

A lifelong member of CTC, and the YHA, Geoff was an active member of South West London DA in his younger days, and again with the Midweek Wayfarers in later years. He was an avid cycle tourist and regular participant in the national BCTC finals, achieving 3rd place in 1965. Geoff was also one of the first to complete the National Touring Explorer's Award. His logged lifetime mileage stood at 299,286 miles, though in reality was much higher. He will also be remembered for his campaigning. **Roger Clarke**

### Jim Devitt: 12/2/34-12/11/2012

Born in Stockport, Jim was apprenticed as a carpenter before being called up for National Service. He joined the army, the Royal Scots Greys. He married Olga in 1957. Jim was a keen cyclist, and was frustrated that he couldn't spend more time riding his bike. At the age of 62, an aneurysm forced his retirement. Jim was old fashioned in some ways: he didn't like colour television, so turned his set to black and white. **Abridged from funeral service**

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Get feedback from other CTC members at [forum.ctc.org.uk](http://forum.ctc.org.uk). Here's an abridged extract from one popular thread in January (see <http://tinyurl.com/9wby83j>).



### ROBERTS V THORN V DAWES V SURLY

**horizon:** I am replacing my Dawes Sardar. The new bike must be a practical, heavy-duty load carrier (camping plus work trips, 5 bags) with 26in wheels. The contenders: Thorn Sherpa, Dawes Nomad, Roberts Roughstuff/Cumbria, or a Surly LHT.

**Dweasle:** I have a Surly LHT. It handles loads amazingly well. I've done over 3,000 miles without any problems, including self-sufficient camping trips in UK and France.

**bikerwaser:** I bought a Thorn Sherpa and it's

perfect for my needs: 40-mile day rides that involve some roads but mainly tracks, some of which can be more like a mountain bike trail. I tour with it and also do the weekly shop.

**Cunobelin:** I bought a Thorn by accident! My wife wanted a Rohloff tourer so we went down to Bridgwater to try one. She loved it. I was loaned one to take out with her. I found the machine boring, predictable and heavy – which as a tourist with a history of broken frames was what I wanted. So we bought – and never regretted it.

**700c:** I have a Dawes One-Down which would appear to tick all your boxes.

**horizon:** Free? Seriously, though, a One-Down is exactly the right type of bike. What amazes me is that so few people buy a bike that will pretty much do everything, a bike that becomes their way of getting around in the world, bringing stuff home and getting to places quickly in all weathers on all roads and most tracks. Basically I'm looking for a new One-Down and that's currently a Sherpa – or something else.



## THE WRONG LUGGAGE

The latest issue of Cycle features a silly front cover illustration. The young woman has eschewed mudguards but has both a swinging saddlebag and a huge bar bag – a most unstable arrangement. She also appears to be cycling across open moorland!

I respectfully suggest that you will be well aware of the impression which the photographs that you use, especially on the front cover, have on your readers. Please stop publishing photographs that clearly suggest that you recommend crossing open moorland, or even touring on paths or roads, on a bike with wobbling luggage and no mudguards.

I think you would concede that the honourable thing to do would be to grant me the space to outline what I think are the advantages of the touring set up I've used since the late 1980s. Then let the readers make their own minds up.

**Ed Mackrill**

(Above) A 'silly' way to carry luggage on a bike, or perfectly sensible, given a light load?

(Below right) CTC Vice President Josie Dew demonstrating fold-out spacers

**Wobbling luggage? Cara is using a Bagman saddlebag support to prevent this, and there's nothing to suggest that the bar bag is anything but secure. She's riding on a tarmac road too; you can't see it due to the angle of the photo. I'm with you on the mudguards but one of the joys of cycle touring – and cycling in general – is that we can make up our own minds about how we do it.**

## LOLLIPOP SPACERS

Some years ago I saw a cyclist who had attached to the rear of the bike frame a plastic rod sticking out horizontally about 18 inches with a large reflector at the end. This may have been illuminated at night and I guess it was possible to swing it to upright position. An excellent idea!

Could you not get some firm to manufacture one? I have noticed when walking in a supermarket car park that most drivers show little consideration to me as a pedestrian, but if I push a trolley they are so considerate... 'Mustn't get my nice car scratched!' The same would apply to the cyclist with his reflector.

**Philip Elwood**



**While good road positioning should persuade drivers to overtake better, you can still purchase lollipop-shaped spacer reflectors. Oxford Products (and perhaps others?) still list a Fold-Out Safety Reflector (code: RE831). The website is oxprod.com.**

## WARNING: SLIPPERY ROAD

Over a 29-year period, I cycled 170,000 miles and fell off 14 times, seven times because of ice and seven times when slipperiness wasn't a factor. But in the last two years, I have fallen off twice on slippery roads, without ice being present, sustaining bruised ribs and then a dislocated clavicle.

I know what to look out for in icy conditions, and as I nowadays travel the same routes and ice tends to occur in the same places, I haven't recently fallen as a result of ice. But how do I detect slipperiness? For about five months of the year, road-surfaces are virtually always wet.

Or should I just thank my lucky stars that I never encountered greasy roads in the previous in 29 years?

**David Arrandale**

## ONE OF US MUST KNOW

Apologies for being pedantic. In the latest edition of Cycle magazine, you comment that Dylan had a song called 'Bringing it All Back Home'. In fact, this was the name of his first album to make the top 10 in the United States album charts. He has not actually recorded a song with that title.

Keep us Dylan fans happy with a correction, please.

**Les Edlington**

## HOW TO CONTACT CTC

For national councillors and CTC member groups, see the separate sheet of paper with your address on that came with this issue of *Cycle*.



### CTC MEMBERSHIP

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