



Welcome

"The past is a foreign country," wrote LP Hartley in *The Go-Between*, "they do things differently there." He wasn't writing about cycling, of course, but the sentiments apply. Many things in the cycling world have changed enormously as the decades have rolled by.

The incremental differences are easy to miss when you live through them. Yet if you set the date in your mental time machine to, say, the 1970s and pull the metaphorical, Wellsian lever, you emerge into a very different place.

The cars were smaller and there weren't nearly as many of them. Those are upsides we've lost today, along with the freedom of children in particular to get around by bike. But the bikes themselves were largely worse in the 1970s. Choppers. Ten-speed racers. Small-wheel shoppers.

The bike I rode around Cannock Chase in the 1970s, long before the first mountain bikes had crossed the Atlantic and even longer before Cannock became a trail centre, was an everyday Raleigh whose only concession to off-road terrain was (eventually) a retro-fitted wider handlebar. My first road bike, meanwhile, was a five-speed 'racer' with suicide brake levers.

Rob Ainsley discovered his own pros and cons in the article you can read in this issue. He also found confirmation of something that long-time cyclists know instinctively: the challenges, opportunities and technology may change as time passes but one thing remains largely the same – the joy of cycling.

DAN JOYCE
Editor

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media



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