

Opinion Letters

**THIS MONTH FIXED-WHEEL FACTS, BIKES (BUT NOT TRIKES)
ON TRAINS, BACK PAIN, KIRKPATRICK MACMILLAN, AND MORE**

Get in touch

LETTERS are edited for space, clarity and, if necessary, legality. The editor reads and automatically acknowledges all letters but publishes only a selection. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 28 June. Please include your membership number.

WRITE TO: Letters, Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, GU2 9JX or email editor@cyclingsuk.org



Left: Tim Hughes

Letter of the month

MISCONCEPTIONS FIXED

It's quite some time since I last saw a letter regarding fixed-wheel cyclists but back in the '70s such a letter did appear, criticising the use of a photograph of three cyclists whom the writer thought were riding fixed-wheels and therefore must be racers.

The photograph was taken by the late Tim Hughes on 13 February 1977 as we cycled above the Llyn Brienne reservoir. I know this because I am the cyclist on the front nearside. As it happens, the writer was right: we were riding fixed-wheel bikes. But I hadn't raced since the early '60s, and the only one who might have raced would have been Tim's wife Audrey, who was tucked in at the back.

When I first joined the South Bucks DA in 1954, I suspect about a third of the members rode fixed all year round, and only a few of them ever raced. The big advantage fixed wheel has is that it can be used as a third brake. On icy winter roads it's a far more subtle way of slowing to a stop.

I only wish I had the legs to ride fixed still but, living in the Chiltern Hills, the 66-inch gear I used to tour on would not get me very far now in my mid-eighties. While I may have given up on fixed, I'm still riding using ever lower gears and haven't got round to an e-bike yet. It's a case of use it or lose it!

Mac Crombie

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CYCLING vs SCIATICA

Regarding the query about sciatica in the April/May issue: I also had either this condition or piriformis syndrome; there was no clear conclusion from various professionals. I found I could continue cycling; stopping and dismounting was the problem. I didn't sit in a chair for three months.

I was doing the Transcontinental Race (my bike is pictured) and my training obviously suffered. I started the race not knowing whether I would last the first 24 hours. It turned out to be the best treatment: 325km a day for 13 days, during which I stopped taking painkillers and almost forgot the ailment. It returned once I got off the bike, but not to the same level and continued to improve afterwards. I'm sure every case is different, but cycling was my saviour. There's more on my blog: richardgate.wordpress.com.

Richard Gate

PASS NOTES

I applaud the letter from Rosy Gray (Caught on camera, Feb/Mar issue). Just one minor niggle: her last sentence refers to "the increasing incidence of inconsiderate driving". My own experience of 40 years' cycle commuting is that since the change in the Highway Code drivers are, on average, passing with significantly more room. I didn't expect this, but the message appears to be getting through – and thanks are due to Cycling UK for promoting it.

John Morfey