

Letters

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This month: utility cycling for children, **cycle facilities**, danger in Cycle magazine, **cycling tribalism again**, cycling art, **a trike conversion query**, and a farewell to Richard Ballantine

TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN

It was great to see children's cycling featured in the August/September 2013 issue of Cycle. I am sure it will inspire many children and parents to try out different kinds of cycling.

I was surprised that you did not include Bikeability. Currently half the children of England participate in Bikeability training before they leave primary school. Your coverage gives the impression that children's cycling happens 'in an environment untroubled by traffic' on expensive touring or mountain bikes. But each year tens of thousands of children learn how to become competent and confident on-road cyclists so they can deal with traffic while getting about on ordinary bikes.

At a time of rising childhood obesity, it is of paramount importance that cycling becomes a normal mode of transport and recreation,



Photo: jason@cycling-images.co.uk

not just a specialist pursuit. Perhaps you could feature everyday on-road cycling with children in a future edition?

Dr Michael Frearson

Last issue's focus on recreational cycling for children wasn't meant to imply that that was the only form of cycling for children. We have covered cycling to school, Bikeability training, and practical children's bikes in the past – and we will again. Editor

Letter
OF
THE
MONTH



THE £42M SIDESHOW

The article 'The £42M question' regarding bids for government money (Cycle August/September 2013) left me despondent. This approach may provide utopian conditions for the few who happen to live nearby and only need access from points A to B along a predetermined corridor, or who drive to this National Park, enjoy a

lovely ride on a traffic-free bridleway and then drive back home. This £42 million will, however, do little for the growth of a national, everyday, utility cycling culture.

We should never lose sight of the fact that we already possess a complete, ready made, nationwide network of cycle routes, both urban and rural. They are called roads. Instead of supporting £42 million being spent on a few white elephants, I would have preferred CTC to focus on advocating safe cycling conditions on all roads, to the benefit of all cyclists throughout the country.

B J Brazier

CTC does campaign for exactly what you describe – for example, through the recent Road Justice campaign. It doesn't follow that all cycling infrastructure is a waste of money. Editor

Obviously it is good news that the government is to allocate money for cycling, but don't hold your breath, because it won't happen overnight, and in most areas we are so behind in terms of good cycle provision.

In July, we made a short cycle tour in Germany down the Weser Radweg to Bremerhaven. Such easy cycling, plenty of accommodation, and so safe. There are hundreds of key routes in Germany, but they are so often on traffic-free cycleways. They may not appeal to the more sportive cyclists, but they are great for older cyclists and family cyclists. The whole culture, attitude, and atmosphere is so good.

It is always such a disappointment to return home and cycle here. One often feels under threat, and what routes there are often fizzle out and can be like an obstacle course.

Ted Prangnell

THE DANGERS OF DANGER

Anyone just joining CTC and receiving the August/September 2013 edition of Cycle could easily think that cycling in the UK was a major life-threatening activity. They might be turned off by the over-emphasised danger.

The main news item on page 7

talked about 'in the wake of more cyclist deaths'; the vice chair of CTC on page 8 mentions the two cyclists recently killed on the A30; the news item on page 10 was about 'damages for fatal hit-and-run', plus the brief news included an item about another death in Scotland; Roger Geffen on page 12 talks about 'the risks of cycling still rising'; and page 26 includes a letter on road justice and a photo of a mangled bike under a car.

The campaigning work CTC undertakes is admirable and should be reported. But I think the emphasis in this edition was extreme.

Gary Armstrong

CAUGHT ON CANVAS

I have always been an enthusiastic cyclist and artist, so last year – inspired by the success of British cyclists – I decided to create a series of paintings. You can see more on my website, martincowtonfineart.co.uk. Next year the Tour de France will pass my doorstep so I will be preparing to capture the event on canvas.

Martin Cowton



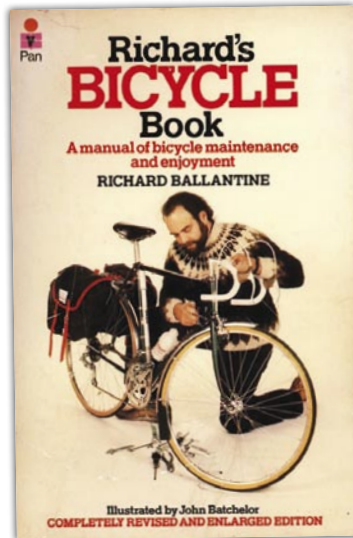
INFIGHTING AGAIN

Why do we have this dichotomy between 'roadies' (including the sub-sets of racers, tourists, and leisure cyclists), 'mountain bikers', 'commuters' and whatever else? It's irrational, divisive, confrontational and contributes nothing to the end result of enjoying man's greatest invention!

I was a member of the Musselburgh RC in the late '40s and early '50s, and in those early teenage and National Service days we considered ourselves superior to those elderly fuddy-duddies in CTC as we whizzed past them, pumped up with an overdose of juvenile adrenalin! Having reached the fuddy-duddy stage some time ago, and seeing the plethora of events now available and the way CTC is actively pursuing the welfare of

cyclists and cycling, it is gratifying to note the attention given to the future of cycling. Your August-September front cover illustrated this.

Edward Thomlinson



FAREWELL, RICHARD BALLANTINE

I was saddened by the news of Richard Ballantine's death. In 1976 I was 30, hadn't cycled very much since my youth, and I was badly out of shape. I then read Richard's Bicycle Book and was inspired to buy a cool, 10-speed lightweight road bike like his, and start cycling to work. My fitness improved rapidly with the daily workout, and regular exercise by any means available became a healthy habit that I have maintained to this day.

His enthusiasm was infectious. I'm sure there are many other confirmed cyclists like me who owe him a great debt of gratitude. Thanks Richard, you did us all a big favour.

Tristram Hill

BIKE TO TRIKE CONVERSION

Could a bolt-on back wheel be fitted to my bike to turn it into a trike? I've been cycling since I was 11 and am now 89. Last week I took a trip to our allotment on a small mountain bike. I enjoyed the trip but feel that a trike would be a little safer.

Eric Lewis

Longstaff Cycles (longstaffcycles.com, 01782 561966) will turn bikes into trikes using their own conversion kit. It costs from £700 – which is cheaper than buying a high-quality trike new. Editor

Obituaries

► Sandra-Rose Parkin

Died suddenly aged nearly 68 at her home in Thornaby in February. She was a cycle camper who travelled around Britain under her own steam, to York Rallies and Birthday Rides, around Yorkshire and beyond. She also built and maintained her own bikes. Her sister Linda tells me that even as a teenager, Sandra-Rose got her out on bike rides. She was an environmentalist who loved nature and the outdoors. A gentle and free-spirited person. *Ann and Donald Manson*

► Pat Brown: 16/1/27-10/5/13

Pat joined the CTC Essex DA in 1950, where she met future husband, Ken. Romance followed: marriage in 1954; four children; and several house and job moves as Ken progressed in his career. Her cycling achievements encompassed 33 Veterans' 100 rides, including 10 consecutive Triennial events; competing in the BCTC; joining the Tandem club; and taking long tours in Europe. Pat and Ken were awarded a joint Certificate of Merit in 1992. In the '60s and '70s Pat ran a Brownie pack and a Girl Guide company. *Arthur Miller*

► Roger Codling: 1943-2013

Died 12 July. Roger was a former Notts CTC President, a CTC Right to Ride Officer, and a regular at Pedals campaigns meetings. An ex-racer, Roger toured until the onset of health problems 2-3 years ago. He stood up for cyclists at Public Inquiries into major road schemes such as the A46 and A453 dualling. He had a thorough knowledge of roads and cycle routes, which he used on the Nottingham Local Access Forum and to keep cycle maps up to date. He had a great sense of humour and loved classical music. *Terry Scott & Hugh McClintock*

► Barbara Braithwaite: 1922-2013

Died in hospital after her 91st birthday. Barbara began cycling on leaving school, winning awards for time trialling and track racing. She later set VTTA age records. Her final club, Sotonia CC, gave her honorary life membership. She toured avidly, riding with CTC at home and abroad. Barbara was a swimming teacher who helped handicapped children in the pool and at school. Her lifelong cycling companion was Tony White. After his death, she later met Eric Neal on a cycle tour; Eric was with her at the end. *Norman Harvey*

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Get immediate feedback from other CTC members on the CTC Forum: forum.ctc.org.uk. Here's an abridged extract from one popular thread before Cycle went to press (see tinyurl.com/pt9yc6m).



TOURING ON A FOLDER

bikercolin: I fancy a folding touring bike for ease of transport. I'm considering a Brompton M6L. Would this make a decent tourer or do I need to look at Bike Friday?

tonythompson: I'm considering a Bike Friday towing one of the case-cum-trailer setups. Of all the folders, this one seems to offer the most for me. The plus is being able to pack the bike into the case when flying. But as yet I have stuck to a Surly LHT.

skylist: Check out this

thread.tinyurl.com/ohmdv9k

bikepacker: My wife and I toured France a couple of times on Airnimal Joeys using Eurostar and TGV trains. The Joeys give the best ride of any folder I have used and they now do a suitcase/trailer option.

Si: In my limited experience. Brommie: not enough gears/gear range for hilly touring, too much flex. Birdy: loads of gears, comfort, carrying capacity, but can feel a tad sluggish at times, stupid wheel size. Airnimal Chameleon:

comfortable once you get bigger tyres on it, can carry plenty, has a good turn of speed for a tourer... but I broke three and the wheel size is semi-stupid. Dahon: good bikes by all accounts but I was put off by the build quality.

rootes: I have done Lejog and C2C on my 2-speed Brompton plus a manual double chainset to get a lower gear. If touring properly then a 3- or 6-speed would be better. You can get a lot in the front bag system and increase this with a rear saddlebag.