

# CYCLE LETTERS

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



## HAPPY ENDINGS

Modern cork-based handlebar tape is for my money one of cycling's great leaps forward. When I started cycling you had a choice of shiny plastic in two or three colours or that slightly tacky-backed cloth tape in black or white. Definitely not good old days.

But our colourful and comfy cork does have one shortcoming: its ending. The small pieces of colourful 'sticky-back plastic' that are supplied are usually worse than useless and end up being replaced with PVC insulating tape that in a year or so is creeping and sticky.

The solution is to hand. All you need is an old innertube of smallest cross section. Cut two short (25mm or so) lengths and pre-fit them (yes, you knew there would be a catch) to your handlebars. Then just stretch them over the end of the tape. I did two sets over a year ago and they are still perfect: no creeping or aging.

It was suggested to me that you could use electrical heat-shrink sleeving, but you would have to be doing some serious re-wiring to use it that large. I actually use it at the other end of the scale for another bit of terminating – on gear and brake cables. It's very neat and lighter (joke) than the usual ally crimps.

Mike Burrows, Norwich

## WHY I JOINED CTC

In October 2009 I'm taking part in what will be a huge challenge for me: The Women for Women Cycle Jordan event, which involves cycling 300km

in Jordan to raise funds to support women scientists and clinicians to specialise in research affecting women and their babies.

I had been thinking about joining CTC for a while and when I signed up for this challenge I knew this was the ideal time. I'm not very well motivated when I go out on my own, and sometimes find excuses not to go out at all. I was worried that I would hold other people up on a group ride, but when I plucked up the courage

to join Plymouth CTC for my first ride I realised how wrong I was.

I met them at the Torpoint ferry to go across to Cornwall. Everyone was very friendly. I expressed my concerns and was told not to worry, this wasn't going to be a race. The ride was quite hilly and I was told this was a baptism of fire as it was probably one of their most hilly routes! The first hill I came to I didn't change down gear in time and soon had to get off. So George got off and walked with me.

I've been cycling with this little group now for about seven weeks and feel I've known them for much longer. They are so kind, friendly and supportive. They all enjoy cycling and that's what it's all about, having fun. Now I turn up whatever the weather on a Sunday just to see if anyone else is there. Someone always is. I'll never look back, even after the challenge, which thanks to CTC I'll be fit enough for. I'm hooked.

Caroline Sage, Plymouth

## DOING THE DANUBE

I notice that you're running an article on the Danube. My wife Liz and I cycled a chunk of the Danube last August, from



Passau to Linz. It was a really wonderful long distance route and despite being 'flat' (it's actually downhill west to east!), it has a number of very interesting offshoots that give you all the hills you might want.

We cycled in several areas near Salzburg and found that nearly all the towns had designated cycle routes that linked to regional routes. Our favourite was the Salzkammergut Radweg, which took us through the Dachstein mountain area to Hallstatt. Much of this route was by lake and riverside. You can get a comprehensive map (free!) from [www.salzkammergut.at](http://www.salzkammergut.at), as well as loads of local advice. A highly recommended trip and really memorable. Our Danube map was a book 'Donau Radwanderfuhrer', 1:50,000, from [www.galli-verlag.de](http://www.galli-verlag.de)

Gary & Liz Jones, Pembrokeshire

## ROADSIDE REPAIRS



Can you ask someone (Chris Juden?) to tell me where I can get a VAR 425 tyre tool as mentioned in the Dec/Jan issue of Cycle?

Philip Helliwell MD,

**BikePlus stock it. See their advert in this issue for contact details.**

Further to Chris Juden's excellent article



on roadside repairs, can I recommend that you add to your toolkit: a few baby wipes in a resealable poly bag (so they don't dry out); two pairs of vinyl gloves; plus some small cable ties. The gloves keep your hands mostly clean, and the wipes remove the last remnants of grease. The cable ties? Useful for securing broken mudguards, tying up a failed derailleur, and holding a slipping pannier or lamp. Very handy, and almost no extra weight to carry.

Greg Snell, by email

**What did we do before cable ties? Like old innertube, they can be used for so much. In fact, here's a challenge: what's your best cable-tie related repair?**

I enjoy reading Cycle but I often struggle with all the technical jargon. I find some of the reviews of both bikes and gear and the 'techy' articles way over my head. Even the 'Roadside Repair' article in the Dec/Jan issue was a bit scary for me. Can I suggest some 'starter' articles – for instance, simple descriptions of all the different types of bikes and what they are built for to help advise newcomers to cycling and a 'naming of parts', with a clear bike diagram with all the bits named that people can then refer to when reading other articles and reviews. And perhaps something similar for bike parts too such as an explanation of the different types of lights so that people know what to look for when shopping.

I know that these might be a bit patronising for many of the more experienced bike owners out there who can strip and rebuild a bike in 30 seconds, but please don't forget that some of us don't even know what a chainset or a sprocket is!

Esther Clarke, Leighton Buzzard

### MADE IN BRITAIN

Can I just say that I agree entirely with the views expressed by RS Fuller (Letters, last issue). We really should wave the flag for our cycle industry.

You've started the series with a good firm, one of the best. I have a Roberts and very pleased I am with it. It's an early model with Nervex lugwork, 531 butted tubing, etc, frame number 330, making it mid-Sixties, I think.

I also have a Mercian, Bob Jackson and some Moultons, so if the series continues it should be very interesting. I know the age of the Moultons and the Mercian. The Bob Jackson is again mid-Sixties I think, with a frame number of 11293. Can anyone date it? It's an ex-track bike with fancy lugs, 'Piste' fork crown, round



Photo: Al Churcher

section forks, rearward dropout etc.

Incidentally, all my bikes are on good old Sturmey-Archer, mostly 5-speed with two 7-speeds and the latest one, a TSR8 Pashley Moulton, obviously 8-speed.

Please fly the flag a bit more.

R French, Saffron Waldon

### WHEN MIDGES ATTACK

For all those poor folk who have suffered the chomplings of the dastardly Scottish midge (and other biting nasties), help is at hand! No, it is not just another useless potion but something that actually works: tried and tested beyond doubt. As it's been around for many years, I find it incredible that it isn't better known.

I'm referring to 'Jungle Juice' as we used to call it. Its proper name is Jungle Formula. It now comes in a trigger spray as well as the original squeeze bottle. We used it on our dogs too, with equally brilliant results. It can be bought in any good chemists' shop. It's not expensive either.



## ON THE 'NET

The CTC Forum (<http://forum.ctc.org.uk/>) lets you pick the brains of your fellow CTC members 24/7. One popular topic before we went to press with this issue was...

### The Normandy Landing Beaches

**Genesis Rider:** Am planning a trip to visit the Normandy Beaches. Does anyone have any suggested routes?

**james01:** Several years ago we landed at Cherbourg & coast-hugged eastwards, returning through Le Havre. It was about 250km, plenty of time for sightseeing in a gentle 4-day tour, mixing camping with B&Bs.

**Tony:** Indeed, it makes a nice loop from Cherbourg to Ouistreham (Caen) with a ferry at each end. It also goes with the prevailing wind.

**Millhouse:** At the end of my cycle around France I ended up in Ouistreham. There is a handy campsite only 10 minutes cycle from the port. The area is very cycle friendly and there are many war memorials and sites from the D-day landings. It was a truly memorable place and I found it very moving.

**Jake:** The overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Caen that arrives at dawn on the anniversary of D-day is a wonderful experience. A friend of mine did it in the mid-'90s and he said the ferry was full of people in uniforms of all types with some actual veterans as well. As he pushed his bike up the ramp he was passed by dozens of WW2 vehicles that go over for the weekend. It's popular, so early booking is advised.

**BTFB:** At Colleville sur Mer (Omaha) you can see the graves of the Nyland brothers... The real brothers that Saving Private Ryan is loosely based on. Also the grave of Roosevelt. One thing I found interesting was to carry a book with photos of 'then' and stand in the exact same spots 'now'.

**Len:** I made my first cycle/camping tour earlier this year, from Cherbourg to Caen, and I absolutely loved it. I can hardly wait to get back and go on another French trip. As others have suggested, hug the coast and you will be fine. Enjoy.

*This thread has been abridged.*



## OBITUARIES

### MARGARET PETERS

Died aged 86. A life member of CTC, Margaret said that her Raleigh was her 'lifeline'. In the war – she drove an army lorry – her boyfriend was tragically killed. In her 70s, she joined the London to Brighton ride while out cycling with a friend.

### CIS GEORGE: 1921-2008

A CTC member for over 60 years, Cis died on 13/10/08 at 87. Cycling with her husband Bert was her life, not just touring but also racing. She once showed me a newspaper cutting from 1967 headed 'Look of a Champion' recording her victory in a 24-hour race. She was an early member of the Rough Stuff Fellowship and had a great knowledge and love of all aspects of the countryside. *Steve Griffith*

### DAVE GRUNDY

Dave was killed instantly on 19/11/08 in a road traffic accident on the A5199 south of Leicester whilst out on his bike. He was 70. A past president and chairman of the Ratae Road Club, Dave did a huge amount of work for us. He was a prolific time triallist and holds club records for 30 (1.07.01) and 50 miles (1.56.17, aged 63). A talkative man, he encouraged many younger cyclists. *Bob Perrett*

### TERRY FINNEMORE

Terry died aged 63, after being taken ill cycling near York on 4/10/08. Larger than life, physically and in personality, Terry used his talents as a draughtsman for York Archaeological Trust to draw beautiful maps of bike rides from York. An active CTC campaigner, he had a vast knowledge of green lanes and bridleways. *Paul Hepworth*

### LEGACIES

Geoffrey Reynolds from Stockton on Tees, who died in 2008, left CTC a legacy of £105,000. Fred Gledhill from Orpington and Alan Barlow from Oldham, both of whom died in 2007, left CTC Charitable Trust legacies of £5,000 and £31,000 respectively.

*Send obituaries, preferably 100 words or fewer, to the usual editorial address.*

Our friends spent September on holiday in Fort William and then on the Isle of Skye. Not one bite until Viv got up at 4am to let the dog out. Being half asleep she forgot to dab on the juice. Sure enough, she got bitten!  
**C Rolfe, Whitstable, Kent**

**For more information, see [www.jungleformula.co.uk](http://www.jungleformula.co.uk).**

### OFF-ROAD TOURING

The last time I went touring off-road, I had a Carradice Camper Longflap saddlebag, whereas my companions all had panniers. The panniers got very dirty and wet as they were at 'mud level', and they made it difficult to negotiate stiles due to the overall width. Another disadvantage was that they snagged on the sides of deep ruts and on unwary legs when negotiating difficult terrain. So if you can squeeze everything into a saddlebag, it's a much more manageable option.

**Paul Harrison, by email**

### FIXED WHEELS

Having seldom ridden anything other than fixed for 54 years, I have found recent correspondence on this topic amusing and exasperating in equal measure. Amusing to hear of the London based 'fashion statement' relating to the humble fixed cog and exasperated to read suggestions that flat, windless areas are what is needed to cope with a fixed wheel.

The area we cover in Lothians CTC has its fair share of hills and maybe more than its fair share of gale-force winds. I find little difficulty and much pleasure riding my Higgins 'Ultralite' racing trike with its 66-inch fixed gear in the company of my bicycle riding companions, all of whom ride with variable gears.

The secret of riding fixed is to learn to 'ankle', to develop a fluid and relaxed style and to pace yourself according to the prevailing conditions, all of which apply to any form of cycling!

Above all, enjoy the sense of 'oneness' with your machine that a fixed-wheel provides.

**Bob Davis, Livingston, West Lothian**

**You certainly can ride fixed anywhere – even off-road if you really want to – but it's undoubtedly easier where the**

**hills aren't too steep nor the prevailing winds too strong.**

### CTC'S LEGAL EAGLES

In February 2007 I had a serious accident when, through no fault of my own, I fell from my bike whilst cycling with my club in Kent. Fortunately, because of the prompt action of those present, I was taken to Farnborough Hospital in Kent where a broken bone in my neck was diagnosed.

The following day my friends contacted Paul Kitson of Russell Jones & Walker who agreed I might have a case against Kent County Council. After nearly two years it has been successfully concluded. May I thank the CTC for the services of Mr Kitson. Immediately following the accident my family were extremely distraught and Mr Kitson gave them wonderful support. I cannot thank him enough.

I am well on the way to a full recovery providing I am sensible in my activities. I owe a great debt to my friends in The Meridian Cycle Club, whose actions that day may have saved my life. The treatment and care from the staff at Farnborough Hospital and St Thomas's Hospital was exceptional and is a reminder to us all how fortunate we are to have the NHS. And, of course, CTC!

**John Palmer, New Ash Green, Kent**

### BIKES DO GROW ON TREES

I saw this piece of art in Curitiba, Brazil, on my travels in Latin America. Perhaps you could make one for next Christmas?

**Steve Montgomery, by email**

