

LETTERS

This month Tricycles; riding across Wales in winter; audax; cyclists' appetites; gear-shifting solutions; bikes on trains; and family transport

GET IN TOUCH

WRITE TO US: Cycle Letters,
PO Box 313, Scarborough,
YO12 6WZ

EMAIL US:
cycleletters@ctc.org.uk

JOIN IN ONLINE:
forum.ctc.org.uk

BALANCING OUR PRIORITIES

WHEN I was 87, my balance on a two-wheeler deteriorated. I fell off twice, fortunately not damaging anything. Someone suggested a tricycle for its stability and the ability to sit tight at junctions etc. I ordered one through our local dealer. I found it difficult to adjust from two to three wheels, not having had a trike as a child, but persisted.

The trike has received a lot of attention, and I am frequently hailed by passers by. There are at least three trikes around town now. Mine has a large basket between the rear wheels, and it will take the best part of a supermarket shop.

My wife had continued to ride her two-wheeler, but since Christmas began to lose confidence on it and also bought a trike. We are now known as 'the two trike family'. We are now 88 and 86. As long as we can find the means, we will keep cycling.

— *Tom and Bertha Gray*

When a bicycle is impractical, for whatever reason, a trike of some kind is often the answer. CTC member Ron Beams was still cycling aged 99 on an electrically-assisted recumbent tricycle – an inspiration for all of us.



ACROSS WALES IN WINTER

I thoroughly enjoyed Martin Parfitt's account of his journey. His 'couple of points' are things I've dealt with in the past. So much so that I carry a small can of a certain water-dispersal aerosol on expeditions, and I use my shoes to wedge and raise my clothing-stuffed pillowcase to a more comfortable height.

Regarding kit: I suspect that succeeding generations all feel they must re-invent the wheel. Mine devised low-riders and Limpets, which I'm quite happy with. They distribute the load and keep it off my back.

— *William J Houlder*

ALL ABOUT AUDAX

Julie Rand's statistics on member groups in the April/May issue make interesting reading. I was intrigued, though, to find that groups appear to organise 'sportives or challenge events', but no specific mention of audax. As an internationally-regulated and recognised discipline that forms a significant part of the Tourist Competition, it would surely merit its own category?

Maybe there's confusion here – as there unfortunately is among many cyclists – between sportives and audax. Audax

rides are not competitive, and no times are published on the finish list. Finish the route within the wide time-frame allowed, and you're credited with the ride. Dare I mention that the cost is considerably less, too, though you will need to be self-sufficient. The style is much closer to the traditional CTC club run or standard ride, and you can be assured of a warm welcome, a route selected by local cyclists, normally on the best quiet roads in the area, and a sociable and friendly atmosphere.

There are more details, and hundreds of events, on the AUK website www.aukweb.net

— *Chris Boulton*



Illustration: Alan Rowe

HUNGRY CYCLISTS

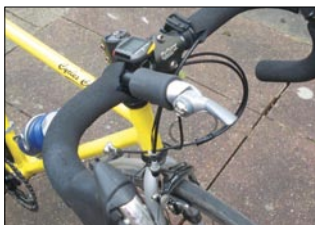
I chuckled at Martin Parfitt's account (Across Wales in Winter, April/May) of ordering four paninis in a café, and the waitress asking when his friends would arrive. I had a similar experience last December at a B&B in Great Bromley in Essex, where I was riding the 'Santa Special' 200km audax organised by Andy Terry of Suffolk CTC.

At the evening meal, the proprietor brought my dessert of apple, pear and blackberry pie with custard, commenting, 'That's a huge piece.' I think she was



» leading into saying 'Don't feel embarrassed if you can't finish it.' I interrupted her, saying that I expected I'd cope. When she returned she looked surprised. 'Oh, you finished it then?' she said. 'Cyclists usually do,' I replied. 'Yes, I suppose so,' she said. 'Like a camel are you, always stoking up with food.'

— **John Thompson**



CHANGING GEARS

After around 7,000km on my new road bike, using modern 'brifters' (gear shifters next to the brakes), I started to feel a lot of pain in my right-hand middle finger from all the gear shifting. I tried to change gear using two fingers, but it was still painful – perhaps a kind of repetitive strain injury? So my husband came up with the brilliant idea of putting the gears on the handlebar!

The shifter is nearer than the downtube, and I can change gear using my whole hand, so the pressure is not just on one or two fingers. I didn't need the modification for the left hand, as you don't have to move to different chainwheels so often. I wondered whether any other Cycle readers had had the same problem, and would be interested in this solution?

You need to check you have enough room left on the handlebar to put your hands on the tops occasionally. We used a very strong mirror mount to put the gears on. Hope you find this interesting.

— **Fiona Le Ny**

BIKES ON TRAINS AGAIN

As Andy Miller (Feb/Mar) identifies, free cycle carriage in the UK (except for Eurostar) is an advantage over Continental trains. Yet there are structural

complexities with our cycle and rail provision that require resolving. Confusion and capacity are the principal issues. There are as many as 30 different private rail companies in the UK, each with their own cycle policy. It can take ages to work out a simple, single journey if it involves more than one operator.

Even when there's one operator, it's not always easy. The longest rail journey in Britain, from Aberdeen to Penzance, is operated by Cross Country. There are only two bookable cycle spaces plus one more on a first-come, first-served basis. By contrast, the thrice-daily Deutsche Bahn Hamburg-to-Passau train (probably the longest rail journey in Germany) carries up to 18 cycles!

Our rail operators fail to see there's a commercial benefit in attracting people with bicycles. More patronage means more revenue. Just give cyclists space; not everyone has a Brompton!

— **Robin Bevis**

FAMILY TRANSPORT

Like so much in the cycle world, the family trike (p32, April/May) has been done before. My father used a Chater Lea box-carrier frame and constructed a body to take two of my sisters on tour to Kent. It too had assistance in the form of a Simplex motor, which was reviewed in the CTC Gazette around that time. When my third sister arrived in the November of 1920, the bodywork was redesigned to a more capacious nature and 'streamlined'. The enclosed picture was taken in 1919.

— **Lionel Joseph**



Obituaries

► Geoff Hearn

Died 21 Dec 2014. On returning from the War in 1947, Geoff became a passionate cyclist and was an active member of St Albans DA and the local YHA group. In 1967, he moved to Gloucestershire and he and his wife Jean became wardens of Duntisbourne Abbots Youth Hostel until 1977. — *Chris Hearn*

► Maxwell Charles Scott 1936-2015

Max and his sister Maureen became joint Secretaries of CTC Suffolk in 1960. They produced the magazine *Winged Wheel* on their mother's kitchen table. Max was later CTC Secretary for Northampton and Milton Keynes, and also Kettering. He was awarded the CTC Certificate of Merit in 1988 and was a CTC Volunteer of the Year in 2004. He loved cycling, most of all cycle camping on one of his beloved trikes. — *Ken Nichols*

► Roy Eaton 1948-2015

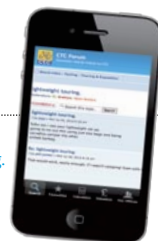
Died of cancer on 5 January. With his wife Ros, Roy cycled Land's End to John o' Groats and he regularly rode 100 miles on summer weekends. This included the Oxfordshire Triennial Ride in 2013. Their tours abroad were often to France. A qualified accountant, he was the first Treasurer of the new Redditch & Bromsgrove Group. His off-road travels were with the Welsh Borders Group of the RSF. — *Alan Head*

► John Shaw 1942-2015

Died of cancer on 27 January. John rode on the Continent as a sponsored amateur in his youth. Later, in the UK, he taught cycle maintenance and repair at adult education classes and to blind and partially-sighted students in Birmingham. His passion for cycling was infectious. He used it as a tool to help people into employment recycling bikes. — *Ian Baulch-Jones*

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 bit.ly/1H3iEYL)



GIVE WAY LINES ON CYCLE TRACK

PRL: We all know the situation: a cycle track alongside a major road with give-way lines. Most of us have a quick glance round but just hope that nothing is coming fast from behind. A cyclist in Richmond was unlucky: tinyurl.com/oa0ean5. Isn't it time to accept that you cannot reliably give way to traffic coming from behind you? We need changes in cycle lane priority.

chris_suffolk: Whilst sad news, this is one reason I don't use

cycle lanes, and stay on the road where I am part of the traffic. Vehicles behind then need to wait if they are turning left – most do.

MikeF: Shocking! This illustrates fundamental design flaws of some of these tracks and the attitude that a cyclist is a mobile pedestrian.

mjr: Yes, the law should change, but also junction layouts should be changed so no road user is ever giving way to overtaking or hooking traffic.

Cunobelin: It is all about 'right of way' and laziness on the part of the councils. There is no reason why every side road should not have an early give way to the cycle route, but that is far too complex.

[XAP]Bob: The Dutch way isn't to have priority, but to reduce crossings, and reduce motor vehicle speed to the point where crossings can be naturally made. Seems to work fairly well, but does require two-way cycle facilities on both sides of all the roads...



Letters are edited for space (if above 150 words), clarity and, if necessary, legality. Please note that if you have specific complaint or query about CTC policy, you should address it to your CTC Councillor or relevant national office staff member. Letters and emails for the Aug/Sep issue must arrive by 30 June. Write to: cycleletters@ctc.org.uk or Cycle Letters, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ



Facebook
Tell us what you think on the CTC Facebook pages:
facebook.com/CTCCyclists



Tweet us
Read the latest updates and get in touch on
[Twitter@CTC_Cyclists](https://twitter.com/CTC_Cyclists)