

Your opinions

LETTERS

THIS MONTH SADDLE PAIN SOLUTIONS, BUDGET BIKES, BUTTERFLY BARS, INDEPENDENT TANDEM FREEWHEELING, AND SOUTH DOWNS WAY ADVICE



Women's cycling

SITTING COMFORTABLY

AT THE RISK of getting boring on the female derriere problem (saddle soreness), may I offer an alternative viewpoint? I ride regularly, approximately 15-30 miles each time. After trying a lot of saddles, I conclude that a Brook's women's saddle (B17S) is by far the best. Adjust it to the maximum height for you – feet flat on pedals, legs stretched.

It is crucial to have a short enough top tube. If you put your elbow on the end of the saddle, there should be 4-5cm between your fingertips and the middle of the handlebars (for dropped bars – slightly more for straight ones). Fit a shorter stem if necessary. The saddle must be completely flat, and level with the handlebars. The goal is to balance your weight equally between handlebars, saddle and pedals. Like this, your sit bones will rest on the wide back of the saddle, leaving your front 'suspended' and hardly touching anything.

Fiona Le Ny

For more on bike sizing for men and women, including similar methodology, see cyclinguk.org/cycle/size-bike-need.

Write to Cycle

EMAIL: cyclinguk@jppublishing.co.uk **POST:** Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ.

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Some budget bikes are good



BIKING ON A BUDGET

Brian Taylor has hit the spot (Beginners on a budget, Letters, Oct/Nov issue). Good value basic bikes and kit are needed for those of limited means, particularly families, to learn that cycle touring offers a different kind of holiday.

Is it a job for a Cycle supplement? A celebration of value cycling brands? Of course there are those who boast, 'I don't use cheap kit!' One chap I know fell victim to the phantom Ozzo! Unable to resist their value overshoes, he'd peeled off the logo and hid the shadow under marker pen. When it rained, the ink washed out, revealing all!

Incidentally, OS have just launched an updated version of their popular 1:250,000 road maps. I got one – No 4, Northern England. It shows all cycleable roads and those used by motorists too. But there's something missing: while they include National Walking Trails, of Sustrans cycle routes there's no sign. Come on, Ordnance Survey: on yer bikes!

William J Houlder

NAME THAT ACRONYM

Reflecting on my 65th birthday in a few months' time, and on more than 50 years of cycling, it suddenly occurred to me that I shall soon no longer qualify for the dubious (and questionable at my age) accolade of MAMIL (Middle-Aged Man In Lycra). I am not aware of any corresponding acronym for the growing number of cycling 'seniors' keen to keep up with the latest fashion and technology. My wife suggested Pensioners In Lycra On Carbon (PILOC). Not sure this quite hits the mark; perhaps your readers could come up with some more flattering alternatives?

John Snowden

BUTTERFLY FANCIER

I have read with interest the drops-versus-flats letters recently. These handlebars are ideal for sportive or commuting rides but I prefer trekking bars (also known as butterfly bars) for touring holidays. On a long-distance journey, the trekking handlebar enables the rider to change hand positions to and from the inner flats, sides, front curves and hoods. Together with a decent bike-fit, these postural changes help prevent back, shoulder,



elbow, hand and wrist fatigue. The more upright posture is an aerodynamic compromise, yet this disadvantage is outweighed by the comfort factor for touring.

Joe Patton

TOURING ON THE CHEAP

I was interested in your editorial comments in the Oct/Nov issue about 'unsuitable' bicycles. My 11-year-old son and I rode more than half of EuroVelo 15, the River Rhine cyclepath, on bikes most people would laugh at. Our Muddy Fox Voyager 100 bicycles were £150 each, brand new. We rode from Oberalp Pass in Switzerland to Dusseldorf in Germany.

Our bicycles were very heavily laden. They weren't particularly comfortable, screws came loose, the gear shifters were not great, and neither were the brakes. But they did the job. After mine was stolen, I walked round to the



A rigid fork suited Tim

cyclocross geometry, flat bars, Alfine Hub gear, 700C Schwalbe Land Cruisers. It was ideal.

Tim Hogan

FREEWHEELING INDEPENDENTLY

Independent freewheeling (Q&A, Oct/Nov) can be done on most tandems but it is not easy or cheap. I bought a chainset with a freewheel instead of a normal chain ring from SJSC. I had the crank helicoiled for a lefthand thread so I could use this as the pilot's lefthand crank.

I then got a normal tandem crossover drive chainset for the stoker and connected the two with a timing chain. On the righthand side, I took the drive straight from front to the back. The rear bottom bracket cassette was already long and I fitted a crank by cutting out the chainring spider from an old chainset. This works with the chain running inside the rear crank to the Rohloff hub. See my web page for photos: akweb.org.uk/northern/part10.html

Ken Reed

Note that if the timing chain is on the right, it's simpler and cheaper. See bit.ly/cyclinguk-freewheelingcranks for the freewheeling chainset below.



Most bikes are fine for this

nearest cycle shop and bought an old secondhand bike for 180 Euros and carried on. No big deal.

Alan J Cook

ANOTHER (SOUTH DOWNS) WAY

I enjoyed Tony Upfold's account of his ride along the South Downs Way in the Aug/Sep issue. Tony was lucky with the weather; I had light drizzle when I last rode it between 31 May and 2 June. The wind increased to absurd levels on day three and, struggling to stay on the trail, I left it at Devil's Dyke, rejoining it at Alfriston.

One thing I disagree with: you do not need a mountain bike or suspension. My latest trip was on a bespoke Reilly 953 XCT –

Obituaries

VICTOR STRANGE

Died 3/7/16, aged 82, after Parkinson's in his last years. He first rode with CTC in 1949 with the Southern Section of Birmingham & Midland DA and was Runs Secretary in the 1960s. His love of cycling and the countryside were lifelong and enjoyed with wife Jeannette and their children, using tandems, trailers, solos and a caravan. Victor was an accomplished photographer and talented engineer. – Jeannette Strange & Alan Head

HAROLD BRIDGE: 1927-2015

Died peacefully from pneumonia 4/4/2015. Harold was a lifelong CTC member and regular magazine correspondent. He joined the Enfield Section in his teens and then the North Road CC. He rode many randonnées, including PBP and London to Edinburgh, and was also was a regular 24hr time triallist. In the 1960s, he moved for work to Port Cort Coquitlam in British Columbia, where he stayed. He organised the first 3,000 mile Canada Coast to Coast, and was one of only three riders to finish. – Rob Parrish

ROGER CHARLES BURCHETT

Died unexpectedly on 22 April, aged 72. He joined CTC in 1962 and was an active member ever since. He was one of the founders of CTC South Kent and was Secretary for the whole of its existence. He was also a member of several other cycling organisations including the Tricycle Association, Moulton Club, Veteran-Cycle Club, and VTTA. He organised many cycling events over the years and helped out in many more. – Donald Holden

Join the conversation

CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other Cycling UK members on the Cycling UK forum: forum.cyclinguk.org. Here's an abridged extract from one recent thread bit.ly/cyclinguk-trainbag.



TRAIN BAG

norts65: I've booked a Eurostar to Paris and want to book a train from Paris to Barcelona so I can take two weeks' winter touring in a warmer area. But I need to 'semi-dismantle and bag up the bike'. Any ideas of what to use?

spicerack: I used a Cinelli bike bag for the TGV from Lille to Avignon. No padding and not great to carry, but it was small enough to roll up and put on my rack during the

tour. **Vorpai:** Why not use the CTC polythene bike bag (wiggle.co.uk/ctc-cycling-uk-plastic-bike-bag)? If you need to pack it up to a smaller size, just fold it over and tape it.

ANTONISH: If I'm intending to carry the bag in a hilly area, I use one that I made some years ago from blue plastic tarpaulin. I had to dismantle the bike somewhat to get down to the required luggage size for the train.

bohrsatom: +1 for the poly bag. Just fold it up afterwards and stuff it at the bottom of your pannier. Alternative suggestion would be to use some heavy-duty bin bags and plenty of tape. The materials are less important – you don't need loads of protection as you need to carry the bike yourself so you will treat it with care! Size is an issue. You need to fit your bike into a bag with a max size of 120cm x 90cm.

Left: courtesy of sjscycles.co.uk...Above left by Jessica Gardner, Flickr CC

How to contact Cycle

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 Cycling UK policy, you should address it to the relevant national office staff member. Letters & emails for the Feb/Mar issue must arrive by 31 Jan. Write to: cyclinguk@jppublishing.co.uk or Cycle Letters, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

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