

YOUR OPINIONS, YOUR CYCLING,  
YOUR IDEAS

# Letters

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***This month:*** Bike recycling, better touring maps, revisiting the saddlebag 'problem', bikes on trains (not), cyclists' thanksgiving services, and Waskerley rascals

## EUROSTAR RESTRICTS BAGGED BIKES

Last September, four of us took our bikes on Eurostar and the TGV via Paris to Biarritz so we could cycle the Raid Pyrenean (Atlantic to the Med). We returned from Argelès sur Mer. The trip was great and allowed us to do most of the big Pyrenean climbs. Disappointingly, I note from trying to book again today that Eurostar has changed its rules about the size of bike bags.



Photo: iStockphoto.com

Previously it was possible to carry on a standard bag (up to 120cm), which accommodated a bike with wheels removed just fine. This size is also permitted on the TGV. From December, Eurostar have ruled that the maximum length of the bag is now 85cm. This more or less stops anyone doing what we did last year. The alternative is to pay an extra 30 quid each way to take an assembled bike, but space is limited and not all trains are bookable. This is very much a backward step.

**Andrew Erving**

**An 85cm limit essentially means folding bikes only. Why have Eurostar banned 120cm bags? They say it's because these take up a lot of space, and that the change is 'so all our travellers can enjoy a spacious, comfortable and safe journey with us'. All their travellers except cyclists, presumably.**

Letter  
OF  
THE  
MONTH

JOIN IN DISCUSSIONS ONLINE: FORUM.CTC.ORG.UK



Photo: Christopher Davey

## BIKES TO AFRICA

Just to say thank you for the article on bikes to Africa in the Feb/Mar issue, which inspired me to donate one of my bikes. The locations mentioned were too far for me to go, but I discovered that Raleigh will accept donated bikes on behalf of the charity if you take your bike (any make) to a local Raleigh dealer. This might be useful for readers to know. The person to contact is Ben

Hillsdon: BenHillsdon@raleigh.co.uk. You can also upload a photograph of the bike on to the Raleigh site.

**Jen Popkin**

## BETTER BIKE MAPS

Regarding the letter from Gary Cummins (Feb/Mar): the Nicolson version of the OS 1:250k Road Map series only covers Scotland. This scale may just be adequate in the Highlands; elsewhere we need a decent 1:100k or 1:125k map. The only ones that I've found to be any good for cycle touring have been those of SW England published by Croydecycle (croydecycle.co.uk). We need maps like that for the rest of Britain!

**Richard Oliver**

## LUGGAGE CHECKS

May I again tackle the saddlebag versus rucksack question? The former fits transversely. I tried the Bagman support years ago. It supports the bag but does little to prevent a good deal of 'swing'. The rucksack, on the other hand, attaches firmly to the pannier frame and is mounted lengthwise, thus minimising instability.

Now to bar bags versus hip-belts. Research many years ago found that weight carried over the front wheel was intrinsically unstable, unless carried as low as possible. The hip-belt carries much the same as the bar bag and in effect becomes an item of clothing, therefore increasing stability.

I didn't keep a copy of my letter but I don't recall that it was simply a critique. Did I not include some of the positive suggestions I make in this letter? The effect is to make me look like some cycling Victor Meldrew.

**Ed Mackrill**

The cover photo of the Dec/Jan issue of Cycle is maybe the best





Bristol DA cyclists on 27 May 1945, shortly after VE Day, attending a thanksgiving service

ever: a pretty young woman riding over moorland hills with a loaded saddlebag and handlebar bag. I see a Bagman bag-support holding the saddlebag securely. I have one as well. It's the best and best-fitting support I've ever had. (I'm 82, a club cyclist since 1948.) A pity you had to publish the critical letter, but as they may say in France, one man's fish is another man's poisson.

I like the photo of Josie Dew with small child and large panniers. She sure is a strong enthusiast. I met her maybe 10 years ago on the footbridge over the river between Walberswick and Southwold. I asked where she was going on a well-loaded bike and she said she was attempting to ride around the coast of Britain. She was riding a red Roberts tourer, if my old memory is right.

**John Lane**

**Ed: I kept the original letter, which doesn't discuss backpacks or hip-belts, so thanks for clarifying. Backpacks are a valid alternative to saddlebags but I don't know about 'better'. I've used a lumbar pack to carry an SLR camera and (separately) a hydration bladder. It was okay but, aside from mountain biking, I (like Cara with her bar bag) prefer the load on the bike.**

**John: Josie completed her trip and wrote it up as Slow Coast Home – see josiedew.com.**

## CTC WEST THANKSGIVING

On the 14 April, CTC West will be holding its 68th Anniversary Service of thanksgiving at St Andrews church at Castle Combe. The service was first held on 27 May 1945 to remember those

brave men and women who died in the Second World War.

Similar services for cyclists are held at Meriden in the middle of England and at Coxwold near to York. This is the West's contribution. The proceedings start at 14:30, and after the formal part has finished, there will be tea and cakes for everyone.

It's a chance for reunions and a great deal of cycling banter. All are welcome to this unforgettable occasion, with bikes or not. For more information, see the website [ctcwest.org.uk](http://ctcwest.org.uk).

**Brian Griffiths**

## A VIEW FROM A BRIDGE

In the Feb/Mar issue of Cycle, Carol Attewell highlighted the Hownsgill Viaduct as one of the attractions of the Waskerley Way. I agree, and have always enjoyed cycling across it. The picture attached was taken from the viaduct.

I am afraid that next time she crosses the viaduct she is in for a shock. It is currently being vandalised with an astonishingly ugly steel framework with wire mesh to prevent suicides. In future it should appeal to anyone looking for a vision of a post-industrial dystopia.

**Geoff Turnbull**



## Obituaries

### John Gradwell

Died January 2012, aged 98. John was a life-member of the Spartan Wheelers CC. When he was sent to Stoke to repair war-damaged tanks, he joined Burslem Olympic Wheelers. He was an all-rounder, racing on track, rollers and most TT distances, as well as the Isle of Man International. He toured widely in Europe, alone and with fellow veterans. He was a formidable country and western dancer, and an excellent club secretary and treasurer. **George Clayton**

### Reg Randall: 1926-2012

Reg Randall, who died in December, was one of the best long-distance time trialists of his era. In 1958, he broke the Land's End-John o' Groats record by more than an hour. Two years later, Reg took the 1,000 mile record in a time that stood for 41 years. A modest man, Reg didn't appreciate the esteem he was held in. Even at the peak of his relentless training schedule, he'd get back to the club's West London HQ (before closing time), saying 'There's fog in the Bristol Channel.' Lesser men were awestruck. **Harlequins CC**

### Dave Lewis

Died at home near Swansea on 16 Jan 2013, aged 57. He was a long-distance cycling fanatic who organised and rode a vast number of audax events, including London-Edinburgh-London; Paris-Brest-Paris; the epic Trafalgar (Square) to Trafalgar; and Calais to Brindisi. Dave enjoyed the CTT 24hr and was part of the successful Cardiff Byways team that won the National Championship Team 24hr in 2006. Dave was a 'hard man' in the cycling sense. He became ill early in 2012 and it came as a shock to find it terminal. **Robin Field**

### John Snuggs: 14/11/50-19/1/13

Died peacefully from complications following heart surgery after two months in intensive care. John started a programme of social Sunday rides for the London Cycling Campaign in the mid-1980s. With carefully planned pub and tea stops on scenic routes, John's rides – later under the banner of Central London CTC – were a regular feature for 25 years. Along with annual French holidays and domestic weekend tours, John helped to bring the delights of social cycle rides to a generation of Londoners. **Bob Davis**

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Get feedback from other CTC members at [forum.ctc.org.uk](http://forum.ctc.org.uk). Here's an abridged extract from one popular thread in March (see [tinyurl.com/chcy7z4](http://tinyurl.com/chcy7z4)).



### ROAD BIKE VERSUS HYBRID SPEED

**Mark1978:** Rode a sportive today with a friend who has a road bike. I have a hybrid (Trek FX 7.1). We're of similar height, weight, etc, and had done similar training. As soon as we met any sort of incline, he was able to pull away. Down to his road bike? Or my fitness?

**Audax67:** If you've got the standard 35mm tyres on, that would do it. Power for power, the heavier the tyre the more slowly you accelerate.

**RickH:** Do you mean inclines up or down – or

both? On downhills, drops will give a more aerodynamic position. Uphill, I find it harder work with straight bars unless I've got bar ends. Some of it may just be down to experience and/or technique if he is the more experienced, even if out of condition.

**Ellieb:** If you watch the Tour de France, you'll notice that very few of the riders are on hybrids.

**PH:** On your next ride, swap bikes. My money would be on him still being able to pull away, but not so readily. The bike will be a part of it, but if you're equally

matched on the flat, there must be something else as well. One thing not yet considered is the psychology: seeing someone edging ahead will make one rider increase effort and another give up.

**easyroller:** There could be as much as a 4 or 5 kilogram difference in the weight of your hybrid to his road bike. All other things being equal, by dropping 5kg of weight (from bike OR rider) a cyclist producing 150 watts, hacking up a 2km-long 5% incline, will be over 30 seconds quicker to the top!