

CYCLE CLIPS

April 2008



Newsletter

Cyclists' Touring Club, Grampian

Foreword

How many of our readers have noticed the cycle clips in the top right corner of our noble publication. Maureen Young placed these clips there when Cycle Clips was about a year old. The name was dreamed up by Peter Kershaw. Did you know the picture was taken in Bill Sinclair's garden? As readers may appreciate, there is a lot of history we do not know about; for example, in what year did CTC Grampian start its life, or how many rides are there during the Grampian Rally (23-28 May), or what is the m.p.g. for a cyclist. The answers to all these questions and more can be found in this so-called "Newsletter".

Grampian Rally 23-28 May (there will be 17 led rides)

From experience, we know that Grampian Club Members are late in applying to join the Rally. Many foreigners from south of Stonehaven have already reserved their places. They look forward to meeting you all.

Who can resist easy rides' titles such as "The Birse Bash", "The Garlogie Water Power System" and "Sea and Hill Views". Or the longer rides such as "Bennachie and Beyond" and "My Lord's Throat Loop".

Registration forms from Gordon Mackay, Heather Reid or any Committee member. You will recognise a Committee member by his or her commanding looks. You can also download the form from the CTC Grampian Website under Events at www.ctcgrampian.org.uk

What's in a name?

In 2006 for the first time, I mentioned during a CTC Scotland meeting my dislike for the term Right-to-Ride. It is too aggressive and should be replaced by something friendlier. I believe that

Right-to-Ride imitated the age-old Right-to-Roam from The Ramblers. I also mentioned my dislike in the RtR meeting in Stirling in November last year. Kevin Mayne nodded approvingly. Now The Ramblers themselves are having second thoughts about their adage. A Note in the National Access Forum minutes states "It would be helpful to agree an alternative phrase, more attractive to the media, than 'Right to Roam'". CTC will follow suit, I am sure. I propose "Love-to-Ride". However, is that too sweet and innocent?

Sportrelief Day

Sunday 16 March was the great day for people to run one mile or two miles or six miles. Elisabeth, a Try Cyclist, happened to pass the Duthie Park coffee shop before the run started. A woman came out having consumed a buttery and coffee. "That's my warm-up done!" she said.

What? No Chain?

I once had a chance of buying a Harley Davidson that had been in Ghana since 1946. Since I had no money at the time, I can't say I regret not buying it. The bike was so heavy, it had a reverse gear. It also had a chain, of course. Recently I saw a HD bike near my house and I couldn't see the chain. I waited until the man came out of his garage and he said they don't have chains any more. They have some sort of rubber bands instead. If HD bikes have them, why can't bicycles have rubber bands?

An argumentative cantankerous bastard

When Nobby Clarke moved into Aberdeenshire in the late seventies, his old road-racing club wrote to the Deeside Thistle that he was a bit of an "argumentative cantankerous bastard". They

commended Nobby as a valuable acquisition to Aberdeenshire's cycling world. With these same words, we said farewell to Nobby, otherwise known as James Henry Clarke. Nobby died just before last Christmas and several of our members went to his funeral in Friockheim. He was, of course, one of us as a CTC man, but he spent most of his efforts on road race cycling and was an absolute star. The Deeside Thistle people will miss him. And so will we.

The Reverse Steering Bike again

A couple of years ago Andrea Venturelli, from Budrio in Italy, wrote to the Cycle Clips asking for the design of a reverse steering bike. Sandy produced proper drawings and Andrea with his friend manufactured an R.S.B. I am happy to report that Andrea now is a competent R.S.B. rider. Anyone going to Budrio? See www.budrio.org It looks a lovely place.

Christmas Lunch 2008

(Is this a record for the earliest mention of Christmas ever? Editor.)

The Inn at the Park, Polmuir Road, has been booked for the CTC Grampian 2008 Christmas lunch on Saturday 13th December. There will be a 20-mile ride beforehand. Not obligatory! Non-cycling partners and spouses welcome.

Bicycle Thieves

There are 460 million bicycles in China. (Don't ask me how they know that). Four million of those bikes are stolen every year. That is less than 1%. Now the Chinese Government is going to give each one of them an ID number. The new measure, they hope, will halve the number of stolen bikes to only two million per year. By comparison in 1990 in The Netherlands 300,000 bikes were stolen out of a possible 20 million. That is 1.5% of those Dutch bikes and in that year mine was one of them.

4000 miles per gallon!

The bicycle is the most efficient machine ever created. Converting calories into gas, a bicycle gets the equivalent of four thousand miles per gallon. From *Bill Strickland, The Quotable Cyclist*.



Baroness Sharples

A Conservative Peer, Baroness Sharples (no relation of Edna), asked in The Lords if she had been right to take a swing with her shopping bag at a cyclist who jumped a red light. She apparently received all round support for her action. As a result, the CTC raised concerns at her and The Lords' attitude. The CTC asked what if cyclists were to take the law into their hands every time another road user broke the law. After a meeting with Roger Geffen of the CTC, the Baroness spoke in The Lords about the health benefits of cycling. What a man, that Roger!

Fixed Gear bikes, the fashion

They say that San Francisco is the capital of the fixed gear bike world. The designers and users of these bikes wilfully ignore all progress made for the improvement of the bicycle since the 1870's. Yet they are successful, as Joe will testify. The citizens of San Francisco also see themselves as the defenders of environmental principles. So much so, that counselling sessions by psychologists are popular for those whose

conscience tells them they have sinned against the environment. Why don't they go for real confession?

Cycle Camping

In May Joe Prosser is taking a group of 20 people to the Western Isles. Editor and readers wish them a happy journey.



Gordon Mackay poses a problem

Gordon asks: *Cycling downhill with the wind behind you, do you go faster when sitting straight up or crouching over the handlebars?* When your Editor consulted some clever mathematician about this, he raised the question How large are his ears? Does anybody know the answer to the first question?

Spending on Cycling in London and Amsterdam

A columnist from London has found that London pays £3.28 per head per year towards cycling-related facilities.

According to the same article, Amsterdam spends about £20 per head per year on cycling. Don't ask me how they get these figures.

Spending on Cycling in Aberdeen

If we take a ten-year period, and we assume that Aberdeen has 200,000 inhabitants and moreover we assume that we must spend about £3 per head per year, the City should have spent about £6 million since 1997. Is that so? Can the City produce a figure like that? I would not be

surprised if it is more than £6 million, taking into account the various sources of money, such as the Scottish Government, Paths for All Partnership, Sustrans, NESTRANS, etc. Louise, can you calculate please? To be published in next Cycle Clips.

This once war-like nation!

Japan boasts the largest active extreme ironing group. They have 5 different styles of ironing: Freestyle, Urban, Rocky, Forest, and Water. The photo shows the Urban Style. Inspirational!



Pavement Cycling?

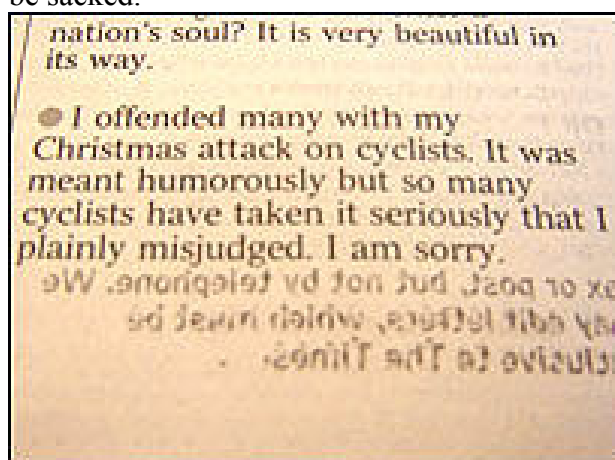
A letter to The Times by Dr Colin Guthrie from Glasgow encourages the mayor of London to introduce cycling on pavements. He says that cyclists and pedestrians safely co-exist in many European cities. His letter resulted of course in loud protests from both cyclists and pedestrians. Personally, I have never seen a European city where pavement cycling is the norm and where pedestrians and cyclists agreeably wave to each other. Dr Guthrie has had several letters published about cycling. Maybe because they are a little extreme.



Was Mr Matthew Parris drunk?



On 27 December he wrote in The Times that cyclists “should be decapitated” by piano wire strung across lanes used by cyclists. Why? Because he found some plastic bottles in the hedge, assuming they came from cyclists. Does he not know cyclists carry real water bottles? I wrote a stiff letter to The Times, not knowing that about five thousand others and the CTC had done it better than me. Should the CTC start proceedings against him? I still think he should be sacked.



Matthew Parris used his Times column to apologise

A Scots Mile

After a disagreement in the pub, I looked up the Scots Mile and found that the Scots mile was longer than the English mile. The Scots mile is on average 1,984 yards or (about 1,814 meters) while the English mile is 1,760 yards or 1,609 meters. Unfortunately, the Scots mile is no longer used. Soon we will all use kilometers.



The True History of CTC Grampian

A couple of years ago, I recall, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the origin of the Club. That was partly right and wholly wrong. Irene Melrose has thrown new light on the real beginnings of CTC Grampian.

Irene writes: *“I became a member of the CTC in 1985 and knew of no other touring cyclists in the area apart from a few in the Highlands Triathlons group. At Easter in 1986 they organised a Scottish Inter DA (the old-fashioned term District Association) at Strathpeffer Youth Hostel. When I phoned the organiser, he told me that an experienced member in the Aberdeen area was talking about starting a local group”*

The origins of the Nicholl Trophy

After this Easter weekend, I received a letter from Richard and Margaret Nicholl (of Trophy fame) who lived at Drumoak. In May 1986, a group of CTC members met in their house and as a result, we began fortnightly rides. The group called itself the Grampian Cycle Touring Group (CTG). In the summer, we met on Wednesday evenings at a pub out in the country arriving there independently.

Irene writes that the numbers dwindled, both on the pub runs and the fortnightly runs. She tried making posters to advertise the group but with no great success. Even in those days, she noticed that letters to the CTC Magazine complained that DA rides were often too far and too fast. Not much change there.

Insurance against Claims

Irene then turned her attention to non-members and short-distance cyclists. She was warned,

however, that this had the potential of claims against the organiser, Irene herself. A steering group was formed to start a DA and the inaugural meeting was held on 15 March 1989 in the Senior Common Room at Aberdeen University. Richard was elected as Chairman and Irene as secretary. Irene writes: *"We had a good amount of publicity at the launch. I also contributed to the Club page in the Evening Express. This generated a lot of interest with many phone calls – even from parents wishing us to take their children on a ride. I remember a ride where there were so many children (and parents) that I felt like the Pied Piper"*

Next year celebrate again!

After this, CTC Grampian never looked back and organised all sorts of runs. They even proposed "women only" runs, with a couple men as mechanics (!). Presently we organise at least three rides per week with as many as seven different rides in the summer weeks. We look forward to **15 March 2009**, the Ides of March, when Caesar was murdered, the Ghana Independence Day, the Proclamation Day of the Third Reich by Adolf Hitler and the real Start Date of CTC Grampian!

The Wobbly Wheelers' Repairs

It is a while ago that the WW's attempted to repair a bike.

A letter to The Times reminded me:

"Dear Sir, I wish to comment on the difference between a mechanic and an engineer. The mechanic, confronted by a problem, hits the machine with a big hammer. The engineer, however, thinks deeply on the problem, brings his expertise to bear, assesses the possible corrective procedures available, and then hits it with a big hammer".

Thursday Cycle Day (09.30 Airyhall)

The **Wobbly Wheelers Occasionals** have been replaced by the **Thursday Regulars**.



The Thursday Regulars ride leaderless. That is a very important fact, distinguishing these rides from all other weekly rides. Every Thursday at 09.30 at Airyhall Library. In case it rains, you can go and read a book there or play with the computers. There is, however, no coffee. Everybody welcome!

The next issue of Cycle Clips will be published in July 2008. Any comments and contributions to Gerard by 10 March at 01224 734799 or to gerardvlaar@yahoo.com
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