



Cycle Clips

April 2009

Newsletter

Cycle Touring Club Grampian



Foreword

The CTC, the UK's National Cyclists' Organisation, is following trends. No longer must we spell out the full name of Cyclists' Touring Club, but instead we should just use the capitals CTC. These letters become a brand in themselves and should always be followed by the words, the National Cyclists' Organisation. In March, the CTC issued a New Vision, which mentions all the usual good things that we should be proud of. One item under "equality" was a surprise to me:

"The wealthiest 20% of people typically travel 4.5 times farther by car and rail than the poorest 20%. However, when it comes to cycle use, this gap is more than halved – the wealthiest cycle just twice as far as the poorest". A Striking Stat.

Sombdy forgot where he parked his bike



Readers are invited to join the Yahoo Group

In order to receive e-mails regarding CTC Grampian you will have to subscribe to the newly set Yahoo Group. This will also give you the opportunity to send mails to the group.

The easiest way to subscribe is to send a blank mail to:-

ctcgrampian-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Then reply to the confirmation mail.

You can then write to the group by sending mails to:-

ctcgrampian@yahoogroups.com

You can unsubscribe at anytime by sending a mail to:-

ctcgrampian-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you sign up with a Yahoo ID you'll be able to use the full features of the website such as uploading files to share, add calendar events and lots more. Full details here:-

<http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/ctcgrampian/> Joe.Prosser@blueyonder.co.uk

Adverts for cycling

Recently a Welsh young woman called Duffy won a handful of awards at the Britpops. She was declared the best singer, no wonder since she is Welsh. However, of greater importance to us all, and to the world in general, is the fact that she was picked by a big company to praise their wares in TV adverts. She does this advert whilst riding a bicycle through a town. What better advertising could we have; and it is all free. Even the CTC couldn't pay for those classy adverts in prime time. Soon we shall see hundreds of youngsters, who admire Duffy, cycling through Aberdeen city. (Forever the optimist).

Burns's 250th Anniversary Supper

The Supper, which was again held at Gordon and Hilda's, was splendid. When we say splendid, we mean the food and the ceremonial surrounding the haggis, the neaps and the tatties.

Heather Reid had special praise heaped upon her for the peeling of the potatoes. John Campbell's Immortal Memory will be remembered for a long time. Since John hails from the general area where the Poet and Tax Collector spent many years, we felt that he spoke from the heart. Rod's Toast to the Lassies was welcomed with great applause, whilst Catherine's Response recalled the cycling adventures of the Bard. We were regaled to real artists' performances by Sandy Lindsey, in his traditional attack on the haggis. He also held the audience spellbound in deep silence and admiration when he recalled the tracks between Glenbervie and Aberdeen when King Edward's army was on its way here on the 4th day of July in 1189. This is the same region from which the Bard's father hailed. Joan Robertson regaled us with superb singing of ballads. She humbly maintains that she is only an amateur singer, who picked it up from her mum.

All in all this was another great evening for which we cannot thank Hilda and Gordon enough.

Rental Bikes Stolen in Paris

The bad news is that nearly 8000 Velib rental bikes have been stolen, out of the original 15000. Some were sighted hanging on trees and others were spotted in Romania. The contract Operator of the scheme for the next ten years had not expected such great losses. He says he repairs or replaces 1500 bikes a day. In return he gets the chance to place adverts on the rental locations.



Paris Theft figures are heartening

Eric Britton, a Ph.D. level economist, and a regular user of the Velib, maintains that these theft numbers are encouraging. He calculates that the theft level is 15 bikes per day out of a daily use figure of 80,000 rentals. That means the theft figure per day/use is 0.00018 %, which really is an excellent figure, when you take into account all the benefits of cycling and the fun that people had riding the Velibs. Like with everything else in life, it's just how you look at it.

The London Bike Rental Scheme

This scheme will start in March 2010 (only one year from now), with 6000 bikes. The docking stations will have theft-proof design. The bike will not be provided with a lock. This means you will have to look after it at all times, or take it to a docking station when you have finished with it. Best of all, Boris has decided that you won't be forced to wear a helmet when you rent one of his bikes. Good on yer, mate!

However, Stop Press!!!

As we are preparing these Clips, a High Court Judge has ruled that cyclists, not wearing a helmet, are partly to blame for injuries in an accident, even if they were not to blame

Now there are all sorts of statistics being bandied about, but the CTC would say that cyclists should not be forced to wear helmets. In the Netherlands, usually regarded as a sensible country, hardly anybody wears one. Are their heads made of sterner stuff?

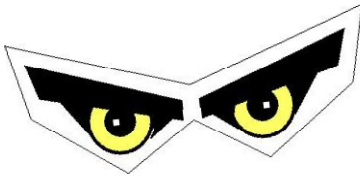
Free Bikes in Amsterdam in the Seventies

In Amsterdam they tried such a scheme 40 years ago, the White Bike trials. They were painted white as the name suggests. The idea was that you could take one and leave it wherever you wanted to go. You didn't even have to pay for the service! That scheme failed miserably, probably because the city fathers overlooked the plain fact that man is not an idealistic animal.



“Double Vision in Duthie Park”

Eyes in the back of your head (As recommended by Hilary S.)



Ever had one of those days, when you're struggling at the back of the CTC run? Your legs ache, the fit ones are yellow dots in the distance... that's when your mind can switch from self-pity to something altogether more sinister. “What was that noise in those bushes? Is the Beast of Buchan just a myth? What about the big cat sightings at Westhill, and that poor woman who was attacked in Inch? Yes; and it would pick off the weakest, slowest animal (cyclist) in the herd!”

That's when you need eyes in the back of your head - literally.

In North America, mountain bikers put big scary eye stickers on the back of their cycle helmets to ward off cougars. Big cats will attack humans from the rear, but if the animal thinks it is being observed, it won't strike.

Next time you cycle near Flora's Hilary's wild beast won't be threatening to attack you there, but there is a field where every year for the past fifteen years (or maybe hundred years, I wasn't there all the time) a skylark has been singing his high tones. He was back last week, 10 March. They are clever birds. When they descend to ground level after an exhausting ten minutes or so, they do not land anywhere near their nests, but creep some 50 meters or so through the grass to get home.

Lucky Cyclists

We belong to a group of people whose time has come. When we decided to become cyclists, we jumped on the right bandwagon. Government and local authority now wants to spend whatever money they still have on improving cycling facilities. They may act out of fear that soon people won't be able to buy or drive cars, because of various crunches. Now anything green goes, so we have caught the crest of a wave. Climate change, health, active kids, no exhaust fumes, no parking garages, no clogged up roads, what more do you want! We are saving the world, aren't we?



John S has had to replace it with a Brooks saddle, that'll give the Kinellar mice something to chew. *(Thanks, Hilary, for this revealing view of John's old saddle)*

A Road Hole mending machine

The Council has bought one of those, at a cost of £140,000. It really does a good job, since it only takes a few minutes to fill a hole in the road. The repair will last for at least three years, they say. The machine first heats up the edges of the hole and

then spouts the mixed asphalt material into the hole. Numbers of mends have been spotted and they are still OK. It is expanding properties of frozen water that causes the problems.

Guess the birthday boy



Proselytising and Campaigning

In the CTC there is a special group of people who call themselves campaigners. Most people don't like campaigners. I am one of those. Once, by mistake, I joined one of those groups for a day's encouragement for campaigners. I felt a fool when we were asked by the "training consultant" to wave our arms and to sing a song. What do they think, are we stupid or what? I won't do that sort of thing, not even for cycling's sake. Yet, most other people on that event enjoyed that day and thought it was a great encouragement to continue with their campaigning. Give me strength!!!

Cycling Etiquette

Some years ago our dear chairman, John Baghurst, drew up a marvellous document. This document was requested by the Committee in order create order and prevent ordure. It somehow disappeared from view: It think it was called Ride Etiquette. We should revive it. Can't we have some simple rules: Eat no more than one scone at a time, carry enough money to pay for your consumption, show mercy to stragglers, no excess of jam on scones, don't covet neighbour's bike, follow leaders (they know best), no moaning or

murmuring at the back of the bunch, don't overtake on the inside, wipe nose regularly. Any more suggestions ?

Credit crunch to car crunch

Cars should be brought to heel. Society doesn't need cars that can top 200 miles per hour. One would have though that it would be illegal to design such cars for the general public. It is not the Jackie Stewarts or David Coulthards that we fear, but the young man showing off his prowess (i.e. the "power" of his left foot on the gas pedal!). You would have though that the Scottish Government could introduce a simple bill that says that all cars on public roads must have speed limiters. Or is it against the law to thwart speeding drivers?

Mealy-mouthed NESCAMP again

The P&J and the Evening Express are helpful in publishing every week those locations where you might be caught if you were to break the speed limit. NESCAMP is conscientious in telling people where their mobile "safety" (not speed!) cameras are going to be placed. This is important to prevent speeding drivers getting annoyed. During a WW ride, Gordon suggested that local papers should publish which houses are going to be easy to break into when the owners are away. Or they should publish which houses are hard to break into because the owners are at home. This will ensure that thieves do not get caught stealing. Is his reasoning somewhat convoluted? Did we cycle too fast or too far that day?

CTC Grampian's 20th Birthday Ride:





Geese set the example

We really should be riding in the same formation as the geese that are now leaving us for colder climes. This can reduce wind drag by up to 40 percent, but we would take up the width of the road. By the way, how can we tell on which day they are leaving us? I last heard them on 15 March. Was that when they left? It is easy to note the day when they arrive with their noisy squawks. Those squawks sound very much like a passing group of cyclists. Have you noticed that geese change leadership very often in mid-flight? An example to follow?

Who is this guy?

Keat Wong took a photo in Italy. It shows an interesting bicycle, but Keat wonders whether any readers recognise the face of the man behind the bike, the man with the cap. Keat thinks he is a famous cyclist.



The next issue of Cycle Clips will be published in July 2009. Any comments and contributions to Gerard by 10 June at 01224 734799 or to gerardvlaar@yahoo.com Web: www.ctcgrampian.org.uk (secretary@ctcgrampian.org.uk)

Sandy's Complaint

Recently a woman driver got somewhat hot under the collar, when she saw this group of cyclists taking up space on the road. She mistakenly thought that roads were for cars only. She put her hand on the horn and let out some furious blasts. Sandy referred to this as "Verbal Abuse by Horn". If it happens again we shall report it to the police under that heading.

Revolting Riders

On two occasions in early March riders have been known to drift away from the stipulated roads so carefully researched by their leaders. Is this a sign of early spring?

Gordon & Sandy, cut the 20th Birthday Cake:



New Types of Rides

Gordon McKay who organises about half of all our rides, has added several features to the rides. Thus there are tower rides, photography rides and discovery rides. Gordon reasons that most members have some special knowledge about the area. Therefore he wants people to come forward and say they have discovered something which not many others know about. For example, on 2 May there, will be a water pipeline ride. It is probably more interesting that an oil/gas pipeline ride, of which of course there are three running through our area. At one point three pipelines cross each other!. It could be that somebody knows of a special tree, and special gable, a famous house, a historic owner. Please let Gordon know.

