



CYCLE CLIPS

April 2006

Newsletter

Cyclists' Touring Club, Grampian



Foreword

I tend to get hot under the collar about some subjects. This month I got somewhat hotter than usual about "Critical Mass". See below.

Try Cycling has started again. And again the Grampian CTC is very busy: some weeks we will organise five bike rides. We all hope Spring will be with us soon and our Grampian Rally, from 26 May for five days will be another success.

Try Cycling



Try Cycling is back - Every Sunday from 2pm, starting on 2nd April and running until 29th October. Rides start and finish at Duthie Park by the pond (off Riverside Drive). These cycle rides are aimed at beginners, or those who haven't been in the saddle for a while. Trained cycle leaders from the Cyclists'

Touring Club & Aberdeen Cycle Forum will lead short rides (<3 hours) at a slow pace. So, if you think you need some practice or road confidence this is the ideal way to keep fit, to gain a healthy heart and make cycling part of a healthy lifestyle. For more information phone Gerard on 01224 734799. It is necessary to phone in advance if children under 18 will be coming on the ride.



Third Grampian Rally 26-31 May 2006

Book now for the 3rd Grampian Rally! It will be held at Templars, Maryculter from 26th-31st May. Daily rides of 20, 40 or 60 miles and evening entertainments, finishing with a dinner and ceilidh on 30 May. Every CTC member is welcome.

Even if you're not attending the Rally, you are still welcome to attend the social evenings (£2 per head) and ceilidh (tickets: £18.50, partners & friends welcome).

For application forms, see the web site (www.ctcgrampian.org.uk) or contact Cindy Blackmore on 01224 484891 or at:

cindy.blackmore1@btinternet.com

The Sandy-reverse again

About one year ago, we published a photo of Sandy's reverse steering bike. As a result, an Englishman wanted to know how to build one. Last summer an Italian cyclist read about it and wanted to know where to get one. So in our last issue in January we published Sandy's detailed drawings of how to construct his Reverse Steering Bike. This time there was a response from Zambia. A gentleman by the name of Robin Napier from South Africa informed us that he constructed one in 1989 and had great fun with it for many years. He and his partner demonstrated it on the waterfront of Durban. He states it was difficult to get back on an ordinary bike again. He is attempting to have it photographed and will send us a copy.

101 uses for a dead hosepipe

The Times of 14 March has started a competition similar to what our Gordon invented years ago. Since 8 million people in The South are no longer allowed to wash their cars or sprinkle their gardens, they ask for suggestions... One of the ideas is to use it as a skipping rope. That reminds me...!

101 uses of an inner tube

57. Tie two or three dead inner tubes together and use it as a skipping rope.

58. Multi-perforate your tube to irrigate your veggies - all the rage in Asia.
Dave Lindsey

59. When you have plantar fasciitis, you are supposed to pull the ball of your foot to your body whilst sitting down. My physio agrees that the inner tube can be employed this way.

Why do cyclists wear such abnormal gear?

When you go to a real cycling country such as The Netherlands, you see people going to the shops or to their jobs in the daily working clobber. They may be office workers or plumbers. They would not be bothered to dress in special cycling gear. I believe it puts people off to see this yellow streak shoot past them on their commuting journey to work, especially on a Monday morning.

In the Sunday papers, there was advice what to wear. Examples were given of David Cameron, Madonna

and Guy Ritchie (who are they, you may ask), Alistair McGowan and Tony Turnbull (and who are they?). They mention brands where the shorts cost £150 and a jacket £250. The author is a wise man since he believes the beginning cyclist should try cycling in their ordinary clothes. "*The more clothes people buy in one go, the less likely they are ever to use their bikes*". No danger of that in Aberdeen.

(Notwithstanding all the above, we would still advise any rider, to wear at least one article of bright clothing).

Critical mass critic

A Cycle Clips contributors writes:

Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups. I was reminded of this wisdom, when I made the mistake of joining the "Critical Mass" cycle ride on Saturday 25 February. There were young people drifting all over the road, like young dogs, let out for an hour of play. I would say to them, one day you will need a car. Maybe to get to work or to take your child to the hospital. One day you will be Middle Class. On Carden Place there were older cyclists riding four or five abreast and circling the roundabout to hold up car traffic. To them I would say Grow Up. You are thirty years out-of-date. Flower-power people used to hold these Critical Mass events and stopped car traffic for hours. It may have been necessary in those days. Now however, the benefits of cycling are realised by governments and councils. Progress for cyclists has been made by the campaigning of ordinary daily cyclists, not by irresponsible once-a-month people. Let cyclists behave like real transport users and obey the Highway Code. Many cyclists on the "Critical Mass" ride were not aware that they were being used, that this was a ride to annoy car drivers, that they "were taken for a ride". They were not aware that they were holding up buses, delivery vans, an ambulance and a police vehicle. They were not aware that rides like these give all cyclists a bad name.

Do readers agree or disagree? Comments will be included the next Clips (10 June).

Slides about bikes

Amith d'Silva held an enjoyable presentation on the "History of The Bicycle". This was the second time that our own digital slide projector was used. Amith showed the many forms that the bike has gone through before it finally settled roughly into the shape that we now know. Darwin's law on the survival of the fittest also applies to the design of bikes.

The Applicant

The Applicant for the post of Grampian Cycle Runs Leader was undergoing a stiff interview. He had produced his Police Clearance Certificate, answered all the questions on the Highway Code correctly and convinced the interviewer that he knew how to deal with incidents on bike rides, including those involving inappropriate behaviour.

The interviewer told him that he almost had the job. "There's just one more test", she said, "and it's a toughie. Let's see you fold this Landranger OS map".

Alan Cowking

A (nearly) free bike

15,000 inhabitants of Lyon have joined a collective bike scheme that allows registered users to hire one of 1,500 bikes. Rental costs one euro an hour, with the first half-hour free. That means borrowing a bike is as good as free, since many commuting journeys are shorter than 30 minutes. Can we do this in Aberdeen, please?

The London YHA has launched a hire fleet of 100 bright yellow 'Budgie' bikes from five London youth hostels. An hour's rental costs £1.50. The YHA said: It is possible for people at work to get out for a quick spin during their lunch break. (That seems a tad optimistic, in my humble view).

Waiting for a train in Edinburgh?

If you ever find yourself with a little time to spare between trains at Edinburgh Waverly, you should consider paying a visit to the Bike Station, which is located on the station concourse just to the left of the Booking Hall. Ring the bell to the right of the door and you will gain entrance to stairs leading down into the catacombs, which host a huge collection of bikes of many varieties and in various states of decay, renovation and cannibalisation. This underground warren makes The Illicit Still (a favourite watering hole of the Aberdeen Cycle Forum) look like the Albert Hall. Its walls are festooned with arrays of chain rings, forks, wheels and all the ingredients that go into the assembly of the wonderful mechanical construction, of which we are all so fond.

A mixture of mostly volunteers beaver away in this warren, assembling serviceable bikes, which are sold on for a nominal sum to deserving and needy causes and individuals. At any given time, they will have about 2000 bikes in stock and their financial turnover is about £2500 per week. There is a mixture of paid staff and volunteers who are all trained to Sci-Tech quality Technician Level 3 or 4. They even have inmates from Shotts Prison working as volunteers as part of a rehab project. Their finance relies on donations and the principal ones are from the Scottish Parliament and Edinburgh City Council; the latter were persuaded that a donation of £5000 would cost less than paying the landfill tax on the bikes that the money would help reclaim!

Over the years, their activities have mushroomed: they have an above-ground branch in Edinburgh (The Castlecliff Bicycle Workshop). Two similar operations have started up in Glasgow, one in Perth and there is the prospect of one in Clackmannan. They have a Cycle Training Manager and a team qualified to train both beginners and aspirant cycle trainers.

The outfit is big enough to take on substantial contracts; a recent one was to supply 75 bikes to a Primary school, train the children to ride and take them out on a short tour.

Whoever is the founding father of all this deserves a knighthood!

David Lindsey

Tandem Club Journal readers are very clever

Gordon Mackay is a TC member. He suggested I should publish something about braking whilst going downhill. Since I wanted to save readers from ploughing through lots of difficult words, I only give the following extracts:

"Maximum heat build-up is around unbraked (terminal) velocity divided by the square root of three."

Malcolm Parry

If you think that is clever, then read the following reply:

"A cyclist/tandem of mass m descending a hill of gradient x at speed v is losing GPE at a rate of $mgvx$ and has air resistance of av^2 (power dissipation av^3) for some coefficient a . Calling the terminal velocity V , we have $aV^2 = mgx$ or $a = mgx/V^2$. Power dissipation in the brakes is the GPE that is not lost in the air, given by $mgvx - av^3$ or on substituting for a , $mgvx - mgxv^3/V^2$. Dividing by $mgxV$ and defining $z = v/V$ gives power dissipation dependent on $z - z^3$ which is maximised when $1 - 3z^2 = 0$ or $z = \sqrt{1/3}$, i.e. at a speed which is 58% of terminal velocity. Of course multiplication by the root of $1/3$ is the same as division by the square root of three, and so this is in accordance with Malcolm's figure above."

David Demerell

Of course, why didn't I think of that. My thanks and apologies to the authors and to the editor of the Tandem Club Journal who allowed me to use these wise words. I do hope that Gordon and Sandy take the above into account whilst taking their stokers out for a spin.

Speling

In the Isat eidotin I miexd up the sepling to see if you cuold still raed it. Alan Cowking snet it for chkecing to a man in Uppsala, to see if it wsa Sewdsih by any chacne... He ceame back whith the folwoing:

"I hvae ceckhed it adn tihnk it is a dkuern Socl".

The Burns Supper Social

This year the supper again was very social. We are grateful to Hilda and Gordon for allowing us to make a mess in their house. There was the brandishing knife from Sandy, the Immortal Memory from Eric and the Toast to the Lassies by Albert. This was all in good taste and decent. As it should be!

Then there appeared in the doorway a brash, very-well-endowed redhead, looking like a teacher from The Gorbals, with big glasses on her nose, make-up a teeny bit overdone and all over the place. Good taste had suddenly gone out of the window and poor taste reigned from then on. The roar of laughter would have frightened the neighbours. I hope there was no-on watching through the front windows. At the end Sheila (for it was she) let down the well-endowed bits in a dangerous manoeuvre involving two pins. There were some disappointed faces.



To Sheila I have dedicated the following wise Gaelic Red Indian saying: "A man's got to do what a man's got to do. A woman must do what he can't."

Hands on handlebars, please

Last summer George Bush rode a bike at Gleneagles. With both hands he waved to the police protecting him "Thanks guys, you're doing a great job" and collided with a police officer. The police accident book reads, "Officer collides with moving and falling object". (Thanks John Baghurst for noticing this report)

Hamish's champion skier nephew

That nephew took part in the Winter Olympics in Turin and did well, even though there were no Trophies for Torphins. Hamish discussed the following with Roger (that's his name):

Put a cyclist on a 15% downhill slope on good tarmac and a skier on a 15% downhill on good snow. After one mile who reaches the highest speed?

Roger said the skier would win, Hamish maintains the cyclist would be first. The Cycle Clips has many readers who can scientifically calculate the correct answer, with the help of many v's and x y's and square roots thereof. Next Cycle Clips in July we will have the answer.

(Hamish finished the argument by stating that a cyclist can go uphill too. That shut Roger up all right).

Cycle trek from Inverurie to North Africa

John Tuckwood is at it again. He cycled from home to Portsmouth, crossed to Cherbourg, trekked via Bordeaux and Biarritz to Northern Spain, crossed the whole of Spain to Gibraltar, did not cross the Straits from there (I had expected him to swim across), but from Algeciras to Tangier. He confesses that at one point in Southern Spain he did 2 km in 15 minutes, i.e. a grand speed of 8 km or 5 miles per hour. Presently he is coming across places with beautiful names such as Tetouan and Chefchaouen. Now and again he struggles with foreign keyboards and sends a message saying he is alive and well. In Spain, flagged down by the police, he managed to say "no habla Espania". I don't know what he would say in Morocco. We haven't heard from him for ten days. For all we know he was taken by Barbary Pirates as a white slave for a Sultan's court. I can just see him waving ostrich feathers over the throne, dressed in only a leather apron for modesty: he really has the figure for it.

As I am writing this, the computer speakers announce a new message. It is John. He is safe and well. He must be enjoying himself immensely, in spite of dangers on the road, broken spokes and punctures. He is full of praise for the beauty of Marrakech, the fresh orange and the spices.

Cycle lanes hit by 30% cut in funding

Just as Cycle Clips is going to press, we were sent the following clipping from the **Sunday Herald**:

"Ministers are slashing spending on cycling at the same time as promoting it as a healthy way to help save the planet, the Sunday Herald can reveal. LibDem transport minister, Tavish Scott, has been condemned for a "scandalous" 30% cut in funding for cycle lanes and other facilities designed to encourage people to get on their bikes.

In 2004, the Scottish Executive promised to favour cycling as one of the most environmentally-friendly and health-giving forms of transport. It has a target to double cycle use between 2002 and 2012. But a new analysis of spending on cycling in Scotland discloses that public funding is due to fall from £11.9 million in 2004-05 to £8.3m in 2006-07. Over the same period, cycle spending as a proportion of the whole transport budget will drop from 1.4% to just 0.6%. This was described as an "impending disaster" by Dave du Feu from Spokes, the Lothian cycling group that compiled the figures. He feared cycleways will not be built, upgraded or lengthened, and road junctions won't be altered to accommodate bikes. "In the light of the public health and environmental problems now facing Britain and the world – let alone the Scottish Executive's own targets to increase cycle use – the decline in cycle spending is truly scandalous," he said. The Executive's vision for encouraging cycling was now "discredited", du Feu claimed. And it was Tavish Scott as transport minister who had to take the blame, he argued. Scott recently turned down a bid from the sustainable transport group, Sustrans, for an ambitious £11.6m programme for new cycle projects across Scotland over two years. Instead, he gave the group just £2m for one year. This was regarded by Spokes as Scott's first big test on cycling policy since he took charge of transport last June. "The LibDems pride themselves on their environmental credentials, yet the decline in cycle project spending is accelerating due to the personal decisions of a LibDem transport minister," commented du Feu. Scott's apparent lack of enthusiasm for cycling contrasts with the attitude of his predecessor as transport minister, LibDem Scottish leader Nicol Stephen. Stephen had praised Sustrans, and invited its £11.6m bid. The Scottish Executive defended its support for cycling, insisting that it was committed to encouraging people to get on their bikes. It had given Sustrans £9.5m since 2002-03, and annual grants to local authorities for "cycling, walking and safer streets" would top £9m in 2007-08. "Cycling and walking continue to be important in the context of the Executive's priorities for transport in Scotland," said a spokesman. John Lauder, the director of Sustrans Scotland, said he was "really pleased" with the £2m grant this year. Transport campaigners, however, were scornful of the Executive's approach. It was wasting hundreds of millions of pounds on increasingly expensive roads, alleged Colin Howden from TRANSform Scotland. "Just devoting to cycling the cost overruns on the ill-conceived motorway building programme would transform the conditions for cycling in Scotland," he said. "It seems that Scottish ministers are only prepared to spend money on transport when there is an industry lobby to be bought off – something that cycling doesn't have."

*By Rob Edwards, Environment Editor
Sunday Herald. 19 March 2006*

The next issue of Cycle Clips will be published in July 2006. Any comments and contributions to Gerard by 10 June at 01224 734799 or to gerardvlaar@yahoo.com

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