

The West Surrey Cyclist



**July – September
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WHAT WE ARE

CTC is the national cycling charity. It campaigns for both road and off-road cyclists. Membership includes third-party insurance, legal claims advice, travel and technical guidance, on and off-road route information, and a bi-monthly national magazine. It has 70,000 members and affiliates and is the oldest and largest cycling body in the UK. It has a network of local groups of which CTC West Surrey is one.

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CTC West Surrey history & archives website:

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/chris.jeggo/wsdahist/histarch.html>

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

This issue could very easily have been late, as perhaps could I.

I have recently returned from a visit to the Dordogne. I took my folding bike with the aim of doing a morning ride whenever the weather permitted. One day there seemed to be side-to-side wobble of the steering column. I stopped to check that everything was tightened correctly - it was - and continued. All seemed well for a while, but then the bike's handling was very peculiar on a twisty descent. Further scrutiny of the steering column and shaking it from side to side revealed nothing amiss.

After a stop at a shopping centre the wobble of the steering column was so severe that I halted again and peered suspiciously at the join of the column to the frame. It would have been helpful if some passer-by could have shouted "You're getting warmer" but alas no one did. Having again drawn a blank, but by now convinced that something was seriously wrong, I rather dubiously got back into the saddle and immediately found myself sat astride one of the two unicycles that I now possessed. Well, almost.

The sequence of events was now obvious. A crack had been developing in the frame, thereby allowing some rotation of the steering column relative to the seat column. The more the frame had been flexed by this rotation, the worse the crack had become. Eventually the frame had collapsed, leaving the front and rear portions of the bike connected by just a sliver of

metal. The whole thing seemed to have taken about an hour's cycling. I hadn't spotted what was happening because I had been inspecting only that part of the bike that had been manifesting the symptoms. If there's one thing to be learnt from this experience, it's that the cause of a problem is not necessarily where the symptoms appear.

It's unfortunate that I now need a new folding bike. On the other hand it's fortunate that you do not need yet another new editor. I still shudder when I think of the bike's odd handling on that twisty descent and imagine the outcome if the final failure had occurred there.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE, WRITE SOMETHING!

All contributions are welcomed by the editor. Please send them to editor@ctcwestsurrey.org.uk.

LETTER COLUMN

Regarding the piece by Dane Maslen in the January - March edition of *The West Surrey Cyclist* about GPS bicycle speedos, my neighbour (a keen mountain biker) recently returned from a ride. As he dismounted, I stood next to him as he checked the GPS unit on his handlebars. He looked at me amazed as he read the display which said something along the lines of "Distance travelled - 115 miles, maximum speed - 91 MPH". He had forgotten to switch it off while on the train! Not something to worry about with a normal cycle computer.

Dave Williamson

I've had a similar experience on a bus after a walk, though in that case the problem wasn't forgetfulness but a failure to press the GPS's off-switch firmly enough as I scrambled aboard the bus that I had just caught by the skin of my teeth. You are, however, not quite right in believing that this is not something one has to worry about with a normal cycle computer. Users of cordless models should switch them out of automatic mode whenever there's a risk of electrical noise, e.g. on an electric train. I used to have such a cycle computer for my (excessively) folding bike. I took appropriate precautions on Eurostars and TGVs, but was surprised several years ago after a visit to a supermarket in Ribérac to discover that I had apparently cycled a few hundred metres around its aisles.

INTERMEDIATES' ISLE OF WIGHT TRIP 22/05/13

By Marion Davison

Catching a later train than the "early risers", Louise Gagnon led John Morris, Hilary Stephenson, John Child, Keith Ricketts, Laurie Mutch and Marion Davison. We met Jo and her son at the Ryde ferry and set off in a clockwise direction on a cool, dry morning.

Glimpses of two Napoleonic forts and a peaceful Solent could be seen at intervals as we made our way past Seaview, St Helens and Bembridge before turning back round to the West past the airport and then North to our lunch stop at the justifiably popular Isle of Wight Garlic Farm, in a beautiful position under Arreton Down. An imaginative and tasty menu was much appreciated and we continued South to see the sea from high behind Ventnor. North again and after wondering where all the holidaymakers were we met them all at Godshill which seemed a suitable tea stop, the only decision being which one had the best cakes. We think we chose the right one.



The group at Cowes (photo by Louise Gagnon)

Suitably refreshed we continued along the scenic cycle trail up through Newport, then along the river Medina. As our leader had not visited Cowes before we thought it only right that she should have her photo taken outside the Royal Yacht Squadron. Back to Ryde via Whippingham and Wootton Creek,

where John Child's local knowledge was indispensable and a delicious meal at an Italian restaurant rounded off a highly enjoyable excursion. The ferry and train provided a welcome rest on the way home.

RIDING AROUND

With Geoff Smith

Any time is new bike time and it is always a joy to share the pleasure when a cyclist in our group shows up on a new steed. You can invariably spot a new bike owner by the furtive glances skywards that he or she makes frequently just to make sure no rain is in prospect. You cannot let the new toy get wet just yet.

But is the bike your new toy, or are you the toy of the bike? – Take it from me, the latter is the case. Two recent examples - three if you include me - prove the point.

First concerns a newcomer to cycling who has just taken delivery of a state-of-the-art road bike with electronic gearing. He will conquer it eventually, of course, but at the time of writing he is still coming to grips with his bike's controls, frisky steering, and short wheelbase, and is finding it tough going... Is he the toy of the bike? No question.

Then we have a well-experienced rider in our group with his new pride and joy and, incidentally, without doubt my own current personal choice of dream machine. The look on his face said it all; he is totally in love with the bike. Because of his skill and dedication, there is no doubt that the bike is his toy and is likely to stay that way for some years to come. I envy them their civil partnership; good luck to them both. But it will never last.

But what about me in this context? Have I bought a new bike? No, but I have just spent several hundred pounds renovating my old road bike for the second time, which has set me thinking about bikes being toys, ours or theirs? Mine has just told me yet again what it expects of me in terms of kitting it out and I jolly well have had to submit to its demands. Just like all its life it has told me how it wants to be ridden, which is hammer-down hard.

The trouble is the age thing has come into the picture. The hammer does not go down as hard as it used to. Apart from with my cheque book, I can no longer fully satisfy my bike and I have therefore become its toy, its plaything. The same, dear cycling friends, will happen to you.

It is the inevitable way of things; we must show respect to our bikes and cater to their needs constantly. That is why I have had no qualms about shelling out loads of cash on my 17-year-old road bike, and one trusts, all

of us feel the same in our ongoing relationships with our magnificent machines.

Just remember, they are not our toys, we are theirs.

WOKING MIDWEEK WAYFARER INFORMATION

By John Murdoch

Mailing List

A reminder that there is a Midweek Wayfarers user group mailing list, used for sending e-mails to riders, typically to provide up-to-date information about rides e.g. any changes to the published rides list. If you wish to add your name to this list, please advise the editor, Dane Maslen, by e-mail.

Train Assisted rides

This refers to all rides which start well away from our local area, as I am aware that few members now take the train to the local station, some taking the car, others riding to the start.

Thank you for your feedback following my recent e-mail. It appears that such rides are still popular, but I have received a number of suggestions to improve them further. Therefore, there will always be free car parking close to the station (please contact me if you wish to know where), and the coffee stop will be close by, allowing for a full morning's ride, before returning to the station/car parking later in the afternoon. For those riders who wish to ride to the start, please be aware that the reason for these "away" rides is to take us to new areas, and therefore it is likely that the route will take you further away from home, before returning to the start point. It may be, of course, that having ridden to the start you may wish to take the train back, which could be cheaper than a morning rush hour train.

However, please do not think that such rides are only for my group, or for those who like going a long distance (unless you ride to the start, of course!). It is the intention that we will always have two ride leaders at such away rides, myself and also someone for an intermediate group. I certainly hope that this information will make such rides popular again in future.

If you want to know more about any particular ride, simply give me a ring (01276-681131).

B & B CROATIAN HOLIDAY – WITH A DIFFERENCE

By Richard Ellis, accompanied by Alan Holbrooke

It's not always easy to organise cycling holidays! Having discarded the 2010 plan for a European trip with the customary hotel with luggage support, it was to be something different. In this instance B & B does not just mean “Bed and breakfast” but

Boat and Bike (+ evening meal)

a combination which had the appeal of providing a travelling hotel with some challenging cycling. A lot of “surfing” revealed that the river trips were all well booked. Eventually Sail Croatia Ltd appeared, courtesy of Google, offering a seven day experience “island hopping” along the Adriatic seaboard starting in Split (For you non-geographers, it's about halfway down the Croatian coast after the mainland bulge of Istria, and Dubrovnik is another 150km further south).



The deal included en-suite twin-bedded cabin with dinner, bed and breakfast and hire bike. We booked.

This cycling “adventure” meant a very early flight from Gatwick – turning up at the airport at the ungodly hour of 3am – missing a night’s sleep.

Bleary eyed, we arrived in pouring rain at Split airport and took a shuttle bus to Split harbour with our hand luggage – and soon found our floating accommodation for the week - MV Labrador. This was a 30-metre wooden sea-going vessel which would be our resting place for the next seven nights. It was a welcome sight, though our two berth cabin was a little on the small side - most clothing etc stayed in our small bags - with no shelving space and smallish combined shower room, washbasin and WC. (cyclists can cope!)

There were 33 cyclists on board and a crew of five which included two guides. There was a welcome drink, a short presentation, a lunch and we were off. About half were our “group” from the UK, mainly the South & Midlands, and the rest were Scandinavians who generally rode separately though we inevitably passed each other en route.

Over the week we visited 4 islands, with the formula of an overnight stop-over at one port, disembarking with our “hired” bikes (part of the deal) the following morning, pedalling off together in a large group, meeting up for a mid-morning refreshment break and lunch en route and then reaching another port on the island in the late afternoon, returning to our boat where our bikes were again stored on deck.

Each island was shaped like a Cornish pasty with surrounding rocky (crinkly) coastlines and a long spine in the middle, involving a steep climb up out of the port on to the undulating ridge then winding along the summit(s), terminating with a long glorious swoop down to our boat at the next port at the other end of the island. The few coastal roads had severe ups and downs, which we mostly avoided as nearly all of them went nowhere!

Our group was led by Julio, a swarthy but friendly Croatian who gave us brief instructions on each day’s ride... which inevitably started with at least a 45-minute to 1-hour climb from the disembarkation port – then usually a welcome coffee/refreshment stop, followed by lunch, and later a well-deserved descent and a visit to a tavern/bar at our destination port.

Julio was helped by “Girl Friday” Natalija, his back-up, who looked after admin and made sure that we all got safely to our destinations.

On average we cycled about 40-50k each day depending on the size of the island and the attractions en route, plus the available roads – there are very few of them! Fortunately after leaving Split the weather quickly improved

and by the middle/end of the week we were basking in warm/hot sunshine. It was almost perfect for cycling as the early morning climbs were mostly done in cool and cloudy conditions, with higher temperatures in the sun later in the day.

The day of our arrival in Split, we sailed directly west to the island of Brač, docking at the delightful harbour town of Milna, where we were “introduced” to our bikes and pedalled round a long promenade, avoiding a very large funeral procession just about to enter into a very old church on the quayside with the coffin being wheeled in on a small cart. That was the main excitement of the evening!

(Alan, collector of memorabilia, noted that on Brač “they mine white marble and it is claimed it was used in the construction of the Reichstag in Berlin and in the White House” – not a lot of people know that!)

Day 2 – BRAČ (famous for the sight and smell of lavender): As a group we swiftly left the port of Milna behind, to immediately face our first long hill climb (up to 350 metres), passing mulberry and fig trees, up to olive groves and on to largely rocky uplands – lunching on peasant-type cheese ham and bread “en famille” on rough benches at a tiny tourist stop, looking longingly at the expected feast offerings produced by a large barbecue, unfortunately reserved for other guests arriving by car and coach! After an uneventful up and down afternoon, we swooped down into the port of Bol on the south-west coast and quenched our thirst at the local bar, before hopping on board SS “Labrador” to sail on to our next destination, the lovely harbour town of Jelsa on the eastern seaboard of Hvar - our next cycling stop.

Day 3 – HVAR: This is the longest Adriatic island - on which our morning ride started mildly enough from the port of Jelsa along a scenic gorge-like valley for 8 km, followed by a stiff long climb up to the summit searching for a restaurant/bar – fortunately it was not many kilometres away – where we slaked our thirsts and got out of cold biting wind. We reached our destination, the port of Hvar, at almost dusk so our evening tour after dinner was limited to a short stroll in this lovely medieval town - busy with tourists strolling along its quay - and climbing up and along the old cobbled streets to the floodlit castle, restaurants, bars, and shops.

Day 4 - KORČULA: This turned out to be our longest day ride. The start was from the port of Vela Luka with a gradual climb up to Blato along the top of a deserted road. There was little sign of habitation here and no coffee stop, so our intrepid guide took us down an even more deserted coastal route along a dirt track which eventually narrowed frighteningly to a



Dirt track down to Piske

steep and narrow cliff-edge trail on loose gravel which was too dangerous to ride – even on down slopes! There was widespread relief when we finally reached the tiny village Piske unscathed at 3pm absolutely whacked and famished – no café or bar here either!– but food & drink was winkled out of a small provisions shop catering for the locals. Finally recovered, we reached our destination, the port of Korčula, late, after a hard day's ride.

Day 5 - MLJET: Almost no cycling today on this relatively small island, which unlike the others had a heavily forested national park at the northerly tip. After pedalling a short distance, we visited a 12th century Benedictine monastery on an inland lake by boat, admired the scenery, and generally chilled out in now warm sunny weather.

(It was later in the day, on the voyage over to Pelješac that your correspondent was afflicted by sea-sickness. No dinner, just some pills provided by one of the guides)

Day 6 - PELJEŠAC PENINSULA (attached to the mainland just north of Dubrovnik): By this time we were enjoying unbroken Mediterranean warm sunshine and on this idyllic day we climbed to 1000ft, and for many miles enjoyed interrupted views of the neighbouring island of Korčula, over which we had struggled two days ago. There was also the spectacle of three Italian destroyers and helicopter on patrol - but we wondered why they were in these Croatian waters! After a short café stop, we whizzed down the remaining 7 km to the port of Lovište, where our lunch was served on the awaiting boat, followed by a long but leisurely afternoon cruise back to the mainland of Croatia.

We disembarked at the popular holiday resort of Makarska, nestling under the imposing limestone cliffs which border the coastline. In our tourist mode again, we strolled around the town and found yet another ubiquitous

restaurant for our evening meal at exceptional good prices.... we found everything so much cheaper here than other European countries – as they still have their own currency, the kuma, much cheaper than £ sterling or Euros.

Day 7 - OMIŠ to SPLIT: Wisely our bike tour operator had decided it was too dangerous and too much to expect us cyclists to pedal north along the only (very busy) coastal road – taking all the traffic north/south – back to our ultimate destination, Split so our boat-hotel vessel made an early start and motored up to another large town/resort Omiš along this stretch of the mainland ... with some 40 miles still to do on our bikes.

Fortunately there is a break in the mountains behind the town of Omiš – allowing us to pedal inland before heading north and back to Split on a parallel inland road - but inevitably facing a final 1+ hour's climb until we reached the top c450m. It was here that Alan managed to have a puncture. He immediately rang our leader Julio on his mobile phone for assistance and some time later,



Julio appeared - on “sweeper” duties - and very competently fixed the tube and replaced the tyre, whilst Alan looked on admiringly. We all then sped down this minor inland country road along the Celina valley, later circumventing most of the most of the dusty and unkempt back-roads and streets leading into the city, and back into the busy Split harbour.

Our tour bikes, which were Czech in origin had served us well, were now handed over boat rails and loaded on to the foredeck for the very last time – while we explored the city in hot sunshine, spending most of the time in and around a huge castle-cum-palace just a stone's throw away from the harbour in Split. This vast building, originally Roman in origin, now houses market stalls and shops and is surrounded by gardens and historic battlements.

The End - After a splendid meal, back to MV Labrador, an early breakfast, and taxi back to airport for the pleasures of Easyjet and Gatwick

CYCLING IN THE WESTERN CAPE

By Laurie Mutch (who returned from Cape Town in March)

The Western Cape in South Africa has some of the most spectacular scenery in the world - especially the Cape Peninsula. Because of this and the generally good weather from October to May (southern hemisphere summer), cycling is hugely popular.



110km Argus Cycle Tour

The Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour (“Cycle Tour”), now in its 36th year, is the largest individually timed cycling event in the world and takes place on the second Sunday in March, which this year fell on 10 March. It is limited to 35,000 entrants (hugely oversubscribed) and covers 110 km from central Cape Town around the peninsula.

The fastest men’s time was set in 2008 at 2 hours 27 mins; the fastest women’s time is 2 hours 48 mins. The top 1,000 riders in the Argus expect to complete the ride in under 3 hours and ride around 1,000 km per month in training to achieve this. It takes nearly 4 hours to start all participants in seeded batches. The cut-off time is 7 hours and the entire route is closed to traffic for the duration. See <http://www.cycletour.co.za/> for details. Overseas riders receive guaranteed entry.

The Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour and cycling in general in the Cape fall under the auspices of the Pedal Power Association, with 19,000 members, 10 full time staff and a huge team of volunteers. Over the last 4

years the Association has raised Rand 8 million (£ 600,000) for various cycling projects.

Unfortunately, like the UK, there are a large number of cycling deaths in the country each year, and since 2011 the Association has led and funded Rand 2 million towards a safe cycling campaign “Cyclists stay alive at 1.5m” aimed at raising awareness regarding a safe passing distance, as well as other aspects relating to cyclists’ safety. All pointers are that the 1.5



The Pedal Power Association safety campaign

metre passing distance is set to become law in the Western Cape Province this year. This was celebrated at 7 am on Saturday 23rd February with a ride from Camps Bay to Chapman’s Peak with some 300 participants all wearing the highly visible yellow and red PPA safe cycling campaign cycling shirts – see photo.

The Association coordinates road and MTB events (so called “fun-rides” – the term “sportive” is not well known in South Africa) each weekend during the season, many of which are timed by RaceTec electronic transponders.

The times are then used to establish keenly sought seeding for all events on the PPA calendar. Cyclists can register and pay for these events online; all participants wear a registration number (linked to an ID data base and the rider’s seeding) and “no helmet – no ride” is strictly enforced.

The so-called fun rides offer cycling and motorbike marshals, traffic officer out-riders for the leading groups, first aid support plus helicopter medevac if required and police and marshals controlling traffic at intersections. Typical distances are between 50 and 100 kilometres with a 06h30 start and up to 1,000 riders taking part. It costs around Rand 100 (£ 7) to enter and, with most of the organisers being service organisations, the funds raised are used to promote cycling in disadvantaged communities and various charities. For example on 24th February there was a 50 km

ride over part of the Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour route to and from Fish Hoek, a small town on False Bay (see map). Over 800 cyclists participated of whom 700 were officially timed with RaceTec transponders. The first rider across the finish line took 1 hour 20 minutes, although no podium places are awarded at these funrides.

As you would expect from such a popular sport, it's well served with cycle shops, although prices of bikes and kit are expensive – around a 20% premium over UK prices. Despite this there is no shortage of high tech gear on display – not so dissimilar from a UK sportive.

For those of you contemplating an overseas holiday including riding in wonderful scenery – think about coming to the Western Cape! See further information on all the cycling related activities on www.pedalpower.org.za.

Ed: Can you spot the link between Laurie's photo and Louise's article?

ELSTEAD AUDAXES ON 19TH MAY

By Nick Davison

The economy might not be growing but the event is booming with a 26% increase in entries [93] and 37% increase in riders [74]. Perhaps next year we could make the magic 100.

The weather was a great bonus with a large entry on the day. The later start time was welcomed by a couple of riders who took the earliest train from London to Godalming, although the closing time for the Stonehenge was 10pm.

At 9.35pm two Japanese riders checked in having greatly enjoyed themselves on the Stonehenge ride. One of the reasons for their late arrival was riding down the A303 from Amesbury to actually see Stonehenge! They have sent me a Japanese audax magazine with photos of their rides including the Danebury ride last year; unfortunately it is in Japanese but the photos are good.

Apologies for those who got delayed by the Watercress Festival; we shall amend the route around Alresford in the future.

I am very grateful for the support from Peter and Christine Hackman as well as Don Gray on the day.

THE BICYCLE ICYCLE 70KM RIDE ~ 7 APRIL 2013

By Mark Waters

The ride attracted 11 people, ten of whom were West Surrey riders. These were Peter Hackman, Clive Richardson, Anne Etherington, Bob McLeod, Roger Philo, Pete Chimes, Anne & Derek Tanner, Arthur Twiggs, John Gillbe plus Mark Waters, the organiser. We also welcomed one rider from north London, namely our old friend and CTC Tourist Competition winner, Mike Batchelor (West London).

You might remember that last year there had been some excellent weather leading up to the ride, resulting in a record entry of 18. It was all somewhat different this year but, on the positive side, the ride probably enjoyed one of the best days of the year so far: not too cold, fairly still, dry and



relatively sunny. What more could one want, given what we'd become used to over the past months!

The organiser must admit to leaving everything very much to the last minute this year. Nevertheless it all ran smoothly and no one was unkind enough to say they remembered the 'info' control questions from last year! It was very good to see Derek and Anne Tanner coming along to ride, not to mention two West Surrey members not often seen – not to me anyway! - namely Pete Chimes and John Gillbe. Thanks to all for coming along to ride, particularly Bob McLeod and Pete Chimes for actually entering in advance.

All completed the course, with the first riders getting home in 4 hours 7 minutes, a touch slower than last year. Had Clive not had his puncture, we might well have beaten the course record, which is eminently achievable simply by not stopping. Apart from time spent repairing the flat, we didn't, other than brief stops at the info controls.

I have to admit that this was my first ride since the 1st January (other than a gentle 10km saunter round my short local training circuit) because the weather simply hasn't been conducive to cycling. I was anticipating a tough ride and wasn't disappointed. What a difference it makes having others to ride with and it was great to be rolling along with Bob, Clive, Anne and Peter, although we were a bigger group for much of the time.

Everyone arrived back within a half hour span and enjoyed a cuppa, a biscuit and some Omani dates, which I insisted everyone ate, since I have a large box to consume. It felt subarctic on my patio, resulting in a relatively rapid departure home for everyone.

This route never disappoints and, despite knowing it well, it's always a pleasure to ride. Potholes were probably in greater abundance but the lane over the hill just past Hascombe was in considerably better condition than usual.

A great ride as ever.

TOUR OF THE HILLS - MARSHALS STILL NEEDED

By John Murdoch

Perhaps I was being overly optimistic, or simply naïve, to believe that my call for volunteers in the last issue of the magazine would prompt a material response. Sadly, this did not occur, and we are once again struggling to find sufficient to run the club's flagship event even though I have reduced the number of manned controls and hence the number of volunteers required. Please contact me now on 01276-681131 or johnmatsouthview@btinternet.com to let me know that you can help, even if you have previously indicated “general willingness”. Many thanks.

Ed: Don't delay, do it now!

THOUGHTS ON CYCLING SAFETY

By Louise Gagnon

Cycling in the UK has seen an explosion of interest, no doubt stimulated by Britain's recent international cycling successes. Over the last 5 years, commuter cycling has doubled in London and Bristol, and the Mayor of London has announced an annual festival of cycling to take place in August with the main Ride London event coming through our part of the world.

Sadly this growth in cycling comes at a cost. In 2011 there were 107 cycling deaths in the UK and 122 in 2012. Over 19,000 cyclists were injured in road accidents reported to the police. Many cycling casualties are not reported and, as many of you know, neither are the countless close calls.

85% of serious cycling accidents result from a collision with a vehicle, and the most common factor is failure to look properly, both by driver and cyclist. A recent report found that 10% of cyclists killed or seriously injured are the victims of vehicles passing too close. In London, 25% of serious injuries result from a large vehicle passing too near or across the path of the rider.

Over the last 12 months The Times has run a vigorous "Cities Fit For Cycling" campaign. The recent "Get Britain Cycling" parliamentary report also raised safety issues, and UK cycling bodies including the CTC are campaigning for "better justice and enforcement". Despite these efforts, inexperienced or potential riders understandably consider cycling to be dangerous and many give up or do not take up cycling.

It appears that the majority of accidents results from **two key factors**: firstly **failure** by the driver and/or cyclist **to look out for each other** and secondly the **close proximity of vehicles to cyclists** on the road. It is these two points that I wish to address.

Unlike motorists, cyclists are not surrounded by a 1.5 ton steel protective shell. They therefore have a vested interest in making themselves **highly visible** day and night as well as **predictable** in their manoeuvres so that motorists can **detect and avoid** them in time. For the motorist, failure in this early detection of other road users might just result in a scrape or material damage when another car is involved, but with a cyclist it could

easily be fatal.

Cyclists who act as “cowboys”, criss-crossing lanes without warning, running red lights, etc., substantially reduce the chances of a motorist detecting their presence and assessing their direction of travel. Last but not least is the new fashion trend in the UK of the “all-black” cyclist clothing look, a curious trend which is totally non-compliant with the guidelines of the UK Highway Code as it makes cyclists blend into most backgrounds. How fair is this for the law-abiding motorist whose worst fear is to live with an unintended cyclist’s death on their conscience? Being visible and obeying the law: not hard, is it?

Motorists frequently invoke the excuse Sorry Mate I Didn’t See You (SMIDSY) when involved in accidents and/or close calls with cyclists. Sadly, they may not actively be looking out for bicycles or motorcycles. There are the usual dangerous distractions (e.g. phone calls) and by their own admission, some motorists have not a care in the world for any other road user (particularly bicycles) who may slow down their journey. Hence the many close shaves we have as cyclists.

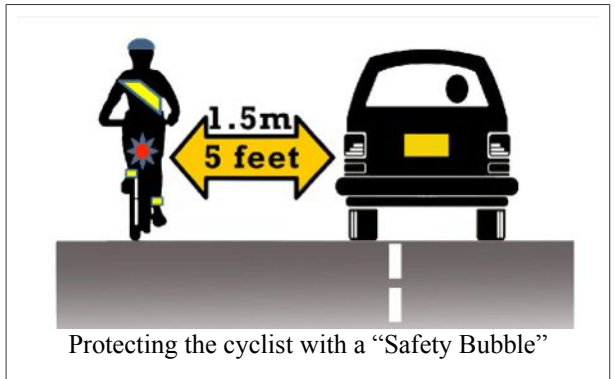
A number of countries have enacted laws or have campaigns for **safe “passing” distances** (when **meeting** and **overtaking**) in order to deal with the dangers of close proximity of vehicles to cyclists. France, Spain, the Canadian Province of Quebec, 24 US States and the Cape Province in South Africa have all promulgated into law a minimum safe passing distance of either 1 metre or 1.5 metres. For its part, New Zealand recommends drivers to “ideally allow at least 1.5 metres between you and the cyclist”; a beautifully simple guidance for all circumstances where motorists may be approaching a cyclist at speed from any direction. An NZ petition is on-going to have this 1.5 metre guideline enshrined into law. Other energetic “1.5 metres campaigns” are currently underway in Australia, the Canadian Province of Ontario (Chief Coroner’s recommendation), and Singapore.

As for the UK, the Highway Code recognises that cyclists are legitimate but vulnerable road users requiring some protective space when in proximity of motor vehicles. In particular Rule 163 advises motorists to: “give motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car”. Although Rule 163 doesn’t specify a minimum safe overtaking distance and is only advisory, the Highway Code shows a picture of a car safely overtaking a cyclist by positioning itself in

the opposite lane.

In all fairness, the majority of motorists get a near perfect mark for such safe meeting and overtaking of a cyclist. Likewise, the majority of cyclists go out of their way to follow the Highway Code and make themselves visible so that motorists can detect and avoid them. However there is still room for much improvement as the above statistics and the personal experience of cyclists demonstrates. May I suggest that one traffic death due to a collision with a cyclist is one too many. Therefore the aim must surely be to reduce the number of instances in which a cyclist is placed in danger, either by their own actions or those of a motorist, and in this way reduce the death toll.

As a former Police Officer who has attended many traffic accidents I believe the safety of cyclists can be greatly improved through a widespread effort at **educating** both the motorist and the cyclist. This could be a “social contract”, collaboratively and



voluntarily complied with by both groups: the cyclist to be visible and behave responsibly and considerately as a road user; the motorist to recognise the importance of **protecting** the cyclist on the road – both therefore contributing to what I like to refer to as a “**Safety Bubble**” for the cyclist.

Wouldn't our roads be much safer for cyclists if within 5 years the following behaviours (see boxes below) are the **new social norms**, **voluntarily** and **habitually** adopted by UK cyclists and motorists? What are your views on this?

1. Are these new behaviours and suggested guidelines needed? If so, how can they be promoted?
2. Could educational campaigns for both cyclists and motorists alone achieve the aim or are changes in the law/more law enforcement also required to anchor the new behaviours (such as when seat belt

and drink driving legislation were introduced)? If so, what changes to the law would you recommend?

3. What else could cyclists and motorists do to achieve a safe cycling environment?

If you have a minute, I would greatly appreciate **your feedback** on the above. Only provide your name if you wish to do so. Very many thanks.

Please send your feedback to: Louise@safecycling.org.uk

Safe cycling everyone!

New Behaviours For Cyclists And Motorists

Cyclists:

- Earn the **respect** of motorists by **obeying the rules** of the road and by cycling **courteously** at all times.
- If you want motorists to **avoid** you, they need to **see you** first!
To be seen:
 - (1) Wear striking and/or Hi Viz clothing.
 - (2) Use front and rear flashing lights in low light conditions; also consider using them during the **day** as many experienced and/or City riders do already.

Motorists:

- Think of cyclists as highly vulnerable road users
- Allow **at least 5 feet (1.5 metres)** clearance between you and the cyclist when approaching a cyclist **at speed from any direction**.
- On a **country lane** or in **urban areas** where a 5 feet (1.5 metres) gap is not immediately available:
 - (1) Slow right down and only proceed if there is a 3 feet (1 metre) gap.
 - (2) If in doubt, do not proceed. Wait for a break in traffic and leave as large a clearance as you can.

Ed: Now take another look at the photo in Laurie's article.

HOW FAR? - PART 1

By Dane Maslen

At the end of a recent ride the trip counter on my GPS (I'll subsequently refer to this as X) read 51.97 km. I saved the track of the ride as a GPX file. When I looked at the GPX file later using the GPS, the distance reported (Y) was 51.8 km. I uploaded the GPX file to my PC and analysed it with a program that gave the distance (Z) as 51.86 km. The differences in the calculated distance are small – in fact given the likely measurement errors they are insignificant – but why are they occurring at all?

That there should be a difference between Y and Z is perhaps the most surprising. They are, after all, being calculated from exactly the same data, namely the track points in the GPX file. In this instance the discrepancy between the two values is probably being exaggerated by the rounding of Y to 1 decimal point: ridewithgps.com, which in my experience nearly always reports the same distance for a GPX file as the GPS does, gives 51.84 km. Nonetheless that leaves a small discrepancy. Why?

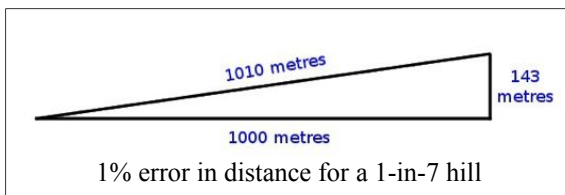
This will probably come as a surprise to you, but calculating the distance between two points at sea level on the Earth is not trivial. If the Earth were a sphere, there would be a simple formula for doing so. Unfortunately the Earth is an oblate spheroid and that complicates things. The method for accurate calculation of the distance, Vincenty's formulae, involves iteration and is fairly computationally intensive. There are, however, various approximations that can be used instead. For some of them the accuracy of the result depends both on the latitude and the direction in which the distance is being measured. One of the simplest approximations is to pretend that the Earth is a sphere: using the haversine formula will give a result that is in error by no more than 0.5%.

Assuming that my programming skills have not deteriorated in retirement, Z was calculated using Vincenty's formulae. I have no idea what method the GPS (and quite possibly also ridewithgps.com) uses, but I doubt that it's Vincenty's formulae, given how computationally intensive they are. The discrepancy between Y and Z is therefore no longer surprising: the GPS and the program on my PC are almost certainly using different formulae to calculate the distance. My program also calculates the distance using the haversine formula. That gives 51.79 km in this example.

So much for the discrepancy between Y and Z. What about between Y and X? It's important to realise that X is not being calculated from the same data as Y. Throughout the ride the GPS was determining my position every second or two, so X could be calculated based on all these measurements. The saved GPX file contains only a selection of the measured positions (the exact selection depends on how the GPS is configured, something I shall discuss in a later issue). That means that some wiggles get omitted, so would lead one to expect Y to be less than X.

Another important difference is that the GPS's trip counter is updated only for movement while the GPS is switched on, but the calculation of distance from the GPX file will probably include distances while the GPS was switched off, e.g. during a ferry crossing (the specification for GPX files provides a mechanism for the track to be split into segments to cope with this scenario, but my Garmin Oregon 450 certainly doesn't make use of this feature). So if one were to switch off one's GPS during a ferry crossing, then X would be a measure of the distance actually cycled while Y would include the ferry crossing too and be greater than X. But if the GPS is never switched off during the ride, then Y can't be greater than X, can it? Surprise! It can, though probably not for a realistic cycle ride. I'll be discussing the reasons for that in Part 2.

There might well be another reason for a discrepancy between X and Y, though I'm not sure. It might come as a surprise to you to learn that the calculation of Y ignores changes in altitude. On the other hand I have reasons to believe that the calculation of X does allow for changes in altitude (I need to take my GPS on a steep, straight ascent such as a chair lift to check this). The next time you cycle straight up the outside of the Empire State Building your GPX file will claim that you have covered almost no distance whatsoever, while your trip counter might well, if I am right, report that you have cycled about 381m. For more normal cycle trips the discrepancy between X and Y would of course be considerably smaller – about 1% for a 1-in-7 hill.



In Part 2 I shall discuss some of the ways in which errors can creep into a GPS's measurement of a ride's length.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sat 29th June: Cycle Jumble, Ripley Village Hall, 09:00.

Sun 14th July: 100 and 75 mile Reliability Rides, option of led ride or route sheets. Start Goal Farm Golf Club, Pirbright (SU939567) at 08:00, entry fee £2, Roger Philo 01483-233381. **Note new start location!**

Sat 3rd August: Prudential RideLondon FreeCycle event. Registration is now closed, but you might want to witness this mass-participation celebration of cycling prior to watching the Grand Prix races.

Sat 3rd August: Prudential RideLondon Grand Prix races, showcasing the Olympic cyclists of the future on a 1.3km loop around St James's Park.

Sun 4th August: Watch the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 and Surrey Classic on routes similar to the Olympic races. For more details of all four Prudential RideLondon events see <http://prudentialridelondon.co.uk>.

Sun 18th August: Tour of the Hills and Tour of the Greensand Hills. Start Shere Village Hall (TQ074480) at 09:50 and 10:30 respectively. See Rides List for more details.

Sat 14th September: Cycle Jumble, Ripley Village Hall, 09:00.

Sat 21st September: Tour of Britain, penultimate stage, Epsom to Guildford. See <http://thetour.co.uk/tourofbritain/277.php#.Ubompc7fu5k>.

Deadline for next issue September 8th. Get your cycling stories in to the editor now: editor@ctcwestsurrey.org.uk

The editor welcomes contributions of all types. If you have photographs that could be used to illustrate your article, feel free to send them too. All contributions will be acknowledged when received.

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Front cover: Riders on the Bicycle Icycle (photo by Mark Waters).