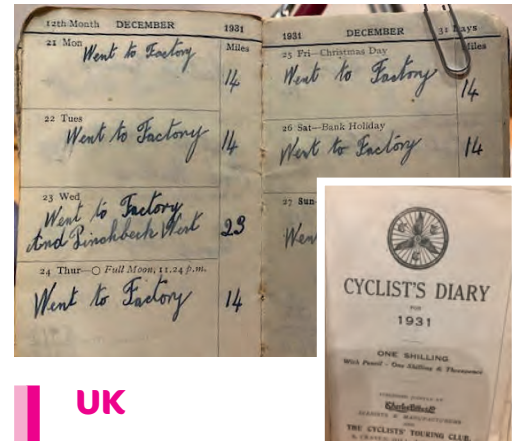




The Alps' highest paved pass



**UK**

**A journey into the past**

CTC used to issue diaries. **Robert Davison** acquired one from the 1930s

**RECENTLY I CAME** into possession of a CTC diary from 1931. A description of CTC is given in the initial pages: "From the first it has concerned itself entirely with the interests of the touring, club-running, and ordinary road-riding cyclist (of both sexes), taking no part in the promotion or control of path racing, but concentrating its efforts on improving the conditions of road cycling and defending the rights of cyclists."

Some things stay pertinent to 2023! Also familiar is the legal defence offered. We're told that the damages recovered "for injured or aggrieved cyclists" had averaged £4,000 per year since 1923. There was free third-party insurance back then as well, and a club magazine, the CTC Gazette, then a monthly publication. So much has remained similar during the CTC-Cycling UK journey.

There is a wealth of information for the practical cyclist: gear tables for 26in and 28in wheels are included; railway rates for the carriage of bicycles and tricycles; numerous records for 50, 100 and 1,000 miles, together with the End to End record.

Each day the cyclist recorded his mileage. These were added weekly and then a 'growing total' calculated, giving his mileage at the end of the year as 6,164. The cyclist rode almost every day. Utility cycling was very evident. After 'signed on at factory' [6 October 1931], the entry 'Went to factory - 14 miles' is recorded every day bar one until 31 December. No day off, not even for Christmas. Luckily some things do change!

**Europe**

**Over the Alps**

Last September **Bill** and **Fred Best** took a long-awaited trip from Geneva to Turin

**A**fter a two-year delay due to Covid, my son Fred [27] and I [67] finally made our cycle trip over the Alps. We had arranged bike hire in Geneva because Eurostar had stopped taking bikes due to Brexit!

Our luggage included a tent as we planned four campsite stops as well as two hotel stays. The route would take us to St-Jean-de-Sixt, Beaufort, Bourg-Saint-Maurice, Val d'Isère, Bessans, and across the border to Susa and Turin. It would take eight days.

The longest and most challenging climb was the 20km ride up to the Col de l'Isèran, which at 2,764m above sea level is the highest paved col in the Alps. Our greatest enemy was the sun, especially in the middle of the afternoon. We made sure we reached the cols by lunchtime, and we generally needed to carry between two and three litres of water each day.

All the downhill were fun but you had to concentrate. One misjudgement on a hairpin bend and you would be at the bottom of the valley much sooner than planned. The small towns of Bessans and Beaufort were the most enjoyable places

to spend an evening. Val d'Isère was a ghost town.

Our final day in the Alps saw us climbing to the Col du Mont Cenis (2,084m), just before crossing into Italy and downhill to Susa. We then took the quieter route via Moncenisio to avoid the busy main road. The easy cycle route to Turin also avoided big roads and took us through delightful villages. We lost the cycle route signs closer to Turin so reluctantly joined the main road to reach our apartment by the river Po, where we stayed for five days and met up with my partner, Linda.

I would wholeheartedly recommend this trip for its exhilarating views, dramatic descents, challenging climbs and, as always in France and Italy, the food.

Over the border and on to Susa

