

# Opinion Letters

**THIS MONTH** EVEN-GREENER CYCLING, BERLIN BIKE LANES, TRICYCLE AXLES, TUBELESS RIMS, GIFT AID, AND MORE



Bamboo: the greenest material for bikes? It's renewable and biodegradable ([my-boo.com](http://my-boo.com))

## Letter of the month

### GOING GREENER

Trevor Cox (Dec/Jan) raises an interesting point with the idea of 'greener choices'. Modern synthetic fabrics perform better in many ways than the materials they replaced. I wouldn't want to go back to cycling in an oiled wool gabardine overcoat! Goods manufactured in the EU will generally meet more exacting standards than elsewhere. But can you find them, and are you prepared to pay the price?

In terms of bike frames, metals are easy to recycle, carbon fibre isn't. There is carbon dioxide emission from the chemical process of making steel. Aluminium and titanium need more energy but it can be sourced other than from fossil fuels. Iron, aluminium, and titanium are all abundant geologically. Mining all of them is messy.

It's also a matter of keeping things in perspective, and using this hierarchy: reduce is best, then re-use, then recycle or recover. So using your bike to replace car journeys is good. Using your car to get to the start of a club ride is bad. Buying new stuff because old stuff is beyond repair is tolerable. Replacing stuff because it's last year's model/colour is bad. How greenly stuff is manufactured is secondary: all manufacture uses energy and raw materials and produces waste. It's merely a matter of how much.

I agree that less packaging would be good.

**John Heathcote**

### Win a Lezyne Macro Plus GPS worth £100

The letter of the month wins a Lezyne Macro Plus GPS, courtesy of Upgrade Bikes. It pairs with your phone and offers turn-by-turn navigation, Strava Live Segments, training integration, optional horizontal orientation, a best-in-class run-time of 28 hours, and more. For details about this and other Lezyne GPS computers, or to find your local stockist, visit [upgradebikes.co.uk](http://upgradebikes.co.uk)



### Get in touch

**LETTERS** are edited for space, clarity and, if necessary, legality. Please note that if you have specific complaint or query about Cycling UK policy, you should address it to the relevant national office staff member. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 28 February.

**WRITE TO:** Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ or email [cycle@jamespembrokemedia.co.uk](mailto:cycle@jamespembrokemedia.co.uk)



### Recycled recumbent

Trevor Cox's letter in December's magazine struck a chord. I've built several recumbent bikes using components from disused or abandoned bikes. Here's my latest. It uses a mountain bike rear swing-arm, a front boom (bottom bracket and down tube, with mods) from a bike left in a local dyke, and sections of old carbon fibre windsurf masts.

I've racked up just under 1,000 miles on this bike. It's comfortable, quite quick, and fun to ride.

**Keith Corridon**



### Nature vs nurture

A tangled family tree and the fact that our father died when we were both young boys meant that I did not meet my half-brother, Phil, until this summer. Getting to know each other has been made easier by the fact that we are both keen cyclists – and both members of Cycling UK!

We rode together for the first time in the autumn, tackling the Velotastic Fifty50, a rough-stuff/gravel bike excursion around the Peak District (which we both did on Genesis bikes, another coincidence).

**Patrick Daniel**



## Tight lipped

When I read Dave Anness's letter about tyre removal from the rims of Orbea Gain e-bikes, I anxiously went to my garage and checked my Gain M30. Like Dave's, it has Mavic Aksium tubeless rims and is fitted with tubes.

I removed the front tyre quickly and without levers. At 81 years of age, I don't have a lot of strength in my hands either. I refitted the tyre as easily. I do dust my innertubes with French chalk before fitting/refitting.

I think the problem must be the choice of tyre. Mine are Continental Gran Prix 4 Season.

I agree with Dave that the Orbea Gain is a fabulous bike.

**Dave Hext**



## Petrol power

I have just built this motorised bike for off-roading. You can get petrol wherever you are, but you can't top up a battery or exchange one just anywhere so I'll use this until electric bikes are realistic. Besides which, this cost £60 plus an old mountain bike that I was about to throw away anyway. Could I get an electric bike as cheaply?

**Ron Pattenden**

*I salute your ingenuity, Ron, but what you have there is a motorbike.*

*It needs to be taxed and insured as such, you must wear a motorbike helmet while riding it, and it needs to display a rear numberplate.*



## Totally 'diff'erent

The PBP article in the Dec/Jan issue of Cycle contains an oft-repeated error. The Longstaff tricycle is said to employ a 'Trykit differential'. Wrong, totally wrong.

Trykit Conversions have never made a differential. They innovated by creating a modular two-wheel drive unit, which surpassed the Longstaff double freewheel unit. A differential unit drives both wheels at the same time, unlike the TWD system, which only drives the slowest rotating wheel.

Longstaff certainly built a differential unit for evaluation, but I know of no actual machine built around the unit. Prior to that experimental unit, Ken Rogers was the last tricycle builder to make differential axle trikes. His unit was a modified version of the Higgins differential, but unlike the Higgins unit it proved problematic.

My own 1953 Higgins Ultralite Differential Tricycle is still working like a Swiss watch. Precision! I also own a 2013 Geoff Booker Tricycle with his superb TWD unit.

**Bob Nolan**

## Cycling ninjas

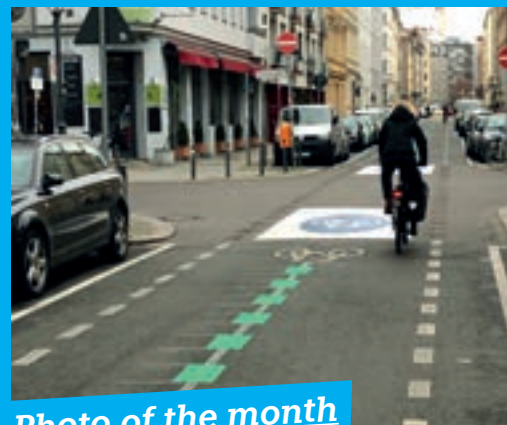
As a cyclist who also walks and drives a car, I am concerned by cyclists who think it cool to ride dressed entirely in black. Surely they are aware from their own experience, driving and walking, that in our overcast winter weather they are far less visible? They thus create a hazard for themselves and other road users – including other cyclists and pedestrians. Any solid

light colour can be seen much further away than black. Being seen from a distance makes us safer.

**Mike Clark**

### Obituaries

Are published online at [cyclinguk.org/obituaries](http://cyclinguk.org/obituaries). Contact [publicity@cyclinguk.org](mailto:publicity@cyclinguk.org)



## Photo of the month

### Germany one, England nil

This shows how German cities (Berlin, in this case) are redesigning and marking their city cycle highways. Of particular interest is the relevance to Cycling UK's 'Dutch reach' campaign, with the space given for potential car door opening. In Germany, of course, there's greater protection for cycle users in terms of cultural norms – and highway laws too.

**Robin Bevis**

## CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other members on the Cycling UK forum: [forum.cyclinguk.org](http://forum.cyclinguk.org). Here's an abridged extract from a recent thread: [cyclinguk.org/offline-mob-mapping](http://cyclinguk.org/offline-mob-mapping)



### SMARTPHONE TO USE WITH GOOGLE MAPS?

**Conscience:** Does anyone know of a good smartphone to use with Google Maps when touring? Problems I've had with a Samsung Galaxy 4 have been the batteries running out quickly and slow internet connection.

**cotswolds:** The problem is more what you're doing than the phone itself. The GPS in the phone uses power all the time; transferring data from Google Maps uses more power; and powering the screen is a big chunk of battery use. Any phone will struggle.

**AndyK:** The key is to use an app that gets the maps and route info onto the phone itself so it doesn't need to use mobile data during the ride. I've had success with Viewranger and the RideWithGPS app.

**Oldjohnw:** I have an excellent alternative mapping system. It's called a paper map.

**scottg:** That is a boring name. It won't sell. How about "Sustainably produced non-volatile fibre-based navigation system, now available with geo-magnetic adjunct"?

**al\_yrpal:** I have a phone case on my stem. In it is my Moto G5S Android phone running OsmAnd+, with imported routes from *cycle.travel*. You can have an additional power pack connected underneath the phone.

**simonhill:** Interesting programme on Radio 4 today (17/12/19) about the effects on the brain of using satnavs relative to using own skills/memory and maps. Apparently, turn-by-turn navigation denies your brain a very useful workout.