

# Opinion Letters

**THIS MONTH** CYCLING TO SCHOOL, ROHLOFF GEAR RATIOS, FLIGHT SHAME, PRESCRIPTION SUNGLASSES, AND MORE

The original article is online at:  
[cyclinguk.org/cycle-magazine/  
bike-week-why-life-better-bike](http://cyclinguk.org/cycle-magazine/bike-week-why-life-better-bike)



Photo: Josie Dew

## Letter of the month

### SCHOOL RUN SMILES

Two years ago, I read Josie Dew's article in the magazine on cycling her children to school. At the time I had one child and was expecting a second. I was determined to follow in her footsteps.

Fast forward two years and I have just completed my daughter's first term at preschool entirely by bike. It's a 5.4 mile round trip, morning and night, and little brother comes too. I began looking two years ago for a Burley D'Lite secondhand, and this is how we arrive at school. The only reason we are late is due to my disorganisation, never the traffic – unlike my neighbour, who can be up to 30 minutes late due to stationary traffic.

Many have questioned why I do it. Several said that I wouldn't survive the winter weather. Others said that I was pushing myself too hard, toting 40kg with both children and no electric assist. The winter has been rather wet but often the commute is the best part of my day. There's the exhilaration of being outside on unwelcoming days, plus fresh air, endorphins, and the amazing feeling of being much more independent. I'm in charge of my own speed, direction and route.

Keep up the inspiring stories, Cycling UK, and I'll keep up my riding!

**Jenny Shouler**

### 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. The Editor reads and acknowledges all letters to Cycle but publishes only a selection and doesn't enter into correspondence. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 30 April.

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



## Cycling on Tiree

Until recently, I was Tiree's GP. The antipathy towards cyclists apparently began after World War II. With the building of an airbase for Halifaxes to patrol the Atlantic convoys, roads were built for the military. Their vehicles had priority and other users, mainly cyclists, had to give way.

This view has persisted to the present day, partly because of the leaflets and posters produced by the island's Community Council. These were finally removed last year.

**Dr Keith Slater**



## West to east

I enjoyed Neil Wheadon's article on his west to east ride in the December/January issue. I promote 'east to west or vice versa' as a ride for Audax UK. If you go to [aukweb.net](http://aukweb.net) and click on 'permanents' on the home page, it will give general information.

If you want the details for my event, you should enter 'JT01' in the search box. Or you can contact me directly. Email [johntommo6@btinternet.com](mailto:johntommo6@btinternet.com) or send me an A5 stamped envelope. My address is 136 Dell Road, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, NR33 9NT.

**John Thompson**



## How low you can go

Richard Hallett's informative article on using really low gears includes a piece of misinformation. The lowest gear sanctioned by Rohloff – on a solo bike, for riders under 100kg – is actually 1.9:1 not 2.38:1, and this input ratio can be used on any size wheel

A 1.9:1 ration can be achieved with a 40t chainring and a 21t sprocket, which on my Thorn Mercury, with 700x40C tyres, gives a range from 14.6" to 76.9". In top gear this equates to 22.9 mph at 100rpm, or 18.3mph at 80rpm. My 14.6" bottom gear equates to 2.18mph at 50rpm. With such gears and a moderate touring load: if they can tarmac it, I can ride up it.

**Andy Blance**



## 75 years a member

I read with interest the article about Jean Ashton in the February/March issue. Not many can claim lifelong membership but I can: I am 75 and have been a member for 75 years.

My husband and I worked for our section, DA, and cycling in general for over 40 years. We also rode regularly until two years ago, when he sadly passed away while we were out cycling. So my cycling is now confined to the trainer.

I also tried my legs at racing but there was one lovely lady, the one and only Beryl Burton, who was at her peak, and I knew there was no way I was going to beat her.

**Hazel Gibson**



## Flight shame

Having just read the latest email newsletter's appeal for the Government to do more for the environment by promoting cycling, I have to say I find it hypocritical to say the least that the magazine promotes quite heavily the idea of cycling abroad, in places that can only be reached by air.

I suggest that the climate emergency would be much better served by cutting out these carbon guzzling flights than if everybody in this country started cycling! By all means promote foreign flights (well, don't actually!) but if you do so then you should stop claiming that you are part of an effort to avert the climate emergency.

**Martin Greig**

*You will be able to vote on a motion on just this subject at Cycling UK's AGM. That's now been delayed until September by the Coronavirus.*



## Fumpa grump

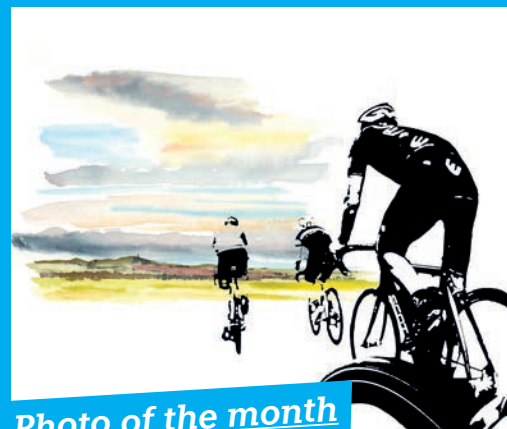
I had never heard of a Fumpa (last issue) and neither had anyone at the local bike shop, but I gather that it inflates your tyres. When I reach the stage that I can no longer blow up my tyres manually, then it's time to give up cycling. And if I ever reach

the stage of not having a friend who could help to blow up the tyres for me, then it's time to give up living.

**Bob Forster**

### Obituaries

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



## Photo of the month

### Enjoy the view

After 40 years of racing bikes and painting landscapes, I decided to bring the two together, to try and marry the atmosphere of road riding with the landscapes where I both ride and paint. It took two years armed variously with a GoPro, a folding stool, my watercolours, and my carbon Cinelli Estrada Pro to get down to the final eight, now on display with The Bicycle Works and Marchmont Gallery in Edinburgh. **Oliver Brooks**

## 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 popular thread: [cyclinguk.org/prescription-sunglasses](http://cyclinguk.org/prescription-sunglasses)



### PRESCRIPTION SUNGLASSES

**Hudson1984:** Not after £300 Oakleys or anything like that. My current sunglasses aren't going to stay on on the bike, so I want something more cycling specific. I don't need day-to-day ones.

**roubaixtuesday:** Got mine from [optilabs.com](http://optilabs.com). Very happy with them, but might not be as cheap as you want.

**ratherbeintobago:** Advice from my friendly CX-racing optician is that contacts plus normal bike sunnies is the way to go, but if you can't or won't do that, could you get by with normal sunnies and one of those elasticated straps?

**CyclingGuy:** I bought some from Boots where I get my regular prescription glasses. They were £60, including single vision lenses, and came with five different

sets of lenses from clear through to polarising and mirrored.

**100%JR:** Optilabs. Been using them for 10+ years. I now need varifocals and I got mine on offer for £199 IIRC (photochromic/varifocal). I would not even consider wearing my day specs on the bike as they were over £600!

**Ray:** Like others, I don't wear my expensive varifocals on the bike. Everyday glasses don't have the wraparound or toughness you need while cycling. These days I wear cheap safety specs equipped with bifocal magnification, and haven't paid more than £15, often a lot less.

**fastpedaller:** I don't think anyone's mentioned Asda Opticians yet? That's correct, in the supermarket (or at least some of them). If you buy their frames, they do ANY lenses. Mine cost £38.