

Opinion Letters

THIS MONTH E-BIKE TRANSPORT, HANDCYCLING, HOLIDAY MEMORIES, PUFFINS, HIGHLAND TRAIL ACCESS, AND MORE



Left: Joolze Dymond

Letter of the month

Power to your pedals

This 'Assault on batteries' letter in the June-July issue was obviously designed to provoke. On the contrary: we should celebrate when people ride a bike of any kind, rather than drive a massive, unnecessary and dangerous SUV. I'm lucky enough to own four bikes: a lightweight road bike for dry weather; a bike with fatter tyres, disc brakes and full mudguards for bad weather; a folding bike; and an electric bike.

The first two are for leisure, and I've covered around 33,000km on them. The e-bike, which I've ridden 19,000km on (I had the battery refurbished last year), is used to: commute to work; cart home 20kg of shopping; ride ten miles across hilly countryside with heavy musical equipment on board; deliver things to my housebound father; etc – everything that most people do by car. I would never use it just for exercise, as it's heavy and not 'fun' like the other bikes.

Our tiny car, and we do have one, hardly goes out except when it's dark or we have to take passengers. We could manage without it if we had to. E-bikes are a fantastic invention and they can definitely replace many car journeys. We should encourage them.

Fiona Le Ny

Win an SKS Compit+ and case worth £89.98

The letter of the month wins an SKS Compit+, courtesy of Zyrofisher. This mounts your phone securely to your handlebar and charges it on the go, wired or wirelessly. When we tested it in the Dec 20/Jan 21 issue, our reviewer said: "I was impressed... A rock-solid mount that keeps your phone topped up." The prize includes a Compit phone case. For more details, or to find your local stockist, visit zyrofisher.co.uk



Get in touch

LETTERS are edited for space, clarity and, if necessary, legality. The Editor reads and acknowledges all members' letters but publishes only a selection and doesn't enter into correspondence. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 31 August. When writing, please include your membership number.

WRITE TO: Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ or email editor@cyclingsuk.org



The right trike

I have been a cyclist all my life from as young as ten years. So when I had my legs amputated in 2017 I got myself a hand-powered tricycle. As I found it hard going uphill, I then bought one that could have a motor in the front wheel (pictured). I enjoy my cycling and go as often as I can. The greatest distance I have done in a day is 32 miles by road and cycle path. Covid-19 has limited where I can go. Many cycle routes around Doncaster are barred to invalids; the council's excuse is that the barriers are to stop quad bikes.

Geoffrey Heap



Tours de force

We recently received an email from Pat and John Ashwell telling us that they are retiring as CTC holiday leaders. My partner Peter and I have been on several of their holidays, including their last one in Somerset this year.

Peter's first experience of travelling with the Ashwells was in Vietnam. He came back so enthused that I leapt at the opportunity to sign up for one of their trips to Mongolia. Our next trips were to Kyrgyzstan and Albania.

All the trips, whilst being remote,

were intricately planned, linking up with wisely chosen local guides. Pat and John's time in the armed forces was evident in their clear, decisive leadership. They were enthusiastic and professional, and I always felt safe.

There are some people who stand out in one's life and Pat and John have truly inspired and enriched mine. Thank you!

Ms Julian Hornsby

Since you wrote, it has been announced that CTC Cycling Holidays is regrettably being wound up. More details on p10.



Orkney & Shetland

My husband and I have been doing the British Cycle Quest since 2012. It has taken us to some wonderful places, most recently Orkney and Shetland.

At the end of May, we took the ferry from Aberdeen to Orkney along with our friend Joy, who had joined us to see the puffins. We rented a cottage in Kirkwall for a week and managed to visit all six BCQ checkpoints in the first three days, which left us the rest of the week to look for puffins, cafés and scenic cycling routes.

Then we took an overnight ferry to Shetland, where we rented another cottage. On our third day we cycled to Sumburgh Head Lighthouse, where we were greeted with magnificent views – and puffins galore.

Jan Bailey

This unsporting life

Alexandra Brewer's letter 'Too Sporty' (June/July Cycle) regarding the perception of cycling as a sport rather than an everyday activity rings true. Many people who cycle would not class themselves as cyclists.

For cycling to progress in the UK, it needs to be seen not

as a peripheral sport for Lycra-clad people chasing Strava segments but as an everyday activity, as it is in Holland. I feel the cycling community should be doing so much more to promote the activity as something for all.

To give Cycle its due, I hardly saw any Lycra in the photos accompanying the 'Saddle up for summer' article.

Bob Skipworth



Access denied

A high gate on the gravel road track above the Cashel Dhu Ford in Sutherland has been locked. This track is used by cyclists riding the An Turas Mòr and Great North Trail routes.

I understand that the Cashel Dhu Partnership has planted trees to promote biodiversity in this area, but cannot see how closing a double-width gravel track is needed to protect this planting.

We at the Obscura Mondo Cycle Club think it's unreasonable and have asked the Highland Council Access Officer to take action under their responsibilities contained in The Land Reform (Scotland Act) 2003. We are asking all concerned with protecting our hard-won access rights to write now to the Highland Council Access Officer: matt.dent@highland.gov.uk.

David Wilson

Bikes for women

Cycle is my favourite cycling magazine due to its well-written articles and relevance to my cycling needs. Unfortunately the 'women's road bikes' review contains a flaw. The Planet-X London Road looks like a very nice bike (I've considered buying one)

but the smallest frame size is only suitable for heights of 5'4" and up. That's about the average height of women in the UK, so it's too big for many of us.

Mary Morgan

Obituaries

Are published online at cyclinguk.org/obituaries. Contact publicity@cyclinguk.org



Photo of the month

Cyclist shushing

I spotted this sign in a village in Buckinghamshire recently. The alleged problem seems to be caused by a single cyclist. Is he/she shouting to him/herself, or ringing the bike's bell at the village dog?

Roger Grosvenor

CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other members at forum.cyclinguk.org. Here's an abridged extract from a recent thread: cyclinguk.org/bad-bike-designs



BIKE DESIGNS WHICH SHOULD BE BINNED

james01: Top of my list is 'lawyer's lips' on front forks. I have a special list of foul oaths for the bright spark who invented them.

mattscm: Vertical dropouts. Black components. I'll live with tyre treads and brake blocks.

Audax67: Sloping crossbars. You can't get a one-litre bottle into the back cage and extract it easily on the road

rogerzilla: Sculpted dropouts that make it almost impossible to fit a rack or close a QR lever.

zenitb: Aluminium non-Shimano Hyperglide cassette bodies with easily 'gnashed' splines. I prefer not to take my cassette cogs off with a chisel.

ClappedOut: Plastic brake levers that flex when used.

PT1029: Internal gear cable routing tortuously routed through down tube via the BB and through the chainstay.

thelawnet: Most uses of 1x, e.g. road bikes, gravel bikes, MTBs. Probably ok on e-bikes and city bikes.

2_i: Bare cables routed through guides under bottom brackets. If you cannot run the cable against a sandpaper, that is the next best.

Bmb1bzzz: Press-fit bottom brackets for sure.

[XAP]Bob: Anything UCI mandated. I know of no other organisation which has so suppressed development in their own field.

Cowsham: Heavy children's bikes – little wonder the wanes don't take up cycling.

nomm: Carbon – except maybe forks. Press-fit BB. Internal cable routing. Semi-integrated head sets. Hidden eyelet mounts for mudguards. Tubeless. Gravel bikes.

Colin Jenkins: Yet ANOTHER wheel size!

Mick F: 9t, 10t, and 11t sprockets are an abomination and should be banned for all bikes. If you want higher gears, use a bigger chainwheel.