

Opinion Letters

THIS MONTH BREXIT CONFUSION, LOST WAYS TIMETABLE, EVERYDAY CYCLING, HUB GEAR KNOWHOW, AND MORE



Some cyclists have been charged import duties on their own bikes

Left: Getty Right: Alamy

Letter of the month

Bikes across borders

After retiring in 2020 I had been hoping to do some cycle touring in Europe despite Brexit – but Covid threw those plans in the air! I am still hopeful for 2022, and so the article in Cycle was very helpful.

However, a few weeks ago I read in the Independent (Simon Calder's travel column) of a case where people travelling on the ferry from Portsmouth to Santander were charged import duties on two bikes on arrival! To be fair, they were taking some items in a van for a family member who had moved to Spain, but had bikes so that they could cycle there whilst visiting – absolutely reasonable, I would have thought.

I wondered if others arriving on their bikes might have similar issues. What are the rules about import duties – even if you have no intention to import the goods? Is this something Cycling UK might look at in case there is a loophole which might affect others? I'm sure cars arriving at ports aren't being charged import duties. That would have made the news.

Mark Holling

There was a sidebar in that article that was dropped for space reasons. It dealt with the issue of taking bikes into Europe. The gist of it was: it shouldn't be a problem unless customs think you're going to sell the bike(s), so take proof of purchase if you're worried. I'm planning to use the sidebar, somewhat expanded, as a short article in a future issue. For those who missed it, the original feature is online: [cyclinguk.org/cycling-abroad-brexit](https://www.cyclinguk.org/cycling-abroad-brexit)

Win a Green Oil bike care kit worth £64.99

The letter of the month wins an Eco Rider Deluxe set, courtesy of Green Oil. Green Oil's plant-based lubes and cleaners are fully biodegradable and contain no PTFE. The kit comprises: Green Oil Wet Chain Lube; Ecogrease; Green Clean Bike Cleaner; Clean Chain Degreaser; FSC Drive Chain Brush; two Bike Armour cable-rub protectors; an EcoRag; a reusable plastic tub for water or storage; and some seeds to grow your own food! For details, or to order Green Oil products, visit [green-oil.net](https://www.green-oil.net)



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 25 February. Please include your membership number.

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



Passport problem

The advice on passports in Dec/Jan was over-simplified. "At least six months left on your passport from the day you travel" may not be enough. My brother was denied boarding on an October flight from the UK to Italy even though his passport doesn't expire until July 2022, i.e. in nine months.

The reason is that his passport, like many others, is not a ten year passport but roughly ten years and six months. The outstanding months on the old passport were transferred to the new upon renewal. However, as we are sadly no longer in the EU, Third Country rules apply: ten years is now ten years and not a day more.

July minus the carried-over six months is January. It was from January backwards that the "at least six months" was calculated.

Colin Deady



Abroad after Brexit

A few further points on this article:

1. You do not need a green card to enter Europe in a vehicle but you do need valid insurance. See [gov.uk/vehicle-insurance/driving-abroad](https://www.gov.uk/vehicle-insurance/driving-abroad).
2. If travelling through France you need travel insurance that includes repatriation cover for medical reasons;

Below right: Jordan Gibbons/Pannier

an EHIC/GHIC does not include this. See france.fr/en/holiday-prep/brexit-travel-rules-uk-france.
3. If you are, say, cycle touring, however you arrive, you cannot take any meat or dairy products into the EU. See gov.uk/visit-eu-switzerland-norway-iceland-liechtenstein.
Graham Connell



Lost ways

Great to see coverage of the drive to get our lost ways recorded. As a cyclist and a horse rider, I am actively involved with the BHS programme to record as many bridleways and byways as possible, and I would encourage all cyclists to join that campaign.

Free online training in how to use the mapping and recording software, to research a particular route and to submit a correct Definitive Map Modification Order, are all available from the BHS – email access@bhs.org.uk. In addition, funding has been secured from Sport England to reward every proper application with a £100 payment to cover out of pocket expenses.

One more point: “no new applications will be accepted after 2026” is accurate but somewhat misleading. The cut-off date (unless we are successful in getting it extended) is 1 January 2026, so really it’s no new applications after 2025. Only four years to go and lots of work to do!

Ann Kennedy

Traffic light timing

I experienced timing problems with a long, steep, traffic-light-controlled single carriageway crossing of a canal and railway on my cycle commute. I emailed the relevant council department, who were able to change the timings from their desk!

This solved the timing between crossing the first loop detector and arriving at the lights. The next problem was that the switching delay, once on the bridge, relied on triggering successive loop detectors. If you failed to trigger them you’d meet oncoming traffic! The solution was to make sure I took the centre of the road, crossing the full ‘diamond’ of the loop detector.

However, I noticed recently that my complaints have yielded results: there are now PIR detectors at the apex of the bridge.

Crawford Lindsay



Everyday cycling

I was very pleased to see the article Help Us Fight For Justice in Cycle, and I have made a donation. But apart from that one article there is nothing else to suggest that cycling is anything but a leisure activity.

I have asked many times for Cycling UK to include more on everyday cycling – the type of cycling that happens in Holland and Denmark. So instead of asking for more in Cycle, which clearly is not going to happen, can I suggest Cycling UK starts another magazine on everyday cycling/town cycling/Dutch style cycling?

Dick Daniel

Switching gears

I was interested to read about the Kindernay VII in the Dec/Jan issue. However, one of my major reservations in changing to a hub gear is in finding cycle dealers who are able to provide spares and service capability.

I would like to suggest that, in a future edition of Cycle, consideration is given to publicising a list of dealers who are able to provide service facilities, showing which manufacturers’ equipment is included.
John Britton

Obituaries

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



Photo of the month

Leading lights

Affiliate club Active Filey ran a Cycling UK ride leader course on Saturday 18 December, enabling seven club members to become group ride leaders. **Bryden Simpson**

CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other members at forum.cyclinguk.org. Here’s an abridged extract from a recent thread: cyclinguk.org/ebike-classic



E-BIKE FOR A LIFELONG CTC MEMBER

L7523: I am not yet ready to hang up my wheels. My machines are classics (Jack Taylor and George Longstaff). The time has come for the e-bike but lifelong cyclists are not the target of the ready-made market. Has anyone the answer?
emleyman: Why not add a conversion to one of your existing bikes? If you go for a rear hub motor and down tube battery you can keep all your existing drivetrain.
stodd: Cytronex do front-wheel conversion kits suitable for lightweight road bikes. They are quite expensive, not as powerful as many, and have fairly small capacity batteries, but may suit what you need.

Nigel: A friend of mine in a similar situation has added an electric motor to one of his ‘classics’. He fitted a bottom bracket motor, which is torque sensing. It has transformed his riding. He is again able to get up hills.
richtea99: I went from a bespoke 20+ year-old Campag-laden Mercian tourer to a low-end Orbea Gain e-bike. The Orbea Gain is marketed as a road/race bike but the lower spec alloy ones are more like a tourer.
Jdsk: A family member has an Orbea D20. Lovely machine. And I suspect that a lot of people aren’t aware of this type of e-bike... Would a catchy name for this category help?
peterb: I thought they were generally called ‘e-road’ bikes.