

Off-road update



Spring is bounding into life, albeit in a confused sort of way with occasional scatterings of snow. Elections are also in the air, and we're asking candidates to support access to the outdoors and better rural cycle routes.

As [restrictions start to lift](#), we can start to get excited about the potential of summer trips a little further afield, and we've got some fantastic routes in Northumberland, the South Pennines and central Scotland to start your imagination whirring. Cycling UK members can enjoy a [20% discount off Ordnance Survey maps](#) (paper and digital) to help you get planning.

Today marks the 70th anniversary of the first National Park, and we've gathered stories from across the country to celebrate these special landscapes.

As sunnier days tempt out the families, dog walkers, horse riders and hikers, it's a good time for a reminder of the things we can all do to be a force for good and leave a positive impression of off-road riders. [Go one better than 'leave no trace'](#) by getting involved with the [Trash Free Trails spring clean](#), and find out what's changed in the new Countryside Code.

Make sure to keep an eye on the Cycling UK website for a brand new loop route we'll be launching later this summer...

Best wishes

Sophie Gordon, campaigns officer



Update on access in Wales

It feels like a long time since the Welsh Government [announced proposals](#) to increase access to the countryside, and you'd be forgiven for wondering what's going on.

Cycling UK, OpenMTB, and other organisations have been involved in [expert advisory group](#) meetings over the past eighteen months to discuss how the proposals could work in practice.

A draft report has now been produced, but the final report will not be published until May. The decision will then be passed back to the Welsh Government, to be decided after the election.

Let's keep this on the agenda in the run-up to the [election](#). If you live in Wales, ask your candidates to support our [Manifesto for Cycling](#), which includes increasing access to the countryside and improving routes in rural areas.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Access to the outdoors in Scotland and Northern Ireland

As part of the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Cycling UK has contributed to a [manifesto](#) calling on the new Scottish Government to appoint an Outdoor Recreation Champion, fund outdoor recreation provision and support more people from under-represented communities to engage with the outdoors.

We're also asking for better rural cycle connections in our own [Manifesto for Cycling](#). [Find out whether candidates in your area have supported our pledge](#), and register for our [cycling and sustainable travel hustings](#) to hear what different parties have to say.

In Northern Ireland, Cycling UK has responded to a stakeholder consultation on the provision of access for outdoor recreation, calling for:

- Paths with public access to be better identified and publicised
- Wider access on publicly-owned land
- Conversion of disused railway lines to traffic-free trails

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Off-road missing links: tell us your story

Real-life examples are a powerful illustration of how increasing off-road access in England could make a difference to people's lives.

Is there a particular route that would really benefit you if you were able to cycle on it? [We want to hear from you](#) to bring the issue to life.

If you've already added your missing link routes to the map, find out what can potentially be done to increase access to some of them by having a look at our [off-road campaigning guides](#).

FIND OUT MORE



Where can I cycle off-road?

For the fair-weather cyclists among us, now is about the time that the bike might emerge from hibernation in search of warmer weather and drier trails. For a reminder of the options for where to ride off-road, have a look at our [handy guide](#).

The [Countryside Code has also been refreshed](#), to provide guidance to people eager to get out and explore as coronavirus restrictions start to lift. To make life easy, we've pulled out the [key points for cyclists](#).

Cycling UK is also supporting the '[Respect the Range](#)' campaign from the Ministry of Defence encouraging people to stay safe when out and about on military areas by not picking up suspicious objects, keeping to the public access routes and checking the firing times online before heading out to make sure it's not in use by the armed forces.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



70 years of National Parks

Today marks the 70th anniversary of the creation of the first National Park, the Peak District.

In celebration of these incredible landscapes, we asked Cycling UK staff to tell us about their favourite National Park to cycle in, and what could be done to continue to improve things for cyclists.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Six great places to ride in Northumberland

England's most northerly county has some [fantastic opportunities for off-road riding](#), including the Sandstone Way, Cheviot Orbital, and Kielder Forest.

If you're looking for something a little further south, we've got a selection of [mountain biking routes in the South Pennines](#) to whet your appetite.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Great Rides: John Muir Way

Bikepacking Scotland founder Markus Stitz explores this coast to coast trail across the Central Belt, which feels surprisingly wild and remote despite passing through the most populated parts of Scotland.

It's a great introductory bikepacking route, and Markus' beautiful short film 'Unhurried' will make you long for that sense of escape that only cycle touring can offer.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



The British history of off-road cycling

We might think of mountain biking as a relatively recent phenomenon, but there are British pioneers of 'rough stuff' riding going back to the 19th century. Cycling UK's Rob Kingston [explores the legacy they started](#), and the off-road access story that continues today.

We also take a look at new book [Further Adventures in Rough Stuff](#), which brings together incredible photos from the Rough Stuff Fellowship (like the one above), of adventures around the world riding lumpy terrain on drop-bar bikes before the word 'bikepacking' was ever invented.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Get involved!

Our work to increase access to the countryside for everyone to enjoy is only possible thanks to our members and supporters.

If you want to play a part in helping more people discover the joy of cycling in our forests, glens and moors, we'd love you to get involved.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

cyclinguk.org/offroadcampaigns



Sophie Gordon
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