

Your opinions

LETTERS

THIS MONTH BIKES ON FERRIES, DANGEROUS DRAINS, DIY BIKE BUILDS, WANDERING DOGS, ONE BIKE ONLY, THE BENEFITS OF A MIRROR, AND MORE

Right: age fotostock / Alamy. Drain photo: Bob Willis



Transport

FUMING AT FERRIES



Letter of the month

Amy Foster's letter in Oct/Nov 17 ('Bikes on ferries') is spot on in highlighting the issue of cyclists queuing for ferries. She's quite right about the noxious vehicle fumes. All ferry companies are guilty of this.

It's worth going further than asking the operators for a separate cycle queuing lane. Some companies (e.g. Stenaline) already provide distinct lanes for cycles, often with motorcycles, but these lanes are beside motor vehicle queues, and many drivers leave their engines running for long periods. It would be better if the ferry companies insisted that motor vehicle drivers turn off their engines whilst queuing. It's private land so the companies and port authorities have the jurisdiction.

During disembarkation, it is insufficient to make an announcement not to switch on engines. The staff on the vehicles decks could monitor and enforce this. Also, ferry operators ought to allow cycles on and off first. All too often cycles are the last on and near to last off.

As Cycling UK members and supporters, we can all play a part here. We can lobby the ferry companies. Like vehicle drivers, we are paying customers who not only buy travel tickets but also purchase accommodation, food, and sundry items on board.

Robin Bevis



Grid slots can trap wheels

DOWN THE DRAIN

The recent correspondence regarding drains with diagonal grills reminded me of my own incident. In strong sunlight, I turned off a main road over a dropped kerb. My front wheel went around the drain grate, but the rear wheel neatly dropped between the diagonal grills, throwing me over the bars. I landed on my face, my mouth taking most of the impact! Since then I have had extensive dental treatment.

I sought legal advice through Slater + Gordon, but as the grate was correctly maintained, I was advised there was no possibility of a claim.

It's frustrating: these supposedly more efficiently designed drains with diagonal grills should never be placed where there is a dropped kerb that could be used by a cyclist. They are a hazard whether maintained or not.

My road biking is much more limited now. I feel far safer off-road on my mountain bike.

John Helliwell

Write to Cycle

Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ. Or email

cycle@jamespembrokemedia.co.uk

The star letter wins a pair of Compass tyres, courtesy of Sven Cycles, worth up to £116! These lightweight, supple tyres will transform the ride feel of your bike. They're available in a range of designs and widths in 700C, 650B and 26in diameters, and particularly suit touring bikes, gravel bikes, and road-plus bikes. For more information about these plush, easy-rolling tyres, or to purchase a set of your own, go online to svencycles.com



DIY BIKE BUILDS

The bike reviews in Cycle always seem to leave me with a sense of disappointment. Could there be some articles that are less industry-driven and more focused on what people could achieve themselves? Cycle could inspire people to create their own unique bikes. The rewards of building a bike that is perfect for you can be amazing – but most people need a bit of help and information to have the confidence to go against what is offered by the bike industry.

It's possible to get hold of inexpensive but wonderful things like Shimano 8-speed mechs, sprockets, and bar-end shifters; flat pedals from MKS; Nitto stems and bars... Beautiful steel framesets can be sourced off eBay. Even a short article on converting your old 700C road bike to a stylish 650B gravel bike would be refreshing.

Colin Lewis

P.S. Here is my real world comfy gravel bike.



Colin's DIY gravel bike

Right: Peter Erik Forsberg/London / Alamy



Loose dogs are a cycling hazard

BRINGING DOGS TO HEEL

I was surprised that Cycling UK's online article about dogs on shared paths (cyclinguk.org/cycle/dogs-shared-paths) did not mention two important measures to protect against unleashed dogs or dogs on extended leads.

1. Highway Code Rule 56: 'Do not let a dog out on the road on its own. Keep it on a short lead when walking on the pavement, road, or path shared with cyclists or horse riders.'

2. Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) legislation enables local authorities to issue dog control orders, requiring dogs to be kept on leads in specific public spaces. While enforcement is not likely, appropriate signage (mandated by the PSPO) is generally effective.

I am pursuing a complaint against my local council for not enforcing these measures on a 2km stretch of the National Cycle Route 15 in Grantham.

Is there a campaign to make dog walkers aware of Rule 56? Or one to ban retractable leads?

Peter Croft

OBITUARIES

Are now being published online rather than in print. Visit cyclinguk.org/obituaries. Send obituaries, with a digital photo if you wish, to publicity@cyclinguk.org.

ONE BIKE ONLY

The article 1 Bike Only (Oct/Nov) was interesting. I bought one last spring: a Spa Ti Adventure. It's been great on tour, on road, off-road, commuting to work... It's the versatility I like. I ride mostly on road but like to take obscure paths and tracks around here in North Yorkshire. I've chosen a handlebar set up that's safe on tracks downhill but has forward extensions for windy roads. Gravel bikes? Get over those drops.

I left my previous 'one bike', an 18-year-old rigid Ridgeback MTB, with the hotel receptionist in Tarifa, having finished a organised ride between the northernmost part of mainland Britain (Dunnet Head) and the southernmost point of mainland Europe.

Paul Randall



Paul's do-it-all bike

MIRROR, MIRROR

My new mirror must be my best purchase for a very long time. I had planned a ride from Cheshire to London. While in Halfords, I saw a rear view mirror (pictured) and thought it might come in handy tackling the busy streets of London. The mirror was light, very adjustable, and easy to fit.

The difference it made was astounding. No more straining my ears for the rumble of an HGV or a car coming too near. I could see it all at a glance. I would be lost without it now.

Alan Hartopp

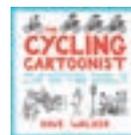


Reflecting on mirrors

The Cycling Cartoonist



Copyright Dave Walker



The Cycling Cartoonist, An Illustrated Guide to Life on Two Wheels by Dave Walker, is published by Bloomsbury (bloomsbury.com), priced £10.99.

Join the conversation

CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other Cycling UK members on the Cycling UK forum: forum.cyclinguk.org. Here's an abridged extract from a recent thread: bit.ly/cycle-leftbehind

GROUP RIDES – BEING LEFT BEHIND

mnichols: There is a Facebook article going around called 'Seven things only slow cyclists understand'. One of them struck a chord: 'The heartbreak of watching the group fade away over the top of the climb.' **horizon:** Anyone riding with someone else faces the same problem; it is the nature of cycling (unless on a tandem). Going cycling with someone is almost a contradiction in terms.

Tigerbitten: If you're the tail-end Charlie,

then you don't get to rest at the top of the hill like all the others. Or if you do then it's not as long. This makes you more tired -> slower -> less rest -> etc. It's a soul-destroying vicious circle.

Grandad: Find a group that matches your ability. Many clubs have two or more differing groups. Mine has nine every Saturday and six others throughout the rest of the week.

Si: First club I rode with had a rule that the first couple to the top then had to ride back down and accompany the back-marker to the



top. Made things a lot more civilised. **Samuel D:** Horizon and Tigerbitten describe a kind of cycling I have often seen on the road. Of course fast riders want to work too. But the trouble is that they do so on the climbs. Instead, strong riders should save their efforts for the flats and there pull like cart-horses. **NUKE:** I think it is down to the club to classify their rides, and for riders to make sure they are of the correct ability. If the ride is not going to wait for people, then say so at the start.

How to contact Cycle

LETTERS are edited for space (especially if above 150 words), 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. Letters & emails for the Apr-May issue must arrive by 28 February. Write to: cycle@jamespembroke.co.uk or **Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ**

FACEBOOK
Tell us what you think on Cycling UK's Facebook page: facebook.com/CyclingUK

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