# **Opinion** Letters

THIS MONTH E-BIKE EFFICIENCY. INCLUSIVE CYCLING. LOW GEARS. WILF LUNN STYLE MALTESER EATING. AND MORE

# Cycle Bristol CTC's 'Get Gorgeous' culminated with a 50-mile ride that some did on e-bikes Letter of the month

# **GREEN TRANSPORT**

atthias Bunte states that e-bikes are atthias Bunte states that I are a zero fuel "corrupting the idea cycling as a zero fuel and emissions transport" (Letters, Dec/Jan). There is no such thing as fuel- and emissions-free transport. Humans are only around 25% efficient at converting food into energy. The impact of food production is not trivial; EU food emissions are estimated at 1.44g/ CO<sub>2</sub>e per kcal, with meat and dairy production one of the largest contributors to climate change.

Humans don't match our energy expenditure with inputs, but a cycling journey will likely result in increased food consumption. An electric bicycle, on the other hand, is around 90% efficient at converting electricity into movement. Even if that electricity is generated from a coal power station, it is possible the electric bicycle journey has fewer emissions than a food-powered human eating meat.

Incidentally, a recent study in Norway found car drivers switching to e-bikes had greater improvements in fitness than those switching to normal bicycles, the theory being that they travelled further and used them more. The Bristol Cycling website covers this in depth: bristolcycling.org.uk/cycling-vs-the-electric-car/. Blaise Kelly

The European Cyclists' Federation has calculated (bit.ly/cycle-ecfCO2) that a bicycle and rider are responsible for 21g of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile, an e-bike and rider just 22g/mile, and a typical car 271g/mile.

#### Win a set of Lezyne lights worth £110

The letter of the month wins a set of Lezvne Macro Drive 1100XL / Strip **Drive Pro lights, courtesy** of Upgrade Bikes. The versatile front light delivers 1100 lumens on its highest setting yet lasts 78 hours on its lowest, while the rear - at up to 300 lumens - is ultra-bright even in daylight. For more information about these lights, or to find your local stockist, visit upgradebikes.co.uk

#### Get in touch

**LETTERS** are edited for space, 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. 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



# Cycling for all

Just a quick email to say how fantastic I think your magazine and organisation are. Perusing our regular collection of cycling magazines (Procycling, Cycling Plus, Bikes Etc), I was staggered at the dearth of articles about women cyclists.

There weren't even advertisements with women in them. Or older people. Or people of other races. The other magazines seem to be only for white, mostly young, men.

Thank goodness we had a copy of Cycle to make me feel like all of us are included in the wonderful and healthy world of cycling!

Mrs April Warburton



# An eye test

I have just spent a frustrating couple of hours reading Cycle. It's usually time that I look forward to, and I enjoy reading it cover to cover. I have had to use a magnifier to read some of the articles. It seems to me that the colour and/or shade of the basic typeface has been changed. It has





become difficult to read, especially under artificial light.

Whatever the reason, please would you consider using a darker shade, preferably a darker grey or, best of all, black? There is nothing better than black on white paper. As always. the magazine is interesting and well produced. Please don't spoil it for the lack of good contrast in the choice of typeface.

Richard Clarke

I received several letters on this theme, generally querying the weight (thickness) and colour of the fonts rather than the size per se. I trust this issue will be easier to read. If not, do write and say. We need to aet it riaht.



#### **Auto correct**

Christian Wolmar argues that driverless vehicles need to be "100% safe". They don't. They simply have to be safer than humans to be viable.

His favourite example of two driverless cars meeting on a singletrack road can be solved. Unlike humans, the driverless car will be aware of the oncoming vehicle long before it is visible and will pull over safely into a known passing place. Driverless cars have the potential to greatly reduce death and injury for all road users. Moving away from private ownership of cars would reduce the cost of travel through better utilisation of assets, and free up a lot of prime land currently allocated to parking.

It seems unlikely that Tesla, Google, Uber and others would be spending huge sums on something that is completely unobtainable. Agreed, it's difficult, but it's doable. The only question is when it will happen.

Tony Blighe



### Climbing gear

Shop Window in the Feb/Mar issue had the Sunrace 8-speed 11-40 cassette. Just the thing for older legs, I thought. I left off the second smallest loose sprocket to convert it to match my 7-speed Shimano Deore thumbshifters, and used a RoadLinktype extender so the top jockey wheel didn't foul the large sprocket.

With a 26 inner on my triple chainset, is this the ultimate climbing combination? I rode stress-free up one of Shropshire's many 20-25% hills.

Mike Callow

That's a bottom gear of about 17in, a good ratio for heavily-laden touring or for anyone who struggles on hills.



#### Too Close for Comfort

The Feb/Mar issue's two articles on this subject seem to give conflicting advice. 'Too Close for Comfort' (pages 42-46) states the cyclist's road position to be 0.75m from the roadside. The road positioning article on p64 says a metre or more, sometimes "taking the lane".

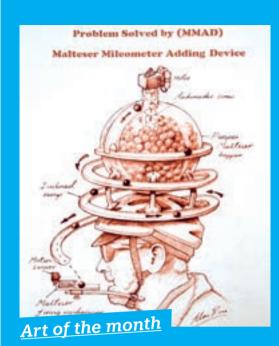
Rick Lees

The road positioning advice (p64) is aimed at cyclists.

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

cyclinguk.org

The Too Close for Comfort mats (shown in that article) are aimed at drivers and illustrate absolute minimums.



# Maltesers on the go

Over the last four years, I have set myself a birthday challenge of swimming (25-metre lengths), cycling (miles), and Malteser-eating the equivalent birthday number of years (74 last year). The Malteser eating has always proved the most difficult - and messiest. My daughter and I came up with this, which Alan Rowe drew for me. **Dennis Volley** 

#### CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other Cycling UK members on the Cycling UK forum: forum. cyclinguk.org. Here's an extract from a thread: cyclinguk.org/whygravel



#### WHY THE SUDDEN URGE TO RIDE ON GRAVEL?

Boring\_Username: I've always considered grayel a surface to be avoided. Gravel bikes may have their advantages (tyre clearance etc), but surely they don't transform gravel from a surface waiting to put you in A&E into one which is to be sought out?

Bonefishblues: Sudden urge isn't sudden. New label is new, mind. bgnukem: It's just a label, but anything that produces road bikes better suited to the road surfaces and weather we 'enjoy' in the UK, and more opportunity to escape the traffic, seems

like a great idea to me.

hamish: Riding on tracks - mud. stone, sand. gravel, etc - is brilliant. I ride them on my fat bike or on my tourer, which does ok. Traditional. narrow-tyred 'road bikes' are very restrictive.

foxyrider: No they aren't. My 'road' bikes go pretty much everywhere you 'need' a gravel/ fat/mountain bike. The biggest tyre any of them has is 28mm and I ride trails extensively on 23mm.

hamish: Hmm. I think we are riding different sorts of bumpy tracks in a different way.

Tangled Metal: It's a bike! People ride it. That's good, right? Why the negativity?