

# Opinion Letters

**THIS MONTH** LOCKDOWN DIVERSIONS, SOLO CYCLING, DRIVETRAIN DESTRUCTION, FERRY CROSSINGS, AND MORE



'Hercule' Fothergill from South Devon CTC tracks down the birthplace of Agatha Christie

## Letter of the month

### iSpysolation

During the lockdown, members of South Devon CTC kept in touch using social media and Zoom but some struggled to find motivation to ride. So to encourage them to get out on their bikes without gathering together, we devised a sort of local version of the British Cycle Quest, dubbed iSpysolation. Clues were the type that could be found at various locations.

It started as a bit of fun, with 15 clues per week, limited to a maximum of three clues per day, thus requiring five rides. Clues were suggested by members and the results were compiled by Dr Kate Hattersley (when she's not been busy giving advice on Covid-19 and cycling). The results are done on a trust basis, but clues are often accompanied by photographs.

Initially around 20 members took part. Then it spread to the local sailing club in Topsham, then to South Wales, the Lake District, and Scotland. New people have come along and joined in as a result of seeing what the club was doing on our Facebook group.

iSpysolation has been great success. It's helped members discover more of their local area and has shown how, in adverse times, good ideas and good things can still happen.

**Graham Brodie**

### Win a Lezyne Macro Plus GPS worth £100

The letter of the month wins a Lezyne Macro Plus GPS, courtesy of Upgrade Bikes. It pairs with your phone and offers turn-by-turn navigation, Strava Live Segments, training integration, optional horizontal orientation, a best-in-class run-time of 28 hours, and more. For details about this and other Lezyne GPS computers, or to find your local stockist, visit [upgradebikes.co.uk](http://upgradebikes.co.uk)



## Get in touch

**LETTERS** are edited for space, clarity and, if necessary, legality. The Editor reads and acknowledges all letters to Cycle but publishes only a selection and doesn't enter into correspondence. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 28 August.

**WRITE TO:** Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ or email [cycle@jamespembrokemedia.co.uk](mailto:cycle@jamespembrokemedia.co.uk)

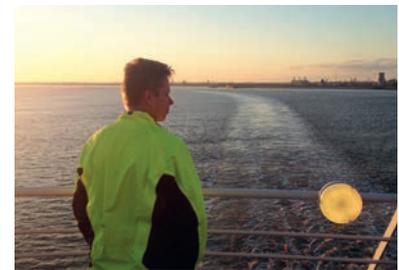


## Great escapism

I was delighted to see Jo Burt's article extolling the joys of solo cycling (Escapism, June/July). It perfectly sums up my experience of an aspect of bike riding that normally receives little attention.

Solo cycling within cities is my particular favourite. I have become a sort of 'flâneur on wheels' – a person who cycles around cities observing life. Which is why I am so passionate about improving conditions for cyclists within urban areas, with features such as protected bike lanes and secure bicycle parking. (I'm a Sustrans Volunteer Ranger.)

**John Kirkwood**



## Ferry inaccurate

In his letter of the month Robin Bevis stated that there was only one ferry option north of Watford, the P&O service Hull to Rotterdam. This is not correct. There are two other services: Hull to Zeebrugge (P&O); and Newcastle to Amsterdam (DFDS). I've used them both to get to the continent and they are excellent.

**Bev Primhak**



## Bike trek: the next generation

I've always loved the freedom that owning a bicycle confers. In my youth I had many cycling adventures in the Northumberland countryside. My cycling sadly lapsed until I met my second husband. Bike ownership expanded. We even got a bike trailer as a wedding present!

Now, at 60, I have been the proud owner of an electric bike for six years, and have enjoyed many further adventures, including cycling past St Paul's Cathedral at midnight! Owning an e-bike has been especially important during lockdown in Wales. I have discovered that there are many enjoyable circular cycle routes starting from my doorstep.

The love of cycling has now been passed on to my 16-month-old grandson, who gets very excited when my son gets the bike out!

**Barbara Grantham**



## Guard against this

Please will you publicise the issue of mudguard safety? The photo shows a bike my son was riding last week after his very sudden separation from it.

He was very lucky to avoid serious injury. This link explains the issue clearly: [cyclinguk.org/article/technical-guide/mudguard-safety](https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/technical-guide/mudguard-safety).

**R Round**

## Mech or break

In his response to Steve Brown's question (Cyclopedia, June/July), Richard Hallett suggests forgetting the 48 front/40 rear combination and removing the two chain links Steve added. With the links removed, unintended selection of that combination could cause serious transmission damage. Locking out either derailleur with the relevant adjuster screws should be advised unless the chain tensioner still has capacity to facilitate such a change.

**Clive Parsons**

*The simplest way to set chain length, incidentally, is to wrap the chain around the largest chainring and largest sprocket, without passing it through the rear derailleur. Ensure the ends overlap by at least one full link, then fit it in the usual way.*



## Knives down, bikes up

I was stunned by the tagline on your June/July edition: 'Liverpool lads who pull wheelies, not knives.' Liverpool, like most cities, has its share of knife crime, but it was a sensationalist headline coming from the premise that 'Liverpool lads' are 'pulling' knives as a matter of course.

This is lazy and stereotypical thinking. I live about 20 minutes on the train from Liverpool city centre and always feel safe there. Liverpool is a pro-cycling city, with very progressive plans in place to make it safer and more accessible than ever to cyclists. Give it a go, you'll love it.

**Gill Gwatkin**

### Obituaries

Are published online at [cyclinguk.org/obituaries](https://www.cyclinguk.org/obituaries). Contact [publicity@cyclinguk.org](mailto:publicity@cyclinguk.org)

**Apologies. The tagline was meant only to reference the group's own slogan: knives down, bikes up.**



## Photo of the month

### The String Road, Arran

Here's a lockdown cycling photo of me cresting the iconic String Road on the Isle of Arran, with Brodick Bay in the background. My husband, Murray Small, took the picture. The String is listed as one of the toughest cycling climbs in the West of Scotland. **Janice Small**

## CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other members on at [forum.cyclinguk.org](https://www.forum.cyclinguk.org). Here's an abridged extract from a popular recent thread: [cyclinguk.org/carbon-frames](https://www.cyclinguk.org/carbon-frames)



### Carbon frames for MAMILs with high handlebars?

**Oceanic:** I keep seeing men of a certain age riding carbon frames with 3cm of spacers under a 'flipped' stem. Aside from looking awful, I can't imagine the handling is as the designer intended. What 'high stack + low reach' carbon frames should they be riding? The Giant Defy and Dolan GXC come to mind.

**Trigger:** I think the Cannondale Synapse is designed for a bit more of an upright position **hamish:** The Kona Libre looks to have a high front end.

**cycle tramp:** They should be riding something better... What is it with attempting to make bicycles as uncomfortable as possible? If you work at a desk or in a factory,

would you have your seat higher than your work surface because other people have told you it looks better? **whoof:** The Kona Libra and Dolan GXC are gravel bikes, the Giant Defy an endurance bike. Therefore it's not surprising that they have higher front ends. As to what bikes people should be riding, it's obviously the same as me – anyone riding something else is clearly doing it wrong!

**TrevA:** The Trek Domane has a high front end.

**Mike Sales:** Oceanic is clearly one of the Velominati: "Rule 45: Slam your stem."

**NickJP:** All my bikes are set up like that. It amuses me when I see the wannabes trundling around with their bars six or eight inches below the saddle because "that's how the pros do it".