



Welcome

The first e-bike I rode in the 1990s didn't leave a good impression on me, although it did in the lawn when it fell over. It was absurdly heavy – hernia-inducing to lift, horrible to ride. The battery was like a breeze block. The bike was a BSO, the motor just powerful enough to offset its mass.

How things have changed. You can now buy an entry-level e-road bike or e-hybrid weighing under 14kg. Heath Robinson contraptions have been replaced by stealth e-bikes that look much like ordinary bikes. They're reliable. Power delivery is smooth.

And that power! Some say 250 Watts isn't enough, that we need legislation for faster, more powerful e-bikes. Outside of e-cargo bikes and trikes, I'm not convinced: 250 Watts is a lot. Try a Wattbike at a gym (when they re-open) and see how long you can sustain 250W. If it's more than five minutes, you should try racing.

If you ever feel ambivalent about e-bikes – as I do when I see apparently able riders in their 30s and 40s tearing around on electric MTBs – it's worth remembering that, as lifelong cyclists, we're not the target market. Not yet, at least.

For most people, e-bikes aren't so much an alternative to cycling as they are an alternative to *not cycling*. They're enabling people to cycle who otherwise wouldn't. And they're keeping hardcore cyclists like us from having to hang up our wheels as we age. What's not to like?

DAN JOYCE
Cycle Editor

Coronavirus
For updated advice regarding the Covid-19 outbreak, visit: cyclinguk.org/coronavirus

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E-bike rider in Clitheroe town centre (when the road was closed to motor traffic).
By Joolze Dymond

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