

# Opinion Letters

**THIS MONTH** RIDELONDON, REACHING CAPE WRATH, CAMPING FUEL, HAIRY TYRES, AND MORE

## 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 31 October.

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



Member Bob Callaghan prepared for RideLondon with Cycle Bristol CTC's Tri-Vets ride

Left: Alamy

## Letter of the month

### MY FIRST CENTURY

**T**he article 'Still Got It' in the Aug/Sep issue rang true for me. This year I turned 60, and to challenge myself I signed up for the 100-mile Prudential RideLondon in August. I had never cycled that distance before, and so began a training programme that would (hopefully) get me up to the distance and up the hills.

I wanted to do 100 miles beforehand, and by chance this was the year when the Tri-Vets events were taking place. On the Cycling UK website, I came across one that Cycle Bristol CTC were running in exactly the week I had scheduled for my 'practice' 100-mile ride. It was brilliant to be able to go out with a group of others on a led-ride for that distance. We had a fabulous day, even though it did rain for the last 20 miles.

This is exactly why I value Cycling UK: enabling us to cycle. If we want to challenge and stretch ourselves a bit, there are resources, events, and fabulous people who can help us.

I had a great day doing RideLondon. To cycle through the closed roads of central London and end at the Mall outside Buckingham Palace was amazing, and I even enjoyed the hills! So thanks to Cycling UK for ensuring that the Tri-Vets events take place, and thanks to Cycle Bristol CTC for making me feel welcome.

**Bob Callaghan**

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

The letter of the month wins a set of Lezyne 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](http://upgradebikes.co.uk)



### Cape Wrath capers

Thank you for the well-illustrated article on the ride to Cape Wrath. Sam seems to have been unlucky with the weather; the sun does sometimes shine in NW Scotland! In spite of your wise advice to use an MTB for the trip, I made it comfortably on a light tourer with 30mm tubeless tyres, and the rider in the photo used a road bike.

Most people use Durness as a jumping-off place, and the SYHA hostel at Smoo offers very reasonable accommodation. Smoo Cave is well worth a visit.

**Duncan Murray**

### Cooking with gas

I was interested to read your test of camping stoves (Aug/Sep 19). I go cycle-camping in France at least once a year. I use a compact folding Campingaz stove that just clips onto a compact gas canister. It cost about €25. Often I take a cheap flight, pre-book a hire bike, and pre-order a compact gas cylinder at the nearest branch of Decathlon – you can't take them on the 'plane, or even on Eurostar. The advantage of Campingaz is that it's available all over France so you don't need to carry a spare canister.

**Francis Chalmers**



## Hairy tyres

I've just fitted a 700x35C Continental tyre. With a calculated 396 rubber hairs (called 'injection spues') over the whole tread, it resembles a circular hairy caterpillar. Okay, they wear off the tread contact area after 100 miles or so, but remain much longer on the sides. I have trimmed them off other tyres with scissors, but they had far fewer spues.

Each spue is about 3mm long and under 1mm thick. Would anyone with a physics brain and time on their hands like to calculate the added wind resistance these generate, plus the volume of water they throw up riding on wet roads?

**John Abraham**



## Plans not bombproof

I enjoyed the Cape Wrath article in the latest issue of Cycle. It brought to mind a trip I did with some friends back in the '70s. We took the sleeper from London to Inverness, rode to the west coast via Ullapool, then up to Durness.

The morning of the ride to Cape Wrath, we arrived at the ferry and were informed by the ferryman that the American marines had woken him during the night to tell him the road would be closed for five days of naval bombardment. We had to leave our bikes at the ferry and be taken to the cape by minibus.

On our return home, I contacted Rex Coley to tell him of our experience. He was very sorry but as we hadn't ridden to the cape we were not eligible for membership of the Cape Wrath Fellowship. The moral being: when

planning a ride of this type, make sure you research everything thoroughly!

**Alan Price**

### Obituaries

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



## Power ranges

I was encouraged to see the test of lightweight e-road bikes in the latest issue. A maximum range is mentioned, but can you say at what average speed? I ride with a veteran group whose social rides rarely reach an average 12mph, so the distance travelled above the 15.5mph cutoff would not be great.

**Alan Couchman.**

**Maximum range is for the lowest assistance mode on easy terrain. Actual range depends on power mode, terrain, wind, rider weight, and rider pedal input. You could eke it out by pedalling without assistance. Or you could get a second battery. These aren't cheap; an Orbea Gain Range Extender is £549!**

## Trigger happy

Alarm bells went off when I read the review of the Bristol Bicycles Step-through in the Aug/Sep issue. Trigger shifters should not require a "powerful thumb push".

Some Shimano Altus derailleurs have a metal tab above the cable clamp screw. The cable from the shifter should pass over the top of this tab, even though the position of the tab makes it appear that the cable might go under it. Routing the cable over the tab increases the force exerted against the derailleur spring and reduces the thumb pressure needed.



The picture illustrates the correct cable route on an Altus FD-M371 derailleur.

**Craig Steeland**



## Photo of the month

### Yarn bombing

We thought you might like a yarn-bombed bicycle to go with your yarn-bombed bike stands [Cycle, Aug/Sep 19]. Seen on Île de Ré in France last June. **David and Ginnie Hignett**

## CYCLING UK FORUM

Get immediate feedback from other members on the Cycling UK forum: [forum.cyclinguk.org](http://forum.cyclinguk.org). Here's an abridged extract from a recent thread: [cyclinguk.org/forum-nocar](http://cyclinguk.org/forum-nocar)



### LIVING WITHOUT OWNING AN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE

**cc1085:** Does anyone here use a bicycle as their sole means of transport? As a lifelong cyclist and car/motorcycle owner, I'm thinking of going bicycle only. Any thoughts?

**Vantage:** I've never owned any form of motorised transport. If you already have a driving licence, then you'd also have the option of car hire for the day if need be. Plus, if you wanted to do bulk shopping on your own, there are always bike trailers :)

**PH:** I haven't owned a car since 1998. I have occasionally missed it, but far less than I thought I would – I use the train and coach for some longer journeys, hire a car once or twice a year,

a few taxi rides, and mostly the bike.

**horizon:** Why don't more people give up their cars? Because they have built their life around their cars. They believe they're using their car to support their lives when it is obvious that it has always been the other way round.

**amediasatex:** One way to look at it is ask yourself: "If my licence was revoked tomorrow, what would I do?" This will highlight every decision in your lifestyle that has been predicated on your ability to drive, whether knowingly or not.

**fatboy:** What I find amazing (probably a bit depressing) is the fact that I'm seen as a bit of a crank to not own a car. This usually comes about in time of bad weather. "You didn't cycle in this?"