



## How to submit an article to Cycle magazine

Contributions from Cycling UK members are an essential part of Cycle magazine. Everything you send will be read by the editor; however, due to the volume of submissions, not all material can be published, and it may take some time before you receive a response. This is because the editor works part-time and reviews most contributions during the quieter periods between issues.

### Who is the best person to contact?

The editor can only respond to correspondence that relates directly to the magazine's content, such as articles and related submissions. Any other queries are handled by other members of the Cycling UK team. See below for guidance on who to contact for different situations or specific needs.

- **Missing magazines:** Contact Membership – 01483 238301 | [membership@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:membership@cyclingsuk.org)
- **Cycling UK policy or complaints:** Contact [HaveYourSay@CyclingUK.org](mailto:HaveYourSay@CyclingUK.org)
- **Cycling UK group activities:** Contact Membership – 01483 238301 | [membership@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:membership@cyclingsuk.org)

### Where to Send Magazine Contributions

Email is best. Use [editor@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:editor@cyclingsuk.org). Please include something in the email header that tells the editor what it is – for example, Travellers' Tales, Letters, Cyclopedias, etc. You'll receive an automated reply pretty much immediately. Check your email's junk file if you haven't seen it. If your email requires a response that the automated reply doesn't cover, you'll receive a separate email from the editor. This will not be immediate. As noted, contributions are generally assessed in the downtime in between issues.

If you're sending something by post, use the Cycling UK office address but add the words 'Cycle magazine'. Please tell us on the envelope what the letter relates to – for example, Letters, Cyclopedias, Travellers' Tales, etc. For example, a contribution for the letters pages would look like this:

Cycle magazine letters  
Cycling UK  
Parklands, Railton Road  
Guildford  
GU2 9JX

## General Information for Contributors

Digital submissions are preferred. They save the editor time and are far less likely to be mislaid.

If you are sending material by post, typed copy is best. Hand-written submissions are acceptable for short items such as Letters or Q&As. Cycle does not accept faxes.

If you need posted material returned, please include a stamped addressed envelope. Please do not send original photographs unless the editor has specifically requested them, as items sent through the post can be damaged or lost.

## Email Submissions

If you're sending an email, you should receive an automated reply. If you don't, check that you've used the correct email address: [editor@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:editor@cyclingsuk.org). If the automated reply doesn't address your query, in the editor's opinion, you will receive an additional reply. This may take a while; the editor files all emails and responds to them – sometimes promptly, often not – in date order. Because of this, ensure your computer is set to the correct date, as incorrectly dated emails may not receive a response.

## Attachments

Attachments are welcome, but do not send unnamed files. Unnamed attachments are often used to spread viruses and will usually be deleted, as will anything caught by spam filters. Please note: Attachments larger than 10Mb per email sometimes fail to arrive.

## File formats

Most word processing and image file formats are fine. In the unlikely event you send something that the editor can't open, he'll let you know. If you're sending something for the Letters or Q&A pages, it's usually best to place the text in the body of your email.

## Formatting

Word processing files should contain plain text only. Simple formatting – bold, italics, capitals – is fine. More elaborate formatting will be removed during editing.

**Do not embed images within word processing documents.** Instead, send each picture as a separate image file (see below for guidance).

## Letters Magazine Section

### Letters to the Editor

Each issue, the editor selects a representative cross-section of letters and emails for the letters pages. Many more letters are received than can be published. **All letters and emails sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication unless you state otherwise.**

Please include your full name and Cycling UK membership number. We reserve the right to edit letters for reasons of space, clarity, or libel. All letters are read and acknowledged, but we cannot guarantee publication. Acknowledgement means you will receive a standard letter or auto-reply email confirming that your correspondence has been received. Please note that the editor will not usually enter into further correspondence about the subject of your letter.

If you wish to comment on a cycling topic, the letters pages are the best place to do so. However, if you have a specific complaint or a query about Cycling UK policy that requires an answer, please contact [HaveYourSay@CyclingUK.org](mailto:HaveYourSay@CyclingUK.org).

The editor can offer an opinion and provide a platform for debate but cannot resolve policy matters.

### Guidelines for Letters

- **Be concise.** Short, well-written letters are more likely to be published. Letters longer than 150 words are rarely printed without editing.
- **Be specific.** If you are expressing likes or dislikes about the magazine, please explain why.
- **No poetry, please.**

- **Be timely or timeless.** Letters should ideally relate to something in the previous issue or address broader cycling topics rather than older magazine content.

## Q&A Magazine Section

As with letters, we can only feature a selection of the queries we receive. Queries that do not appear in the magazine receive only a standard acknowledgement.

## Travellers' Tales Magazine Section

Four Travellers' Tales typically appear every issue and they are always written by Cycling UK members. No payment is made for those that are printed. A Travellers' Tale article should be 250-300 words long and must be accompanied by two or more relevant pictures. Please send a GPX file of your route if you have one. It's useful for other members when your article goes online.

Travellers' Tales are never commissioned. If you have an idea, there's no need to phone or write first — just get writing. We publish the best of those we receive. Submissions not used immediately are kept on file for possible future use. If you would like a postal submission returned, please include a stamped addressed envelope.

A Travellers' Tale can describe any trip by bike. It might cover an entire journey or a single memorable moment. If it entertains or inspires other Cycling UK members, it's suitable. From a practical standpoint, submissions that are of the right length and include strong accompanying images have a better chance of being selected.

What matters most, however, is a spark of interest, originality, or personality — and that comes from your writing. The best advice is to write much as you would speak (though not literally, ums and ahs included!). We want your authentic voice. This isn't an essay or a report; there's no need to "put on" a writing style.

A helpful approach is to imagine telling the story to a friend in a café or pub. Where would you naturally begin? Do you describe meticulous planning, or do you dive straight into the highlights?

Good journalism is, at its heart, one person talking to another by different means.

## Articles in Cycle Magazine

Articles in Cycle are written by a wide range of contributors: cycling journalists, subject specialists (for example, in health), Cycling UK staff, and Cycling UK members like you.

If you have expertise in a particular area, you are welcome to write about it. Otherwise, the most common route is to submit a tour report. Most member tour reports are declined – not because you shouldn't write, but because competition is high and, frequently, the photographs are not of sufficient quality. If you write well, take good photos, and persist, you can get published and paid.

Typical touring articles are 1,200–2,400 words and must be accompanied by good quality photographs. If you have been published elsewhere, you may send samples of your work along with a short précis of your proposed article. The editor will decide whether to commission you based on this.

If you have not been previously published, you will need to write your article on spec and submit it for consideration. It's a good idea to read and reread touring features in recent issues, as these reflect the style and tone the editor is looking for.

**Remember:** your aim is not simply to write what you want to say, but to write what other Cycling UK members will want to read. Many tour reports fail at this first hurdle.

The guidance in the Travellers' Tales section (above) applies here too. Additional points to bear in mind:

- **Make it interesting.** If the story doesn't interest you, it won't interest the reader.
- **Grab the reader early.** Avoid long, dull, or overly detailed opening paragraphs.
- **Write as you speak – but correctly.** Avoid over-formal, unnatural phrasing.

- **Use short sentences and paragraphs.** Long, dense sections deter readers.
- **Favour short words over long ones.**
- **Stick to the word count.** Don't overwrite and don't pad out sentences.
- **Include detail when it matters.**
- **Use the active voice wherever possible** (e.g. "X opened the door," not "The door was opened by X").
- **Avoid sounding pompous or arrogant.** It puts readers off.
- **Avoid slang and clichés unless quoting.**
- **Use concrete, specific language** (e.g. "tea break," not "interval for refreshments").
- **Don't describe meals unless they're genuinely** relevant or interesting.
- **Avoid foreign words** except in direct quotes or product names.
- **Eliminate jargon.** Choose every day, conversational English.
- **Be accurate.** Never guess, especially with names, prices, or phone numbers. If in doubt, find out.

**A final note:** even excellent articles are sometimes turned down for reasons outside your control. It is not unusual for two articles on the same destination (e.g. Iceland) to arrive back-to-back. While a combined piece is sometimes possible, it's unlikely that two nearidentical topics will be printed in consecutive issues.

## Charity rides: A special note

"Are you interested in my 1,000-mile charity ride?"

Probably not. Let me explain. I'm indifferent to the fact that it's a charity ride. That doesn't mean charity rides never appear in the magazine, they do, but they are judged on their merits as articles, not on their charitable worthiness.

### Remember:

- **Cycling UK members tour for pleasure.** Enjoyment is the motivation. When sponsorship is the primary reason for doing a ride (rather than a welcome extra to something you'd want to do anyway), it can seem at odds with the cycle touring mindset. To a keen cyclist, "sponsored ride" can sound a bit like "sponsored sunbathe".
- **Cycling UK is itself a charity.** For this reason, we do not promote other charities heavily in the magazine.

A charity ride article **needs a narrative thread beyond the charity itself**. A well-written piece that happens to mention the charity and ends with a link is perfectly fine. An article that focuses on the charity and its work is not — that's an article for the charity's own media, not for Cycle.

## Sending pictures to Cycle

You don't need to be a photography expert or own an expensive camera to submit pictures to Cycle. We've used phone pictures on the front cover.

**Digital images are best**, as they won't be lost or damaged, and we don't need to scan them. Prints are acceptable for letters or even Travellers' Tales if that's all you have.

Your pictures should be reasonably sharp, and a **good number of them should include cyclists**. A bike leaning against a fence is rarely as good as a person on a bike. If you're travelling alone, try to get some shots with you in them. This is easy (if a little time-consuming) using your camera's self-timer (even compact cameras have one) and a small tripod such as a Joby Gorillapod, which can grip posts, rails and branches.

For landscapes, it often helps to include a cyclist in the foreground, even if they're not the main subject. A tiny cyclist in the distance rarely adds much (unless the photo is exceptional), and fixed-focus cameras make subjects look small surprisingly quickly. With a fixed-focus camera, get closer so the subject fills a good proportion of the frame.

Avoid digital zoom. All this does is crop into the picture. Use optical zoom or get closer.

For touring photos, include local details to avoid the "could have been anywhere" look. Look for opportunities to shoot from unusual or dramatic perspectives: lie on the ground, kneel by the verge, climb onto a bridge - changing your point of view can transform a picture.

Give each photo a short description so that it can be captioned easily. If it's a print, write on the back. If it's a computer file, either: change the name of the file to the photo's title; or, if you know how, add a fuller description to the photograph's metadata (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadata>).

## Photographic media

Digital images are best.

We print at **300 dots (pixels) per inch (dpi)**, whereas images that look fine on your screen may be only **72 dpi**. To work out how large we can print your picture, simply divide the number of pixels by **300**.

For example:

- A 600-pixel-wide image can only be printed **2 inches wide**.
- A fullpage A4 image needs to be roughly **3600 pixels high x 2500 pixels wide**.

There is some flexibility, but this is a good guide.

We can open most common image formats. The default is **JPEG (.jpg)**. Modern high-resolution cameras produce JPEGs suitable for print, even though the format is “lossy”. If you are supplying JPEGs, please save them at **maximum quality**.

If you are sending images via **CD, DVD, WeTransfer**, or a similar file-transfer service, you may include as many images as you like, at any size. You can also set up a free image gallery (e.g. on **Flickr**) for the editor to download from.

## Emailing images

Large files can cause problems. Any single email **over 10MB** may not arrive.

If the editor has specifically asked for highresolution images and email is your only option, please send **one image per email**.

If not, it's best to email a **selection of small, low-resolution images**. The editor will then request high resolution versions of any images needed.

**That's it. Look forward to hearing from you!**