

Opinion Letters

THIS MONTH BALANCE BIKES, COLD FEET, E-BIKE SAFETY, OFF-ROAD ROUTE GRADING, SPEED E-BIKES AND MORE

Get in touch

LETTERS are edited for space, clarity and, if necessary, legality. The editor reads and automatically acknowledges all letters but publishes only a selection. Feedback for the next issue must arrive by 20 December. Please include your membership number.

WRITE TO: Letters, Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, GU2 9JX or email editor@cyclinguk.org



Steve and Janet with [R] Stephen Dee

Letter of the month

OUR 12-YEAR ADVENTURE

After 12 years of visiting checkpoints, we have finally managed to answer all 402 questions of the British Cycle Quest (BCQ). We are still happily married, even though there have been times when we've been on the road all day in the wind and rain, then had difficulty in locating the checkpoint, which has made polite conversation a little strained. It has been a pleasurable challenge that's taken us to many beautiful parts of the UK that we would never have dreamed of going to.

Many people have asked us what were the best and worst places we have been to. For us, the best were the Isle of Man, the Western Isles and the Isle of Wight. The worst? Well, we couldn't name anywhere. The few places we visited that we have bad memories of were usually caused by bad weather or our poor map reading.

We would like to say a big thank you to Geoff Eaves and Stephen Dee for all their administration. True dedication. We would recommend the BCQ to any cyclist who likes new cycling adventures.

Steve and Janet Bailey

Congratulations! For anyone who's curious about the British Cycle Quest, visit the website: cyclinguk.org/british-cycle-quest. You can view the checkpoints map, download the questions book and get started. You don't need to commit to visiting all 402 places. Just try a few local ones and see how you go.

Win a Passport Saddle Pack worth £69.99



The letter of the month wins a Passport Saddle Pack, courtesy of Ison Distribution. This 9.8-litre roll-top bikepacking bag has a waterproof liner to keep your kit dry and a wipe-clean tarpaulin base to shield you from mud. There are two external pockets for keys or tools, and the seatpost strap is rubberised to keep the bag stable. For more about the whole range of Passport bikepacking luggage, visit passportcycles.co.uk.



Left: Andy Catlin

BALANCE POINT

Little did Karl Von Drais, inventor of the 'laufmaschine' in 1817, think that his concept, in its modern junior form, would have taught so many small children to ride a bike. My four grandchildren loved their balance bikes, which they rode with great gusto at the age of two, then progressed easily to pedal bikes aged three or four. As 'Professor' Donald Macdonald says (Cycle, Oct/Nov '24), balance is the key to bike riding. Stabilisers do not teach balance.

As a nervous child myself, I learned to ride a bike relatively late, and only then on a very small bike. The feeling of security in being able to put my feet down allowed me to experiment without falling off, in order to acquire the essential balance. Nowadays, I cycle regularly for transport and leisure, but I've never quite gained the level of natural ease and confidence in riding that my grandchildren demonstrate, thanks, perhaps, to their early experience on their balance bikes!

Clare Hawkins

PRACTICAL POCKETS

I've found my cycling tops useful for more than just cycling. The rear pockets are great for holding tennis balls and, when gardening, they are so useful for holding the secateurs, string, glasses and, more importantly, my phone so that I can play music wherever I go in the garden. Cycling leggings are also great for indoor tennis in the winter.

Dawn Elsworth