



Events Winter group rides

Winter doesn't have to mean hibernation – after all, winter miles bring summer smiles. Now is the perfect time to find a local cycling group that will keep your spirits high when the weather is cold and wet. Cycling UK groups up and down the country are offering festive events like mince pie rides (such as Cycling UK East Midlands on 17 December) and Boxing Day rides. They're perfect for staying fit and connecting with others. With layers, lights and a warm drink after, winter rides can be rewarding and fun. Remember it's only cold when you're standing still! Find your local group on the Cycling UK website and see what's happening in your area: cyclinguk.org/group-listing.

Watch this



Marcher Castles Way, which launched in October, is Cycling UK's newest bikepacking route. Watch this highlight video from our first ride along the route, where Cycling UK staff and three of our 100 Women in Cycling winners took on the 290km loop. We encountered everything from gorgeous

views over Shropshire to bushwacking on lost bridleways, eating our weight in cake and riding past the ghostly ruins of castles. If you want to be inspired to ride Marcher Castles Way, watch the video here: bit.ly/marcher-castles-way-video.

Try this

Advent-ure calendar of cycling

Once the days are darker and colder, it's easy to put your wheels away until spring. But this year, instead of opening windows on an advent calendar for a hidden gift, why not mark the days by getting out on your bike? Pledging to ride every day throughout December might just give you the motivation you need to keep going. It doesn't matter how far you go – just try pedalling somewhere every day. You could even try photographing something festive on each ride to create your very own [#Advent-ureCalendarofCycling](https://www.instagram.com/Advent-ureCalendarofCycling) on Instagram. Don't forget to tag [@WeAreCyclingUK](https://www.instagram.com/WeAreCyclingUK).



Outdoors, not cardboard doors

On my bike

John Franklin

Author of *Cyclecraft* (cyclecraft.co.uk), the guide to safe cycling

Why do you cycle?

As my principal means of transport and for pleasure.

How far do you ride each week?

Perhaps 50 miles on a stay-at-home week. Up to 400 miles on tour.

Which of your bikes is your favourite?

My touring bike, a Spa Cycles D'Tour, as it enables me to go to so many wonderful places.



What do you always take with you?

Such tools and supplies as are necessary to make me self-dependent.

Who mends your punctures?

Me! But I haven't had one for more than a year now; modern tyres are so robust.

It's raining: bike, public transport or car?

Bike. I don't mind cycling in the rain – a strong wind can be much worse.

Lycra or normal clothes?

Lycra for long distances. Normal clothes for local trips.

If you had £100 to spend, what would you get?

Train tickets to tour further away.

What's your favourite cycling journey?

I prefer wilder, more remote places, like Scotland.

What single thing would most improve matters for UK cyclists?

More self-confidence among cyclists and less exaggeration of 'danger'. Cycling on roads is actually a very safe activity.



Left: Gary Eisenhauer. Top left: Rashid Yaman. Right: Getty Images

