



2020 on my north-south ride. The database and map of clues and locations is maintained by Cycling UK volunteers, and checkpoints and clues can change slightly. (Always check the website for the most up-to-date information for the checkpoints you plan to visit.) Checkpoint located this time, I then meandered about completing Somerset and Dorset, passing a

chalk giant, visiting a hilltop monument and a cliff-top globe. Then I crossed the Solent to the Isle of Wight.

Six checkpoints in three days on a circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight felt very efficient. A two-checkpoint day is satisfying, and a three-checkpoint day is exciting. My average checkpoint rate overall is just under one per riding day, but there are often days travelling between points with no questing. I needed to get a move on for a date in Lincolnshire, so had to take a direct route there. En route, I hit a record four-checkpoint day crossing Greater London.

In July and August, I explored East Anglia. I visited all the checkpoints in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, looking for unusual-shaped postboxes, village name signs, cathedrals, a three-legged bridge, windmills, more statues of local celebrities, and a scene from a famous painting.

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I could always have got to wherever I was by a much more direct route than the one I'd taken.

Eventually I pressed my fully loaded touring bike through the tourist hordes at Greenwich on a sunny Sunday afternoon to visit my final Greater London checkpoint. Afterwards I pedalled to Waterloo Station, where my BCQ journey paused again.

Five years and counting

As I live a nomadic life, with no fixed abode, Waterloo Station was going to be an accessible point from wherever I happened to be when I was ready to continue. In May 2025, I negotiated my way past the taxis and buses to exit Waterloo Station and ride south-east into Kent. Cycling infrastructure in London is among the best I have seen in the capital cities I have pedalled through: segregated cycle lanes, cycle traffic lights, signposted routes and so on. It certainly felt safer than the busy rural roads in Kent that I sometimes couldn't avoid.

I answered BCQ questions about a mosaic frieze, a medieval jousting post, fancy railings and a public water fountain. The traffic-free cycleway around the Kent coast was a joy to pedal, and I hunted down the coastguard cottages in Ramsgate and Sandgate where my grandfather had been stationed and my mother spent her teens.

My BCQ journey had to pause at Folkestone for a few weeks. Then I returned to visit the East Sussex checkpoints, reaching the summits of

An ABC of BCQ

It's easy to get started. Wherever you live in England, Scotland or Wales, there will be a BCQ checkpoint relatively near to you.

A Visit the interactive map of multicoloured pin markers at cyclinguk.org/british-cycle-quest. Choose a point on the map and find the location name, unique BCQ number, OS grid reference, latitude and longitude, and the question.

B Check out the Question Book. Download this for off-line access or print out a paper copy. Be sure to keep your Question Book up to date from the website.

C Plan your route. The only rule is that you should cycle there. At the checkpoint, hunt down the target and find the answer. Record your answer or take a photo.

D To claim a checkpoint, you must submit your answer for verification by the wonderful volunteer BCQ administrators. If you want to get competitive, you can join the questers' league tables.

E Collect more checkpoints. Visit points near to home on day rides, points en route to another tour, make a tour of checkpoints in a certain area, or have a fixed-base holiday and ride day loops to tick off a whole area.

F Only 36 people have completed the British Cycle Quest since 2003, but many more are in various stages of their BCQ journey. Happy questing!

Beachy Head and Ditchling Beacon, and enjoying glorious off-road riding across Ashdown Forest. At Redhill Station, I temporarily halted again.

As I write, in October 2025, my 'tyres-on-tarmac' line is 7,006km long. I have so far logged 139 checkpoints in 146 riding days but have spent many more days on the road, allowing for rest days, rain days and sightseeing days. I've camped almost every night.

I don't know if I will ever complete the British Cycle Quest or my plan to do so in one continuous line; there are so many places in the world I want to ride my bike. But already I have visited interesting places and glorious parts of the UK that I would never otherwise have seen. 🌟