

# Opinion Letters

**THIS MONTH** LOIRE VALLEY CYCLING, OFF-ROAD ROUTE INFO, WINTER CYCLING, BIKES ON FERRIES, HELMET MESH 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 31 October. Please include your membership number.

**WRITE TO:** Letters, Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, GU2 9JX or email @ [editor@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:editor@cyclingsuk.org)



**Letter of the month**

## THE LEISURELY LOIRE

**I**t was great to read 'Toddling up the Loire' in the Aug/Sep issue. We revisited a section of the route this year, cycling from Tours to Ancenis. What I want to emphasise is just how easy it is, and how well set up everything is for cyclists, with everything from bike repair shops to campsites to hotels. We took it gently, cycling 30-45km every couple of days.

The biggest challenge for UK travellers is getting to the Loire with bikes and panniers. We've found the easiest way has been to travel down by car with the bikes on a roof rack. We then leave the car parked at a campsite and set off on the bikes. To return to the car, we catch a train. Most of them along the Loire have good cycle carriage facilities, although some now charge €1 for a bike reservation.

Each campsite is different but many are well designed for cyclists, with benches, picnic tables and, increasingly, fridges and basic cooking facilities. Hotels also support cyclists; in Angers our bikes were stored in a dedicated lockup facility.

The Routard guide, La Loire à Vélo (online at [routard.com](http://routard.com)) is invaluable. Even though it's in French (while my name is French, I'm not) you can get by with text-recognition translation. The IGNrando' app has a free OpenCycleMap layer, and we've also used the OsmAnd app. Charging phones at campsites was no problem.

**Alex Bienfait**

## 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](http://passportcycles.co.uk).



Left: Saskia Martin

## OFF-ROAD GRADING

Over the last two summers I've ridden the local Rebellion Way and Wolf Way routes. Both are hugely enjoyable but share a big disadvantage: the very variable quality of the off-road sections.

I travel with 20kg of camping kit, and when presented with overgrown and/or muddy trails I struggle. I acknowledge that this year's weather will have exacerbated the situation on the Wolf Way.

Not all off-road cycling is the same, and not all would-be off-road cyclists can cope with everything bridleways and other rights of way have to offer us. I think we need to acknowledge that there are different preferences and abilities. Would it be possible to rate different sections of prepared routes accordingly? Or give a little more warning of sections that may be difficult?

**Alan Ackroyd**

## ROAD CYCLING REQUEST

I have been a member for some years and enjoy reading the magazine. However, as a lifelong roadie, I've always noticed that the magazine is designed for the touring cyclist. This was acceptable when it was the Cyclists' Touring Club but, as Cycling UK, shouldn't you include some interest for the roadie? By that I mean the cyclist who enjoys short, sharp road rides of the 45-miles-plus type?

**Shaun Walsh**