

GEAR UP

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REVIEW

If you want to submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 78 – for advice. Each one printed wins a ready-for-anything Lezyne CRV19 multitool, worth £29.99. For more about Lezyne tools, pumps, lights, and more, visit upgradebikes.co.uk


**EQUISAFETY POLITE
THINK BIKE WAISTCOAT**
£19.99

Reviewed by CTC Cycle Champion
Nigel Williams

If you want to stimulate discussion, this is the hi-viz vest for you. The first and obvious response is: 'Is that a police jacket?' Hooked! A number of people mentioned that on seeing police, motorists usually check their speed – no bad thing. 'I wonder if the police will mind?' others asked. I'd say: yes, it's cheeky, but that's the point.

Equisafety have a long pedigree in the world of horse riding. This cycling vest is good quality and adjustable. Did I feel safer? Did motorists give more leeway? I'm not sure they did, but maybe they thought about it. Sizes: S-XXL. equisafety.com


SPA CYCLES NIDD SADDLE & DERWENT SADDLEBAG
£35 & £30

Reviewed by CTC Cycle Champion
Martyn Bolt

Leather saddles have a loyal following but it can be a bit of a gamble to see if one suits you, given the prices leather can command. Spa Cycles are offering some much more economical own-brand alternatives. This Nidd is essentially a budget version of a Brooks B17, while the Wharfe and Aire are modelled on the Swift and Swallow respectively.

The Nidd is about 150g heavier than a B17 and it does look more entry-level. The leather has a less glossy and more 'matt' finish, somehow. On the other hand, it's half the price if you go by the RRP of the B17 and still about £15 cheaper even if you were to snag a bargain B17 online. I'm more concerned with comfort than weight, particularly when it comes to a touring saddle like this, so wasn't bothered by the Nidd's extra bulk.

Leather does need looking after, so I applied generous amounts of Proofide before fitting the saddle to my bike. There's one small snag here: the saddle has a 'boot lace' underneath, with which you can pull in the saddle sides. Depending on how much you want to move the saddle on its cromoly rails,



The Derwent saddlebag is well made but compact. Expect to fit tools and spare tube only

you may need to remove and re-thread this, although it's something you'll only do once. Comfort-wise, it felt okay on the rides that I did. I'm undecided as yet as to whether I'll use it for longer audax rides this summer, but leather breaks in so I can only see it getting better, not worse.

The Derwent is a matching leather saddlebag, and like the Nidd saddle it comes in black or brown. I usually use a Carradice saddlebag, either a Barley or something bigger, so the Derwent bag is a bit small for my needs. It's about two thirds of a litre, I think – enough for the tools I'd take on an audax ride, plus one spare tube, but that's all. You definitely want to put a waterproof saddle cover in there too, for those occasions when the bike must be parked in the wet.

Though small, the Derwent is well made. Being leather, it should last a long time. It's pictured with the buckles unfastened. These are actually more decorative than functional, as the ends of the straps snap to the bag with magnets.

Neither the saddle nor the bag have the same prestige or finish as a Brooks, but they're nevertheless well made and well priced. Worth a try.

spacycles.co.uk



ENDURA PAKAJAK

£39.99

Reviewed by Editor Dan Joyce

The Pakajak is a lightweight windproof, weighing just 153g (size M) and easily fitting into a jersey pocket. It comes with a stuffsack, which I lost and didn't miss. The Pakajak's thin polyester fabric will keep out showers but rain will get in, particularly through the untaped seams. It is effective as a windproof: I wore this over a summer jersey and arm warmers in January and was

okay as long as I kept moving. The close-cut high collar, zip stormflap, and elasticated cuffs and hem keep out draughts. There are vents under each arm, so you don't overheat easily. Shoulders, arms and dropped tail have some reflectivity. It's a minimalist 'just in case' jacket like the equally effective Altura Cropton. Sizes S-XXL, five colours, men's and women's versions. endura.co.uk

GEAX SAGUARO TNT 29ER TYRE

£34.99

Reviewed by CTC Senior Off-road Officer Dan Cook

TNT stands, confusingly, for 'tube no tube': it's a tubeless tyre, designed to be used with a tyre sealant and no innertube. Geax also offer this 29×2.2in tyre in conventional folding (£30.99) and wire (£19.99) bead versions, as well as in 26in sizes. The tread pattern is the same for the 26- and 29-inch versions. I was a bit disappointed, as the longer footprint of a 29er tyre needs less aggressive tread blocks to gain the same grip level.

On the trail, the Saguaros greatly surpassed my expectations. A combination of neat knob shaping, spacing, angles and a central 'infill' line means they are fast rolling on smooth surfaces yet grippy on rougher stuff. The rounded profile means that you can lean the bike right over to take advantage of the



cornering edges. They compare well with other XC tyres like Hutchinson Pythons and Maxxis Crossmarks. They're slightly heavier (this Saguaro is 792g), but if reducing weight is your thing, you can even get the Saguaro in a tubular version! chickencycles.co.uk

WE ALSO LOOKED AT... CYCLING BOOKS

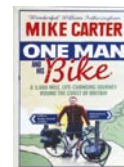


MOUNTAIN HIGH

£20

Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden

In this handsome book Daniel Friebe describes 50 of the most famous/notorious climbs against which European road racers have pitted themselves, illustrated by 250 of Pete Golding's photographs. You get the dramatic histories, the topographies, with maps and gradient profiles. What you don't see is any cyclists on these roads – apart from the cover and so few other pictures that some fun can be had with 'spot the bike'! But they are lovely photos, with words to inspire any racer to follow in the wheeltracks of the stars, and tourists to experience each mountain's special character. Some, as I did, will also enjoy reading about those they've ridden. ISBN 978 0 85738 624 3, quercusbooks.co.uk

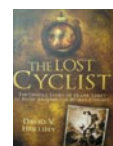


ONE MAN AND HIS BIKE

£11.99

Reviewed by CTC Councillor Tim Jackson

Mike Carter was cycling to his work at The Guardian when he realized that if he carried straight on east at Blackfriars Bridge instead of turning north to the Guardian offices, he could follow the Thames to the sea, turn left and cycle round the coast until he came full circle back. So he did. This was his first cycle tour and it's a delight to share it with him. He is funny, honest and observant and writes well, whether he's describing a night on the town in Whitley Bay or a visit to a gnome reserve in Devon. ISBN 978 0 09194 055 3, Ebury Press



THE LOST CYCLIST

£12.99

Reviewed by CTC Snr. Cycling Devp. Officer Elizabeth Barner

The Lost Cyclist interleaves the nearly-around-the-world travels of Frank Lenz on a newfangled safety bicycle with the successful orbit of Sachtleben and Allen, who returned home in 1892. The book becomes a page-turner when Sachtleben is dispatched to eastern Turkey to search for the lost Lenz and we enter the machinations of the Armenian Question. The strength of the book is its abundant source material. The author throws in beautiful nuggets: the CTC's 1890 motto; a photo of Lenz taken for the crown prince of Persia; the merits of railroad riding versus muddy roads. I was delighted with what I learned here, but if you don't love detail it will be a long read. ISBN 978 1845964320, mainstreampublishing.com



REVOLUTION ADVENTURE WELDED PANNIERS

£64.99/PAIR

Reviewed by CTC Cycle Champion Steve Marsden

Revolution is the own-brand of Edinburgh Bicycle Cooperative. These panniers are a good size for touring or commuting at 20-litres each. The material is robust and, as you'd guess from the reference to welded seams, 100% waterproof. I cycled through some extremely wet weather and the pannier contents stayed dry.

The roll-top closure is supplemented with a buckled lid, whose straps can be tightened down to keep your luggage secure. There's just one main compartment inside, so any loose items will end up at the bottom of the bag. There is also a small mesh pocket under the lid.

The pannier hooks are very adjustable but could be stronger. Fortunately, they are replaceable. They fitted fine to the 10mm rails of my pannier rack, and you can remove the plastic inserts from the hooks to fit thicker rails. Off the bike, there's a carry handle. It's hard plastic that can dig into your hand if the panniers are heavily loaded. I'd have liked a removable shoulder strap.

Apart from the hooks, these panniers are like a budget version of Ortlieb Rear Rollers. They're strong, weatherproof, and simple. The main selling point, of course, is the price: they're £40 cheaper than a pair of Rear Rollers. At that price, they represent good value for money. edinburghbicycle.com



ANA NICHoola HER PLEASURE ARM WARMERS

£28.99

Reviewed by Sophie Edmondson of Challenge for Change

The colour options and name of these arm warmers didn't appeal to me, but they're certainly warm and well made. I can see them lasting well. As it says on the website, the arm warmers are fairly small in terms of tightness: even the largest size was snug on me. That makes it harder to take them off mid-ride, especially when they're damp from drizzle. It does mean they shouldn't slip down accidentally, however. They feel snug and soft, so I'd be more inclined to use them for winter riding than on/off summer use.

Sizes S, M, L. Black, grey, pink or purple. ananichoola.co.uk

9 BAR

£3.50 FOR 5

Reviewed by CTC members Graham & Joy Nix

We've tried many types of energy bars, sweets, and gels over the years as we rode our tandem in the UK and abroad. We've just discovered the 9 Bar, a great tasting energy bar based on seeds. They are dairy, gluten and wheat free, yet have about 275 calories per bar. There are five varieties available by mail order. We purchased the sampler pack of five bars for £3.50 delivered (original, pumpkin, organic, nutty and flax). We enjoyed them all but prefer the original bar, which costs £10.40 for 16 bars. The bar is made in Corwen, North Wales. Delivery is very quick after ordering on line, and you can also buy them in some supermarkets and health food shops. Fully recommended if you like seeds – we do! 9-bar.co.uk



MEQIX POWER HVL PUMP

£39.99

Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden

Meqix is a new Taiwanese manufacturer of bike accessories with a strong line in pumps, imported by Raleigh. The 25cm, 170g Power HVL is the mid-sized member of a family of high-volume mini floor pumps.

It lacks the fold-out foot of its misleadingly named big brother (Mini FPV) but nestles okay between your feet, with a toe over the hose coupling to keep it down. You can also use it off the floor.

Although 'V' is for volume, these pumps are rated 90psi (6bar) and the HVL gets a 32-622 tyre up to that in 140 easy strokes. For higher pressure road tyres, Meqix have a similar, but slimmer, 'P' family. The construction has a quality feel: machined alloy, with a hardwood handle. The valve head screws onto either presta or schrader, with no loss of air from either, or clips neatly into the piston rod for carriage – on a neat bracket that fits beside a bottle-cage

In conclusion: good if pricy competition for the Topeak Morph and Lezyne Micro-Floor-Drive pumps. meqix.com & raleigh.co.uk

