

## GEAR UP

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GREAT BRITISH BIKE RIDES  
BY DAVE BARTER

£25

Reviewed by CTC Marketing Manager David Dowling

With 40 UK routes, there is a lot packed into this 288-page paperback. Most rides are over 100 miles and hilly, but each has a shortened version. Every ride has turn-by-turn directions, a colourful map, and all the stats, graphs and route profiles you might want. It's aimed at the sportier day rider, but the routes could be split over a weekend or more. My only criticism is that the fantastic contents feel squashed in; maps and text are small. As you're unlikely to carry it with you – GPS logs of the routes are downloadable online – a coffee-table format might have been better. ISBN 9781906148553, [v-publishing.co.uk](http://v-publishing.co.uk), 0114 267 9277



## MIO CYCLO 305HC

£259.99

Reviewed by cycling writer Dave Barter

Like other GPS computers from Garmin, Bryton, and others, Mio's 305HC offers navigation, training features, and more. It's well made and should survive the odd knock. It fixes to the bike via a twist-lock bracket secured by cable ties, so you can fit it almost anywhere.

Routes are created either using the supplied software to auto-route between locations or by manually plotting a track. It only works with Microsoft Windows and an internet connection. The OpenStreetMap-based route planning user interface is poor, particularly when editing routes.

The 40×65mm colour screen is touch sensitive, with a single on/off button. You can follow a planned route, navigate to a waypoint, or carry out a targeted workout. The 'Surprise Me' button calculates a random route

either to a point or as a fixed-length loop. I tested this near a town centre and was led on a dreadful loop round busy roads.

The screen itself is easy to read using the pre-loaded TeleAtlas or OpenStreetMap mapping.

Navigation with the touch screen controls is manageable in thinly gloved hands, and is clear and logical. An anti-reflective coating eases viewing in direct sunlight.

It's a highly capable GPS unit, overall, with a hardware feature set on a par with the more expensive Garmin Edge series. An IPX7 rating means that it is weatherproof enough for very wet riding conditions. It's reasonably priced too, but it may be worth waiting until the supporting software has been improved.

Includes: charger, USB cable, cadence and speed sensor, bike mount/cable ties, HRM strap, full UK mapping (OSM and TeleAtlas).

[mio.com](http://mio.com)



## SELLE ROYAL LOOKIN HANDMADE MODERATE SADDLE

**£59.99**

*Reviewed by CTC Cycling Development Officer Seamus Kelly*

This Selle Royal is a men's saddle intended, as the name says, for a 'moderate' style of riding. That suited the riding position on my Brompton. The combination of the width (173mm, about the same as my Brooks B17) and the firm gel padding provides very good support for the pelvic bones, and the slightly wide, but effectively

padded, nose didn't cause any numbness, chafing or undue pressure.

On a Claud Butler touring bike, commuting 15 miles each way, I found the saddle comfortable when riding on the tops or hoods. At a high cadence and riding on the drops, the nose width was not ideal but it was better than the stock saddle that came with the bike.

Saddles are a very personal choice. I found this one very good for riding in a relaxed, slightly upright position on a hybrid, touring or folding bike. It looks well-made, has with protective bumpers to prevent scuffing, it should last. [selleroyal.com](http://selleroyal.com)



## JANAPAR £16 (DVD)

*Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden*

It's not often you see cycle-touring on film, but Janapar ('journey' in Armenian) is no mere travelogue. This documentary tells a very human story in which a young man learns a lot about himself and what really matters... but I mustn't be spoiling the plot! I'm amazed at the quality of the filming, almost all by Tom Allen himself, and cannot imagine the patience it must have taken to capture some of those scenes, especially whilst suffering malaria and covered in flies! TV producer-director James Newton

has condensed over 300 hours of Tom's footage into 79 minutes of engaging, real-life drama.

We are left with perhaps too much of the gruelling stuff and not enough depiction of the joys of cycle-touring. But

on second viewing

I found the fun shone through.

Tom's Janapar story is also available as a book. [janapar.com](http://janapar.com), 07759 818082



## EIGO 12.5 LITRE PANNIER £17.99 EACH

*Reviewed by CTC Cycling Development Officer Anna Cipullo*

These small bags are usable front or rear. They are light and easy to carry when off the bike but they are not very waterproof. While hi-vis waterproof covers are provided, as with any covers these are a bit of a faff compared to bags that are waterproof in themselves. The rack hooks do not clasp around the bike rack; they just hook on. There is a fold-out retention hook but the bags came loose despite this. When I hit a pothole, one even came off into oncoming traffic; the material did not survive the incident. At less than £20 each, these panniers are very cheap compared to touring favourites such as Ortlieb. However, they don't work nearly as well and are unlikely to last as long. [cyclestuffdirect.com](http://cyclestuffdirect.com)

## PANARACER TOURGUARD PLUS £29.99

*Reviewed by CTC Cycling Devpt Officer Seamus Kelly*

The Panaracer TourGuard Plus is a go-anywhere touring or commuting tyre. The 'Tough Lock' reinforced tread and 'TourGuard' layer should shrug off punctures and cuts.

I tested size 700x35C.

They look similar to the main competitor, the Schwalbe Marathon Plus, and were similarly tight to fit without tools. Pumped to 75psi the tyres felt very firm, riding like other tyres at about 90psi. Grip and traction were very good on roads, loose surfaces, wet cobbles and mud.

The real test: how tough are they?

Riding through piles of broken glass and debris that I would normally avoid had no effect: no punctures and no marks or cuts on the tread. They are not fast and are fairly heavy, but for touring or commuting I'd happily recommend these tyres.

Sizes available: 700x28C, 700x32C, 700x35C, 700x38C, 26x1.5in, 26x1.75in. [zyro.co.uk](http://zyro.co.uk)





## SUNSTAR S03 ELECTRIC-ASSIST KIT

### £1015-£1320

*Reviewed by Richard Peace, co-author of Electric Bicycles*  
The Sunstar S03 is, as far as I know, the only crank-drive electric-assist kit on the UK market. Compared to hub systems, the motor weight is better placed, centrally and low down, and the motor drives through the gears, allowing it to work near to its optimum speed.

The Sunstar will fit the majority of bikes (unusual bottom brackets excepted), with programming available for any wheel size from 16in up. There are three battery options: seatpost-mounted (65Wh), frame-mounted (234Wh) and custom-made rear rack

mounted (416Wh). The price varies depending on the battery.

I've tried the kit on two folders, a hybrid and a cargo bike. I found it reliable and a joy to use. The pedelec-style power is delivered smoothly at one of three levels, and the battery mounting systems are well thought out; the medium-sized frame mounted option least affects handling.

Weight is another plus: the manufacturer's stated weights are 4.1 to 7.8kg, depending on battery option. Downsides?

The battery has only a one-year guarantee. Note that self-fitting is not an option. [www.sparticlebikes.com](http://www.sparticlebikes.com), 01223 926111



## MONKII CAGE

### £11.75

*Reviewed by CTC Marketing Manager David Dowling*

Monkii's system replaces your bike's bottle cage bolts with cleats, to which you can click on either small bags (Mono, £17.75, or Wedge, £18.75) or the Cage. This is a simple but robust mount with a Velcro strap, and it will hold just about any container. Fuel bottles or flasks are only the start; I managed to carry a 2-litre plastic bottle. With practice, you can pop out the container and replace it while on the move, and both the cage and cleats are sturdy and secure. There is also an optional mounting bracket allowing you to attach a bag or bottle to your seatpost or stem. It's a remarkably versatile product – it will hold your old plastic bidon as well as anything else. [cyclemiles.co.uk](http://cyclemiles.co.uk), 02392 455 355



## CTC HERITAGE SHORT SLEEVE ROAD JERSEY

### £43.20

*Reviewed by CTC Cycling Development Officer Kirsteen Torrance*

This CTC jersey is a bright and attractive top with a short front zip and three rear pockets. The retro look is eye-catching; passing cyclists were keen to compliment it. The jersey has been finished and stitched to a high standard and has withstood mountain biking, commuting and time trialling. No fade is evident from the washing either. I

found the elasticated arms rather tight on the size 12, especially with arm warmers worn as well. I found the high zip more comfortable when partially fastened. Colours: blue or black. Sizes: men's XS-XXXL, women's 6-18. You'll need the promotional code 'IMPCTC10' when ordering, otherwise it's £48. [impsport.com](http://impsport.com)



## FIBERFIX SPOKE

### £8.99

*Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden*

This roadside repair item weighs 7g. To test it, I removed a right-side spoke from a rear wheel. Spokes here are more likely to snap, being tighter, and are harder to replace. FiberFix gets glowing reviews, but I couldn't wind on enough tension to replace the spoke I'd removed.

The Kevlar cord may be as strong as steel but it isn't as stiff. FiberFix needs to be pulled a lot further to reach the same tension, but a regular spoke nipple does not have enough threads for that. And it's hard to remove initial slack. To pre-tension the cord, I had to take it off the upper cam, adjust it tighter, then lever it back on with a screwdriver. After four attempts, I was able to get FiberFix about half as tight as necessary. It might've done for the left side of this wheel.

The best I can say of FiberFix is it's better than an empty hole. In sloppy wheels (that break spokes by alternately pushing and pulling them) it may be an adequate replacement. But in well-tensioned wheels, you'll have to adjust a few other spokes anyway. It's available from [sjscycles.co.uk](http://sjscycles.co.uk), 01278 441500