

# Hallett 650B Adventure

*Richard Hallett is Cycle's new technical editor. He's also handy with a brazing torch, as his tourer shows. Dan Joyce interviewed him*



**R**ichard Hallett has been a cycling journalist for many years, notably as technical editor for Cycling Weekly and Cycle Sport. Like many of us, he's got ideas about frame design, only he's gone further and put those ideas into practice. His 650B Adventure won Best Touring Bike at Bespoked 2015.

'After I left roadcyclinguk.com two years ago, I began writing The Bike Deconstructed,' he said. 'Researching early lightweight frame building, I came up with a few ideas I thought worth pursuing. I could already braze after a fashion, but I asked my old friend, the legendary Cliff Shrubbs, to teach me his frame-building techniques, as well as how to braze to a frame-builder's standards. I then made various jigs and built a frame on my own. A couple of friends then asked me to build them one.'

One idea he wanted to explore was 650B,

an old French touring tyre standard

recently reinvented by the off-road fraternity. 'I became interested in the touring potential of fat road tyres back in the late '90s, and even persuaded frame-builder Dave Yates to build a test bike with MTB slicks. The tyres available weren't great, but the theory behind fatter tyres was sound. Fat 650B road tyres have built a big following in the US recently. Building my own frames allowed me to try the format myself.'

He cites supple, 42mm wide 650B tyres from Grand Bois and Compass as key to exploiting the ISO 584 format. 'The main advantages over a 700x32C tyre are ride comfort and low rolling resistance, especially when carrying a load. The fat tyres also work well on gravel roads and make for a very safe bike with exceptional grip. The smaller

**"The main advantages of supple, wider 650B tyres are comfort and low rolling resistance"**

650B wheel diameter keeps the weight of a fatter tyre down. I'd love to find a fast 559 road slick but there aren't any.'

Richard still rides, and builds, 700C bikes, but reckons he uses his own 650B bike more – for club runs, day-to-day riding, and pannier-laden touring. He's also ridden sportives on it. The 650B bike he was displaying at Bespoked was built as a tourer for Cole Wright, who wanted specific features: 'Cole asked for the Alfine hub gear after trying it on my bike. The double chainset turns it into a "budget Rohloff". The Jtek bar-end shifter isn't part of a pair, so Cole partnered it with a down tube lever.'

Cole likes his new bike so much that he wants another. The judges were impressed too, and when I spoke to Richard at Bespoked he was clearly delighted: 'I have been a touring cyclist since I began cycling, and I was surprised and chuffed to win in a sector that I feel both challenges and rewards the custom builder.' ●

## Tech spec: Cole Wright's Hallett 650B Adventure

**FRAME AND FORK:** Custom Columbus Zona steel with polished stainless steel highlights

**WHEELS:** Velocity USA Synergy 650B rims on Sturmey Archer sealed bearing (front) and Shimano Alfine (rear) hubs, hand built with Sapim Race (F) and Strong (R) spokes

**GEARING:** Shimano Alfine 8-speed hub with Jtek bar-end shifter, Paul Melvin chain tensioner, Mavic front derailleur and Middleburn double chainset giving 16 ratios from 27.4 to 104 inches

**BRAKES:** Shimano XT linear-pull with Tektro RL520 levers **STEERING & SEATING:** Rotor S1 stem, On-One Midge handlebars, Campagnolo Super Record seat post, Gilles Berthoud leather saddle

**ACCESSORIES:** Custom made stainless steel rear and lo-rider front racks, polished stainless steel Blackburn bottle cages **WEBSITE:** halletthandbuiltcycles.com

**SHARE YOUR STORY:** If you've got an interesting bike that's been chosen or customised to suit you, get in touch. Email [editor@ctc.org.uk](mailto:editor@ctc.org.uk)