

GEAR UP

Components, kit, and accessories reviewed by specialist journalists, CTC staff – and you.

This issue: a camera, a commuter, and more

REVIEW OF THE MONTH



Roadhawk BULLET R+ CAMERA

£149.95
dogcam sport.co.uk

A CAMERA ON your helmet or handlebar gives you comeback in cases of careless driving, and can be used to collect footage while mountain biking or touring. The Bullet R+ is a higher-resolution replacement for the Roadhawk Ride, recording 1080p (or 720p) video. For such a tiny camera – it weighs 62g by itself and about 100g mounted – the video quality is excellent. I could stop the playback and easily read number plates. The 135-degree field of view is good too. It'll record 90 minutes video on the supplied 8Gb SD memory card; 16Gb and 32Gb cards are available. You can record in one chunk or on a 15-minute loop, automatically overwriting earlier footage to stop the card becoming full. Run-time from the integral battery is the limiting factor. Roadhawk say 60-90 minutes; I often got less before the camera turned itself off without warning. An extra battery pack, with cable, is £40.

I didn't like the single button operation. There's no positive click, just a whirring noise, a blue/green light that's hard to see



in sunlight, and a brief laser flash so you know where it's pointing. I sometimes turned it on and off again by accident. I didn't like the stick-on helmet mounts either. Only one would fit my Bell Array helmet securely, and only on the side. That made the helmet feel unbalanced. Not having the optional strap-on helmet mount (£12.95), I used an Exposure Lights helmet mount – a vast improvement.

I had teething problems editing the footage on my i7 Macbook Air. The camera's H.264 MOV files didn't always play nicely with Photos, Quicktime, iMovie or VLC, flashing up error messages or failing to save. Windows PC users or those with more video experience may have an easier time. I did finally produce edited footage, adding a soundtrack as the camera's audio isn't great. In summary: an excellent little video camera that's only limited by its battery life, audio quality, and learning curve.

Dan Joyce

SUBMIT A REVIEW

To submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 3 – for advice. Each one printed wins a personalised SplashMaps map worth £28.99. For more about SplashMaps' weatherproof, washable, wearable maps, visit splash-maps.com



IRD XC Pro Thumbshifters

\$159.99
interlocracing.com

OLD-SCHOOL THUMBShiftERS still exist. It's straightforward to engineer a bar-end lever to fit a bar-top mount, and several manufacturers have. IRD's aluminium XC Pro Thumbshifters are for Shimano 9-speed. The front is friction only, so front derailleur and chainset choice is wide open. The rear is indexed only. Since Shimano's 9-speed road and MTB mechs use the same cable pull, that's fine. The shifters are light (150g/pair) and durable. A hinged clamp with suitable spacers makes fitting easy, to flats or drops from 22.2-26mm diameter. Shifting is slick. I used them on a Genesis Longitude, the kind of bike they suit. UK distributor is fine-adc.com. Mine were from hubjup.co.uk, who are awaiting stock.

Dan Joyce

- PROS**
- + Simple & reliable
 - + Widens gearing choices
- CONS**
- Dearer than Rapidfire pods





- PROS**
- + Chainguard
- CONS**
- Heavy, draggy hub
 - No mudguards, rack, or lights

Raleigh STRADA EIGHT

£850
raleigh.co.uk

THE EIGHT is the top bike in Raleigh's Strada range of 'street' hybrids. Its defining feature is its Sram G8 hub gear, which has ratios of 60.9, 71, 80.3, 90.3, 105.4, 120.4, 135.5 and 158.1%, a total range of 260%. That compares to a range of 307% for a Shimano Alfine 8. At 2088g, the hub is about half a kilo heavier than the Alfine. It's significantly draggier too. Apart from 1st and 2nd, all gears operate through two stages; the treacliness is tangible. Sram recently discontinued it, citing market conditions.

My dissatisfaction with the hub rather soured my attitude to the bike. That's a shame, as the Strada Eight has its good

points. The Avid DB1 hydraulic disc brakes are a sound choice for an urban bike, and the Schwalbe Spicer tyres roll well; I'd only want them wider than 700x30C for improved comfort. The butted aluminium frame and fork are nice enough, with a rock-solid set of adjustable rear dropouts, plus fittings for mudguards and racks. Guards and rack(s) aren't provided – annoying on a street bike, especially when Raleigh have treated us to a Hebie Chainglider. Genesis's Borough costs the same as this and includes mudguards, a rear rack, and an Alfine 8 hub, while Cube's Travel SL RF has all those things *and* dynohub lighting. Raleigh tell me that they will be revising the Strava range for 2016. I'll be interested to see what they come back with. Sizes: 16, 18, 21in. Weight (18in): 12.5kg inc pedals.

Dan Joyce

Cycling Guides NEW FOREST CYCLING GUIDE

£7.95
cyclingguides.com

THIS GREAT little map of The New Forest gives clear descriptions of each colour-coded route, including route distances and the distance between turnings. The map also give details of cafés and pubs, as well as landmarks where you can stop for a picnic. The map highlights difficult sections of the route – for example, if it is muddy, a busy road, a steep incline or descent, or if there's a gate or cattle grid. Each large village or town is represented with a zoomed-in inset to make navigating through it easy. This is useful if you need to make a detour to a nearby shop for supplies. The map itself is water- and tear-proof but it is not rigid. Matching GPS files are available via the website. This map is well worth investing in for a visit to the New Forest.

Mike Everitt, New Forest Cycling Week



Buff SS15 TOUR DE FRANCE COLLECTION

£14-£17
buffwear.co.uk

THE BUFF I tested is a simple stretchy tube of material with no hems or seams, made for summer. It's lightweight and promises to block 95% of UV radiation, thus making it perfect for cycling (or waiting for pelotons) in the sun. It comes in various designs, inspired by the Tour de France. For me, the best thing about Buffs is their versatility. I like the 'neckerchief' formation, but on chillier morning rides, convert them into masks. I also tested the headband, which I preferred as a wristband. But that's just me – the diagrams on the packaging are bound to have something for you. And, if you do get to France, how about whiling away the wait for the riders by working out how to twist your Buff into the 'pirate' configuration?

Cherry Allen



- PROS**
- + Comfortable & UV protective
 - + Versatile
- CONS**
- Expensive official memorabilia





- PROS**
- + Good value
 - + Peripheral vision
- CONS**
- No clear lens

» **Lvxing**
PRESCRIPTION RIDING GLASSES £89
 nowyousee.co.uk

THE LVXING range includes both non-prescription and prescription riding glasses. This pair came with a prescription insert held firmly in place by the nose pads. I used them for a mix of commuting, mountain biking and road riding. The glasses come nicely packaged, with a hard case, a cloth bag and five sets of interchangeable non-prescription outer lenses for a range of conditions.

The outer lenses are much wider than my existing pair and prevented my eyes from watering on cold

descents. This, along with the slightly bigger prescription insert, also offers a larger corrected field of vision, giving excellent peripheral vision. The outer lenses are easy to change. They clip in and out without feeling like you're going to snap the lens or stress the frame. My only gripe was the lack of a clear outer lens option, which I prefer for night riding. They're a relatively inexpensive solution for corrective glasses: the price includes the prescription insert.

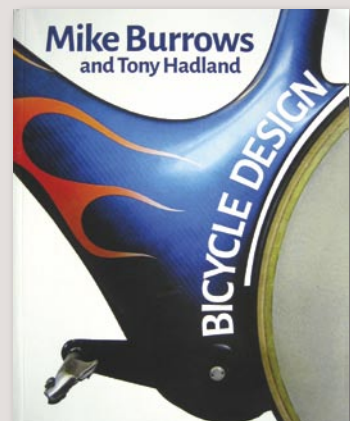
Gavin Wood



Mike Burrows
BICYCLE DESIGN
 £14.99
 snowbooks.com

UNLIKE BICYCLING Science, which has a lot of maths in it, Mike Burrows's analysis of bicycle technology is accessible, opinionated and often funny. He covers everything from frame materials to aerodynamics, gearing, suspension, and more. Myths are mercilessly exploded. This revised edition brings up to date a book first printed 15 years ago. Despite 'since I wrote this' addenda, some of the earlier copy now seems anachronistic. 'V-style brakes come into their own for serious off-road use.' Ahem! On the other hand, this does show how things have changed; modern developments such as tubeless tyres, off-road wheel sizes, and new gearing options are all covered. There's a lot of material on going faster in general and on recumbents in particular, but really this is a technical book for any cyclist. If you don't have an earlier copy, buy it.

Dan Joyce



Blackburn
OUTPOST HANDLEBAR ROLL £49.99
 zyro.co.uk

THE OUTPOST Handlebar Roll is a bikepacker's bar-bag, adding 10 litres of luggage space to a bike that won't take (or doesn't have) a front rack. It suits more malleable luggage, such as clothing or a sleeping bag, and includes an integrated stuff sac. Its quick release carrier is secured by straps and a bar-bag style bracket, which fits best to a flat bar. Attaching it to a riser bar meant bending the mounts, and I was concerned that the stress could cause a failure out on the trail. On a flat bar, it works well: the roll is held a couple of inches in front of the stem, with ample room for brake and gear cables.

It will obscure a front light, unless you use a Minoura Space Grip or similar. I tested the Outpost with a sleeping bag, jacket and bivvy bag. It was easy to attach and remove from the bike. Openings at each end make

access to kit simple, and the securing strap acts as a carrying handle off the bike. It's not waterproof so a dry bag would be required for wet conditions. Otherwise, it's a well thought out design that's good value.

Dave Barter



- PROS**
- + Easy access to contents
 - + Doesn't squash cables
- CONS**
- Not good on riser or carbon bars