

Reviews

Gear up

COMPONENTS, KIT, AND MEDIA SELECTED
AND REVIEWED BY BIKE JOURNALISTS AND CYCLING UK STAFF

Put to the test

Is there a product that you think needs reviewing?

Write to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

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Pros & cons

- + Handle & shoulder strap
- + 100% waterproof
- Doesn't fit Brompton Electric



Other options



BROMPTON BOROUGH WATERPROOF BAG LARGE £180

For a review of Brompton's own 25-litre waterproof bag, plus three other Brompton bags, visit:

cyclingsuk.org/article/group-test-brompton-bags-commuting



CARRADICE ORIGINALS CITY FOLDER £104+

25-litre waterproof cotton duck Brompton bag with leather straps and base. Made in the UK, various colours. Requires a Brompton carrier frame (£39). carradice.co.uk

Restrap

City Loader

Waterproof Brompton bag from the UK bikepacking specialists

£149.99 restrap.com

Restrap's City Loader is a 20-litre capacity waterproof bag that fits a Brompton front carrier block. It comes with a handle and shoulder strap for carriage off the bike. This is essential when you have the bike folded in one hand and need to get on and off a train. It's not the most comfortable strap but the bag is primarily designed to fit well on your bike and not get in the way of lights, levers, and front wheel.

The main compartment is one huge space with a roll-top closure secured by the easiest-to-use clasp I have tried on a

bike bag. The Fidlock buckle is magnetic so quickly and satisfyingly clicks into place. The buckle's strap is long enough that you can secure a folded jacket on top of the bag with it.

The two side pockets nicely fit a water bottle, a small lock, and a snack. They reminded me of Restrap's 'cockpit' bags for bikepacking, which give easy access on the go to food, drink, and tech. There's also a small front pocket, which is easy to open even in gloves. This has a reflective semi-circle on it.

One of the clever pieces of design is the bottom of the

bag. Its unique sturdy curve, combined with a solid back, enables the bag to stand up when placed on the ground. It also offers protection from dirt, water and grime that may miss the mudguard. This strong base helps if you are carrying a laptop. It gives the bag strength and shape, but doesn't prevent you squashing it down to a smaller size if you are carrying clothes or a small sleeping bag. You can compress the sides of the bag as well.

The metal fixing that attaches to the Brompton block is strong and will last. If that part snaps the bag is effectively useless, so it's reassuring that it comes with a lifetime guarantee.

For this test, I packed a medium-sized laptop, charger, packed lunch, water bottle, glasses, jumper, lock and wallet. I took it on roads and towpaths. ●

Victoria Hazael

Verdict

Ideal for commuting, rain or shine. There is no faffing around with a waterproof cover or fiddly buckles with the City Loader. Its features are easy to use and the cargo space is flexible. As a bonus, it is both made and designed in the UK.



Cycle's test promise

At Cycle, we are proudly independent. There's no pressure to please advertisers as we're funded by **your** membership. Our product reviews aren't press releases; they're written by experienced cyclists after thorough testing.

Adidas

Five Ten Trailcross GTX shoes

Flat pedal shoes that don't become soggy sponges in the wet

£160 [adidas.co.uk](https://www.adidas.co.uk)



Pros & cons
 + Waterproof
 + Wide size range
 + Can be personalised with your name



Putting these shoes on for the first time I felt like Cinderella: they fitted perfectly. They come in half sizes in a really wide range; I tried the 7.5. I have quite wide feet and the toes of my right foot are prone to swelling after a bout of 'Covid toe' in 2020. Having shoes that fit well helps prevent pain and numbness. These Five Ten Trailcross shoes were snug but not too tight even on a long day ride.

Five Ten's flat pedal shoes have a reputation for grippiness. These were no exception, whether I was riding my mountain or gravel bike. The Stealth® Phantom rubber on the soles works well with pedal pins.

Adidas claims the shoes were also developed with hiking in mind. I got to test this on an unscheduled four-mile 'hike-a-bike' through bogs, streams and even seaweed-strewn rocks in the Scottish Highlands (thanks to my cousin Al's 'short-cut'). They were great.

Best of all, I found them really waterproof when I was bikepacking in the rain in Scotland and fording streams on a Cumbrian fell. There's a layer of waterproof Gore-Tex, while a neoprene cuff stops water getting in at the ankle.

The only downside is they're not super warm; there's no added insulation for winter riding. (If

you suffer, like I do, from chilly tootsies you might want to go up a half or a full size for thick socks.) That does mean they are probably suitable for all but the hottest summer days in the UK. The fabric is breathable and my feet didn't ever feel too warm – albeit in spring conditions.

I also like the overall feel and appearance of these shoes. They're quite lightweight and not too chunky but also sturdy and durable. The laces stay tied up, unlike my other Five Tens, and the ankle cuff means they feel secure on the foot. Colour: black, white and grey. Sizes: UK 4 to 14.5 (unisex). ●

Julie Rand

Verdict

Comfortable, waterproof flat pedal shoes that perform well both on and off the bike. They grip pedals with pins really well and are breathable, although they're not as warm as I hoped they would be.

Other options

VAUDE MOAB AM MID STX £180

Breathable, waterproof flat pedal shoes with a leather upper. Designed for 'hike-a-bike' trips as well as cycling. Sizes: EU 36-48. [vaude.com/en-GB](https://www.vaude.com/en-GB)



DEXSHELL ULTRA DRI SPORTS SOCKS £34

Waterproof socks don't solve the soggy shoe problem but can at least keep your feet dry within. We reviewed these in the Dec 21/Jan 22 issue. [dexshell.com](https://www.dexshell.com)



Pros & cons

- + Excellent shifting
- + Covers SRAM road, XPLR and Eagle
- + DIY-friendly installation

Ratio Technology

Ratio 1x12 Wide Upgrade kit £74.50

Ratio 1x12 Road kit £99.50

Use SRAM 12-speed derailleurs and cassettes with 10- or 11-speed shifters

ratiotechnology.com



SRAM's commitment to wireless shifting for their 12-speed 'ecosystem' has left their cable transmissions a gear short. These clever retrofit kits from UK innovators Ratio Technology let you cost-effectively sync 10- or 11-speed SRAM shifters to 12-speed road, gravel or MTB derailleurs and cassettes.

The first plus is that the Ratio website has a very clear, simple guide to what matches, will/won't work, and what other kit (cassette, chain, chainring or rear mech) you might need.



Having recently introduced a 2x12 kit for double chainring bikes, and added retrofit long-cage options from Garbaruk, there aren't many combinations Ratio's kits can't cover. I've been testing the 1x12 Road Upgrade kit with a modified Force rear mech and 10-36t cassette as well as the 1x12 Wide Upgrade kit with a modified GX MTB mech and 10-50t Eagle cassette.

The kits themselves include the alloy 12-tooth ratchet cam needed to add the extra click to the shifters, as well as a new mounting bolt. You also get new 12-speed jockey wheels on the road upgrade kit and a new cable fin for the rear mech on the Wide upgrade kit.

As long as you're patient, follow the instructional video on the Ratio website carefully, and completely remove the cover panel on the shifter, swapping the original 11-speed cam for the new 12 speed cam is simple, even with the shifters still on the bike. In fact, rethreading the cable into the awkwardly-angled internal channel was what took most time on both installs.

Definitely use a fresh cable with a sealed end.

The jockey wheel and cable fin swaps were equally easy too. I did have to fettle the cable tension slightly during the first rides to get a perfect sync. Fit a barrel adjuster to the outer if you don't already have one.

I've had zero problems since, with crisp and accurate shifting right across the tight road block with a flat-top chain and across the super wide-range Eagle cassette with an MTB chain. The Eagle set up is running on a tandem, but the extra torque and cable length hasn't phased the setup at all. In fact, the more I've used the shifters the more they've seemed to smooth out and get more accurate in their shift. They will invalidate any warranty on your SRAM shifters or rear mech, however.

Guy Kesteven

Verdict

Ratio's kits are a simple and extremely cost-effective way to get the benefits of any of SRAM's 12-speed cassette options from 10- or 11-speed shifters.

Other options



SRAM RIVAL ETAP AXS £659

The cheapest way to go SRAM 12-speed 'officially' is via the cable-free cleanliness of wireless Rival AXS eTAP shifters (£370), rear mech (£236) and battery (£53). sram.com



MICROSHIFT ADVENT X £208

Microshift's 1x10-speed Advent X (drop bar shifters £130, rear mech £78) offers 11-48t gearing that competes with SRAM Eagle and Shimano GRX at a great price. microshift.com