

Gear up!

A cross-section of cycling products selected and reviewed by CTC staff, specialist journalists and CTC members

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TAGA £1695

Reviewed by CTC Campaigns Officer Adam Coffman

The Taga is a cleverly engineered trike that converts into a stroller. In either format it can carry a child from six months old. It's built from oversized aluminium tubes and uses 16" wheels all round; the rear has a Shimano Nexus 3-speed hub. The front disk brakes and rear roller brake were very effective at stopping the trike even fully loaded. On the road the Taga turns heads, but inquirers were shocked by the price.

To convert the Taga from trike to stroller, you remove the child seat and then flip the back wheel over so that it becomes the front wheel (see www.taga.nl/taga-video.asp). It takes about 20 seconds. While it

does separate into two parts to fit into a car boot, the 20-29kg weight (depending on the configuration) means it's heavy to lift.

As I struggled to fit the 73cm wide Taga through my front door, I wondered what problem it solved. I seldom need a push-chair at the end of a cycle journey. And when I did convert it to a stroller – which I took on the London underground – the sheer size made it awkward. Also, child trailers from Burley (from £500) and Chariot (from £600) convert to strollers and attach to any bike.

Details: Available direct from Mothercare (www.mothercare.co.uk) and from bike shops and pram shops. See www.taga.nl

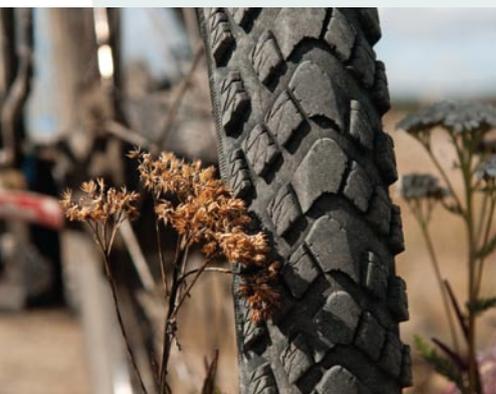
SCHWALBE MARATHON EXTREME £38.99 EACH

Reviewed by expedition cyclist Cass Gilbert

Schwalbe's Marathon XR tyres have long been an expeditionist's favourite for mixed surface tours, thanks to their rugged build and almost wear-free tread. From the same family, the Extremes are effectively a lighter version (650g for the 2.25in) with wider, deeper lugs better suited to loose gravel and dirt roads. Saving a couple of hundred grams apiece, they're noticeably livelier when riding unladen, making them ideal for tours where you're stopping to mountain bike along the way. This does come at the cost of longevity. My set has had around 4,500km of hard use – much of which has been fully laden and off-road – and the tread is

showing significant signs of wear at the rear, with a cut in one of the lugs. Still, they should be good for a few thousand kilometres more yet, and the sidewalls are holding out well despite riding with heavy loads. Grip is noticeably better than the XRs though they roll a little slower on road. Running an XR at the back and an Extreme at the front could be the ideal compromise for long distance tours along loose, gravel highways, as you'd find in South America and Asia.

Details: available 26 x 2.0 and 2.25, and 700C x 1.4 and 1.6. See www.schwalbe.com



TIDYTENT £50

Reviewed by journalist Michael Stenning

It's a tent for bikes that live outdoors. There's no security, of course, so when you fix it to a wall (required for support) add a wall anchor too. It measures 200 x 167 x 80cm and will shelter two or three bikes. While they will be protected from rain, they might not be covered by your insurance policy, so do check. But the fabric seems hardy and it's much better than leaving bikes to get wet.

Details: www.tidytent.com, 01525 382938



SCHMIDT EDELUX LED HEADLAMP

£124.99

Reviewed by CTC member Gordon Brown

I use this high-power lamp with a Schmidt 20R dynohub, which I bought ready-built into wheel from St John Street Cycles. The light output is far superior to my previous Schmidt BiSy(E6) lamp. I can now confidently exceed 30mph on unlit roads. On my daily commute cars at junctions will wait rather than pulling out when they see this bright lamp coming towards them.

I use the lamp 'senso' mode so it is always on except in bright sunshine, giving rise to shouts of 'You've left your light on, mate!' It comes with a standlight, which charges up with the first spin of the wheel and gives good light when stationary. It has a recessed spade connector for a rear lamp; I use it with a rear mudguard-mounted B&M Senso Plus light, which also comes on automatically. The complete package is so unobtrusive that it lives permanently on my winter bike. Incidentally, the lamp bracket is a home-made one.

Details: www.sjscycles.co.uk, 01278 441500



NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK MEMORY MAP

£20 + £1.50 P&P

Reviewed by audax and touring cyclist Sheila Simpson

The package is a Memory Map overlay comprising the hundreds of track fragments that make up the 12,000 miles of Sustrans' National Cycle Network, along with the digital OS 1:250,000 Road Map of Great Britain. The NCN tracks are shown in green (traffic-free) and red (on road). Hovering over a track with your mouse gives more information, such as distance and an elevation profile. As the tracks are more detailed than the 1:250,000 map supplied, they are best used with more detailed GPS software, or within Memory Map with the OS 1:50,000 Landranger series. For cyclists interested in riding the NCN, who already have detailed maps (ideally digital – but you could copy routes onto paper maps), this is a very useful package.

Details and ordering: www.sustransshop.co.uk

Cycle shorts

QUECHUA T2 ULTRALIGHT PRO TENT

£79.95

I needed a lightweight 2-person tent that packed small for a sponsored tandem ride with my nine-year-old stepdaughter. I found this 2kg tent at Decathlon. It's easy to pitch, the porch is big enough for a couple of panniers and ventilation is good. Space is conservative but quality seems fine. I am very impressed. See www.decathlon.co.uk or Decathlon stores. CTC member Steve Rowley



WHITE BOX STOVE

£18

So called because of the box it comes in, this meths stove weighs just 29g. Sit the stove on the foil heat reflector, wrap round the wind shield and after about a minute of priming the stove boils 500ml of water in around 7 minutes. One fill of meths (75ml) will burn for about 20 minutes – enough to cook a simple meal for three and make cups of tea. The stove is made in the US from a recycled aluminium beer bottle. It has no moving parts so is tough as well as light. See www.backpackinglight.co.uk/product230.asp. CTC member Steve Rowley



A JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD: A CYCLING MEMOIR

Author David Sore cycled around the world in the 1960s, so this book has been a long time coming. But his circumnavigation (3 years, 8 months) is covered clearly and in great detail, with plenty of research about the places visited. Despite taking place over 40 years ago, it's a tale of an epic trip that's still worth reading. ISBN 978-1848760-541, 344 pages, published by Matador: www.troubador.co.uk/matador. Mark Waters

