

## GEAR UP

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REVIEW

If you want to submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 78 – for advice. Each one printed wins a ready-for-anything Lezyne CRV19 multitool, worth £29.99. For more about Lezyne tools, pumps, lights, and more, visit [upgradebikes.co.uk](http://upgradebikes.co.uk)



## LOWEPRO PHOTO SPORT 200 AW

£159.95

*Reviewed by outdoor writer & photographer Jon Sparks*

Anyone who takes a 'proper' camera mountain biking faces a dilemma: how to carry it safely and comfortably yet retain speedy access for shooting. LowePro's new Photo Sport AW series offers a solution. I gave the Photo Sport 200 AW backpack a thorough workout in New Zealand, with nine days' riding ranging from groomed bike parks to serious hike-a-bike 'off-piste' in Pureora Forest.

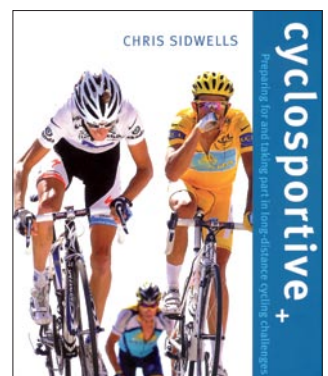
First impressions: the pack looks and feels like a good all-round outdoor pack. Though not bike-specific, it carried well, remaining stable even on Queenstown's gondola-access downhills. It's strikingly light, but LowePro promise its high-tech fabric has great resilience. It certainly shrugged off Pureora's dense bush – unlike my skin! There's an all-weather cover for extra protection. The 200 AW also accepts a hydration reservoir. This is not included (a shame at this price); shop around for best compatibility.

For camera-stowage, there's a well-padded compartment in the base, accessed by a flap on the left side. An ingenious cinch-cord system keeps things secure on the move. Most DSLRs will fit, but not bulky pro models. A secondary compartment takes a spare (slimline) lens or flashgun.

With nothing else in the pack, it's just possible to remove and replace the camera while wearing it. However, I found it easier to unhitch one strap and swing the pack around. From stopping to shooting takes 3–4 seconds, which is pretty handy.

With a typical street/web price of around £130, the Photo Sport 200 AW is definitely for the dedicated photographer. But if you need that balance of security, comfort and convenience, it's the best solution I've yet seen.

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

CYCLOSPORTIVE  
by Chris Sidwells

£19.99

*Reviewed by Challenge for Change's Sophie Edmondson*

**Sidwells tackles all the key points around building up to your first long-distance cycling challenge – equipment, bike set-up, training, and nutrition. The format is easy on the eye, being broken down into easily digestible chunks of technical info. It mixes sound advice with tips from pros, case studies, and recent cycling photos. The most interesting section was on training. If you already have an interest in sports science, then the details covered will seem thorough but fairly basic. This book is a comprehensive guide for the complete beginner.**

ISBN 9781408140222.



### ABUS URBAN I REFLECTIVE HELMET

**£59.99**

*Reviewed by CTC Cycle Champion Seamus Kelly*

If you wear a helmet, fit is vital – and if you need a size bigger than 60cm, your choices are limited. The Abus Urban I comes in two sizes: small/medium (52-57cm) and medium/large (56-62cm), which I had. It is adjustable for a secure fit, and it will fit over a cap on cold days. The soft, pliable straps have a pad under the buckle, but can move and need frequent adjustment.

Being bright yellow with reflective stickers, it is highly visible both day and night. The 4-LED light in the adjustment dial is clever but quite bulky; it catches on some collars. Despite this and the niggle with the straps, it's a comfortable and solid-feeling helmet with good sizing options. For winter commuting, I chose it over my other helmets every time. It's also available in red with the reflectives and for £5 less without the reflectives (in blue, 'tweed', silver, black, and 'Berlin'). [zyro.co.uk](http://zyro.co.uk)



### BROOKS COLT SADDLE

**£116.91**

*Tested by CTC member Ted Seaman*

This is a substantial Brooks saddle: the thick hide, deep sides, large rivets and the absence of vent holes mean it's designed to hold its shape. At 156mm wide, it seems ideal for the larger road bike rider or the averagely built touring or hybrid cyclist. No saddlebag loops means you'll need a rear rack for luggage, or some other form of saddlebag support.

I had always chosen gel saddles over leather ones, having experienced saddle discomfort, but after a few months on the Colt I'm converted. Prior to proofide treatment, it was firm with a relatively slippery surface but not uncomfortable. After a couple of treatments and 50 miles, I was not really conscious of using a different saddle. The Brooks had been in the sun by the 70th mile and I could appreciate further improvement. A few days later, with more proofide to the underside, the saddle felt even better. After another 30 miler, I had decided not to go back to gel saddles.

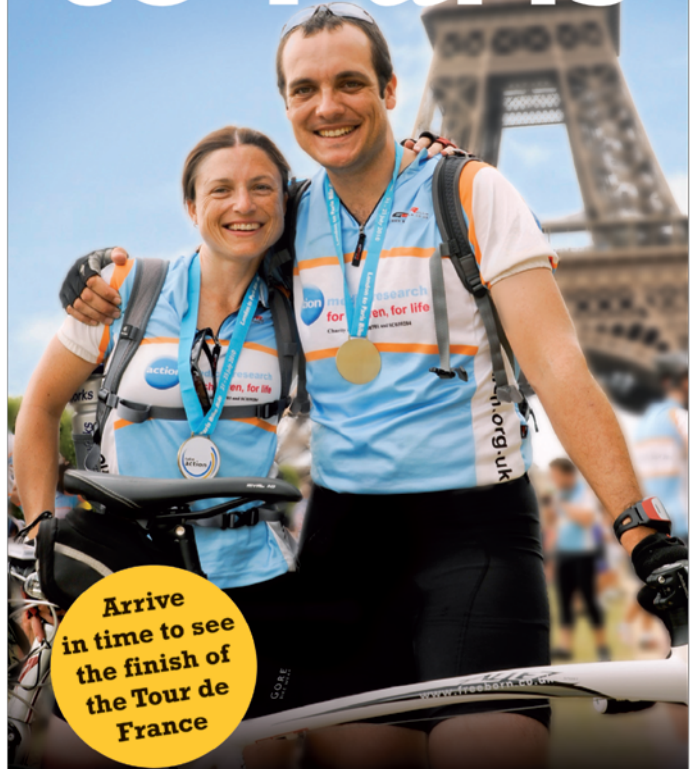
On a summer cycling holiday, the saddle came into its own. After 450 miles I considered it fully broken in, and by 600 the Colt felt like part of me: I could ride it all day.

It weighs about 530g and is available in turquoise, pink, violet, and mustard, as well as this utilitarian black.

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



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## LUMIE BODYCLOCK ACTIVE 250

**£99.95**

*Reviewed by editor Dan Joyce*

This alarm clock simulates dawn with a 42W halogen bulb that gradually brightens over 30 minutes. Lumie say it wakes you up 'naturally'. It's certainly more pleasant than getting dragged awake for your morning ride by a blaring alarm, especially in winter and if you're not a morning person. You can set an audible alarm – or synthetic birdsong – as backup, though I've never needed it. This version also has a radio and a range of setting options. I'd recommend the basic Bodyclock Starter 30 instead as it's £40 cheaper. I bought one. [lumie.com](http://lumie.com)

## RIDO R-LT SADDLE

**£67.50**

*Reviewed by editor Dan Joyce*

The R-Lt is a narrower (138mm) and lighter (225g) version of the unusual but effective Rido saddle. Like the original, it has two convex bumps for your sit bones; Rido call this 'pressure shift geometry'. I've used a Rido for years for time trialling because I haven't found anything as good as it for eliminating perineal pressure when pedalling in an aero position. On more upright bikes, I've found Specialized Body Geometry saddles more comfortable.

All Rido saddles I've used push you forward a bit, meaning more weight on your hands unless you tip the nose up slightly. Backside comfort can come at the expense of numb hands unless you get the angle just right. There isn't the same scope to move around a Rido saddle

either, particularly if you like to ride at the back of the saddle. Nevertheless, I like the original Rido a lot – and this version is better yet. I tested it for months without backside discomfort on my fixed-wheel winter bike, on long rides as well as short ones, and at some very high cadences. I'd reserve it for shorter distance, high intensity cycling, but it might suit you for longer rides too. It's available in black, white or yellow. [rido-cyclesaddles.com](http://rido-cyclesaddles.com)



## SHIRT SHUTTLE

**£30**

*Reviewed by CTC Communications Officer Alex Bailey*

This pannier-stowable box aims to protect a shirt from splashes, dirt, crushing and creases, with the shirt being wrapped around a 12-inch board. Water-resistant zips guard against raindrops and drink spillage and a lip at the top of the board keeps the collar stiff. While the collar was well protected, the body of my shirt came out creased and rucked at the rounded corners of the folding board. It doesn't deliver on its promise of a crease-free garment. A soft-collared shirt can just as easily be rolled for transit. If you need only to protect the collar of a shirt from being crushed and you'll wear a jacket at your destination, the ShirtShuttle could work for you. [shirtshuttle.com](http://shirtshuttle.com)

## EXPOSURE STRADA

**£245 (Mk3)**

*Reviewed by CTC member Aileen Brown*

The Exposure Strada has transformed me from a reluctant, hesitant night rider, crawling along dark roads, into a confident cyclist grinning on my daily commute along an unlit cycle path. I own the Mk2, though there's now a Mk3; that's much the same except a little more powerful.

The Strada is a rechargeable front light that floods the road ahead with white light from two 325-lumen LEDs. The light can easily be dipped using a switch on the light or a remote button. Both work well when wearing gloves. The lithium battery lasts 3 hours on full beam, 8 hours dipped. The attention-grabbing flashing mode works well in built up areas and lasts days. The robust handlebar bracket fits both standard and oversize bars and guarantees that each time the light is removed, the position of the light beam

remains the same. It's obviously not cheap but is worth the investment for regular riders on unlit roads. [exposurelights.com](http://exposurelights.com)



CRUD ROAD RACER



SKS RACEBLADE LONG

# Mudguards for road bikes

No room for conventional guards on your road bike? **Chris Juden** tries two alternatives

► **THIS ISSUE'S** road bike review provided me with test mules for the Crud Roadracers I've had for ages, just as SKS launched new Raceblades.

## Crud Roadracer

To someone used to proper guards, Crud Roadracers appear a poor alternative. At 152g, secured by rubber O-rings and zip-ties, I expected them to be floppy and rub the tyres. My low expectations were greatly exceeded.

The guards are easy to assemble, requiring neither tools nor tinkering. Something this light can't be made stiff enough to stand up by itself, so Mr Crud doesn't try. He equips each side of the guard with little nylon brushes that bear lightly against the rim. There's no discernible drag and the quiet brushing cannot be heard when riding. A (releasable) zip-tie over the brake-bolt may seem crude, but it's most effective in snugging up the guard to make as much as possible of the limited clearance in a racing frame.

Crud Roadracers look neat and they do keep down the spray. The front is low enough to shield feet and chainset from the worst, and whilst the rear does little for anyone behind, the bike's own rider is well enough protected.

## SKS Raceblade Long

The original Raceblades work okay for some people but seem to need a lot of attention to avoid rubbing. Plus they're too short to keep muck off the chain.

SKS answer those criticisms with the Raceblade Long. They are full-length and equipped with mudflaps. As they weigh as much as proper mudguards (466g) they're bolted onto the bike. Lack of frame eyes is solved by attachment to the quick-release – via slotted brackets, so wheel removal is only slightly impeded.

Lack of clearance is avoided by stopping short of frame/fork and brake, so all you have to fit under those are thin metal brackets. The stays and guards can be released, leaving just the (not very pretty) fittings in-situ.

There's scant margin for error between the narrow curved guard and a 23mm tyre, which is the most these guards are designed for. Adjusting the stays is also critical, or the guard rubs.

In use, if well aligned, these guards are no trouble and stop a lot of spray.

## CRUD ROADRACER

**£20** [crudproducts.com](http://crudproducts.com)

Neat, light, easy to fit, and surprisingly effective. Mk2 version increases coverage



The Crud Roadracer is thin and light, snugging tight under the fork crown, while the Raceblade Long interrupts the guard at this point with a thin metal bracket

The rear guard is really long and much appreciated by those riding behind. But collected water discharges over the unguarded brake, which gets quite dirty, and leaves little for the short frontal sections of guard to do. A decorative peak on the front one makes it heavy enough to knock on the tyre.

## Verdict

The Crud Roadracer is clearly best suited to the job, being much lighter, neater and also cheaper than the Raceblade Long. And despite being narrower and shorter, it also seems slightly more effective – except with regard to following riders. However, Mr Crud is already onto Roadracer Mk2, which adds 20 or 30cm to both ends of the rear guard – and so should keep wheelsuckers' teeth less gritted.



## SKS RACEBLADE LONG

**£45** [sks-germany.com](http://sks-germany.com)

They stop a lot of spray if well aligned, though the front guard sections do little