



Welcome

If rough-stuff cycling pioneer Walter MacGregor Robinson – Wayfarer, to give him his pen name – were alive today, he'd probably ride a lightweight gravel bike. He famously made an off-road crossing of the Berwyn Mountains in the spring snow of 1919 on a fixed-wheel road bike. That was the technology available to him, and he believed [the Cycling North Wales website tells us] in having "as little bicycle as possible".

You could repeat his journey on a fixed-wheel bike today but it would be 'type two' fun. I've ridden rocky singletrack mountain bike trails on a fixie, solely because it was the only option at the time. If a more suitable bike had been available, I'd have used it. Likewise, I think, Wayfarer.

The fact that there are countless types and sub-types of bike available now isn't a bad thing: you can more easily choose one that's better suited to your preferred brand of fun. There will always be fads and trends. Ten-speed racers. Then mountain bikes. Then fixies. Then fat bikes. And now gravel bikes, of which there were plenty of shiny ones on display at the Cycle Show back in April.

It's easy to roll one's eyes. Gravel bikes are "just tweaked, rebranded cyclocross bikes". Bikepacking is "just rough-stuff touring". But it doesn't matter. It's not about the marketing. A bike that takes you where you want to go and puts a smile on your face is a good bike, whether it's a cheap steel fixie or a five-grand gravel bike.

DAN JOYCE
Cycle Editor

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On the cover
Boardwalk on the Vélodyssée near Talmont-Saint-Hilaire, France, by Andrew Sykes

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Founded in 1878

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