

## Gear up!

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

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### SHIMANO ULTEGRA 2010 SHIFTERS ONLY £270-300 PER PAIR

Reviewed by Chris & Amy Juden

'Washing lines' is how some folks describe the gear cables festooning the front of any Shimano-equipped road bike. Not any more, not if you step up to new Ultegra, which channels everything neatly under the handlebar tape (just like Campag).

So we could check out how smoothly it all works in spite of the extra cable curves, Madison sent me the full 2010 groupset. But I was feeling indulgent so I upgraded my daughter's bike instead. She's faster than me nowadays and has been testing new Ultegra with her university cycling club. She reports it does indeed work very smoothly – and looks slick.

Ultegra is 10-speed of course and another improvement is a slight

increase in rear mech capacity, as Shimano now offer an 11-28x10 cassette. It's total overkill for the flat countryside of Cambridgeshire, but mindful of other rider's needs we tested the system to full capacity with a triple chainset too.

To suit the mudguard-friendly clearances of Amy's fast bike we fitted Shimano BR-R650 callipers. They have all the same features, quality and look of Ultegra – just a bit more reach – and worked perfectly with those levers even though their reach had been reduced by the maximum (they come with optional thick and thin reach-reducing inserts) to suit Amy's small hands.

A few grams have been shaved from mechs and outer chainring, which



is a composite of alloy and carbon-fibre-polymer with a hollow core and concealed nuts that gives an even more streamlined appearance to the chainset now.

The STI (combined brake and gear) levers are nevertheless the most significant change. We think they're a better shape to hold and operate; and whilst tourists will have to dry their socks somewhere else, a handlebar bag fits easily now.

Details: distributed in the UK by Madison, [www.madison.co.uk](http://www.madison.co.uk)

## SCHWALBE DURANO PLUS TYRES

£35.99 EACH

Reviewed by CTC Member Groups  
Officer Adrian Lawson

These road bike tyres have the same springy rubber 'SmartGuard' belt to protect against punctures that you find on Schwalbe's Marathon Plus tyres – albeit a thinner layer. I fitted a pair of 700x25C Durano Plus tyres to my light tourer, replacing the old Marathon Pluses that were on there.

They're easier to fit than the Marathon Pluses and are much faster on the road. I can easily keep up with my mates and I can ride all day on them quite comfortably. They feel more supple too,



which makes my aluminium frame more comfortable than it felt with the Marathons. Grip even on wet roads is good.

While lighter (380g) and less sturdy than the Marathons, I haven't punctured the Durano Pluses in over 1,000km – including rocky bridleways – and they're wearing very well. So while quite expensive, they'll be cheap in the long run. Recommended.

Details: available in 700x23C and 700x25C (tested). Usually available at [www.ctcshop.com](http://www.ctcshop.com). Details at [www.schwalbe.co.uk](http://www.schwalbe.co.uk)

## Tortec Velocity rear rack £29.99

Reviewed by Dan Joyce

This 10mm alloy-tubed rear carrier is specifically designed for light tourers, audax bikes and those (few?) road bikes with the required eyelets. It's narrow – 4.5cm across the top – which rules out a rack-top bag but puts the panniers a bit closer to the centre of the bike 'for improved performance'. Perhaps; I didn't notice. But for a bike with narrower tyres that will only carry small, heel-clearing panniers, it's as good a rack as any and it looks a lot neater than most. There's a even a bracket for a rear light. Details: weighs 400g, rated to 25kg. From [www.zyro.co.uk](http://www.zyro.co.uk). 01845 521700



## Abus Bordo Granit X Plus £99.99

Reviewed by lock expert Gary Zanco

The Abus Bordo Granit X Plus is an 85cm long lock when it's unfolded. It's no featherweight, just 100g lighter than the 1.7kg 16mm-diameter Kryptonite New York LS D-lock. The Bordo is well made. The Abloy style lock mechanism has a good track record and its sheer heft suggests this is a serious bit of kit.

Attack 1 consisted of drilling the lock mechanism; as expected, this had little effect due to the design of the barrel. Attack 2 involved plumbing tools and a measure of determination. It was at this point that the Bordo failed, breaking into three parts. Attack 3 was with the thieves favourites, bolt croppers, the Bordo put up little resistance to medium sized croppers, suggesting that even smaller croppers would have done the job.

In summary, while better than an armoured cable, the £100 price of the Bordo suggests that it could have done better, especially considering that the 16-18mm Kryptonite D-locks are un-croppable and, when used correctly, much harder to break. Details: [www.zyro.co.uk](http://www.zyro.co.uk), 01845 521700



Experience the ultimate in convenience, power and reliability with the Solidlights XB2. Designed to get the most from modern hub dynamos using power LED technology, it's perfect for commuting, touring or Audax riding.

Weighing just 158g and housed in compact, super-tough aluminium alloy casing, it's seriously versatile. There's a choice of fork-crown mounting or a convenient quick-release handlebar mount. Professionally-made cables are included for easy installation and a neat, robust finish. It will run from hub dynamos or batteries (not included). It has a flashing mode for maximum visibility in town and includes a standlight to give you a few minutes of light even after the bike has stopped.

The XB2 is purpose-designed to light your way on unlit country roads so there's no need to compromise your riding after dark this winter.

For more information see our website at [www.solidlights.co.uk](http://www.solidlights.co.uk)

email [info@solidlights.co.uk](mailto:info@solidlights.co.uk)  
phone 01223 655611  
international +44 1223 655611

## RRP Neoguard £13.49

Reviewed by Ian Warby

The NeoGuard™ is a neoprene mudguard for mountain bike suspension forks that is designed to prevent mud getting thrown up off the front wheel and into your face. Whereas frame-fit mudguards stop spray best at low speeds, the NeoGuard comes into its own the faster you go. After a few rides, I wondered how I'd ridden in the winter months without one. It's great. [www.rapidracerproducts.com](http://www.rapidracerproducts.com)

**CTC SHOP  
IN STOCK**



## Ortlieb Bike Shopper pannier £66

Reviewed by Julie Rand

Commuting means transferring stuff from home to bike to office and back. The waterproof Ortlieb Bike Shopper Pannier is ideal for this: it clips on and off a rack in seconds, holds all you need and has an adjustable shoulder strap. Like any pannier the bike facing side can get grimy, requiring care when used as a shoulder bag. But overall, excellent. [www.ortlieb.de](http://www.ortlieb.de)



## Rapha Stowaway jacket £165

Reviewed by Dan Joyce

I've used this wind- and showerproof nylon jacket for 18 months. It's been a just-in-case summer windproof and a winter top layer. It's well stitched and there are nice details, like the reflective piping up the arms and a zip that doesn't rub your throat. Yet it's more than three times the price of the Endura Jura it replaced. I like it but couldn't justify its cost; others will. Sizes XS-XXL, in grey, black or pink (no green now). [www.rapha.cc](http://www.rapha.cc)



## Garmin Dakota 20 GPS

£305 (INC BAR MOUNT)

Reviewed Sheila Simpson, editor of Arrivee magazine

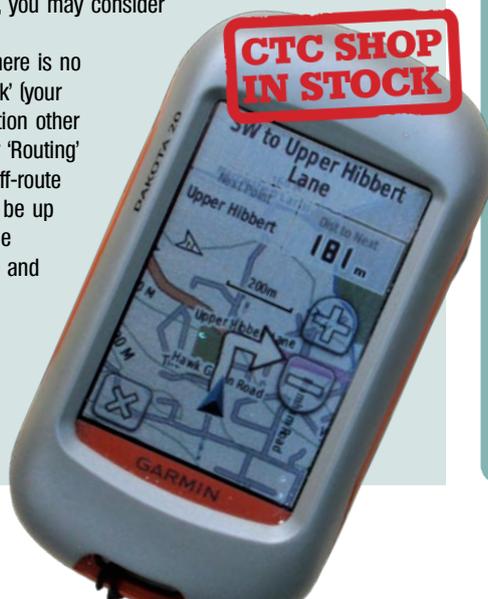
Last summer Garmin announced a new, sleek GPS device, the Dakota. This has a bigger screen than their Etrex range but is nevertheless smaller and lighter. It has a touch-screen interface, which I found as clear as my accustomed Etrex, providing it was angled correctly on the handlebars – the map has a default white background, rather than the pale khaki of the Etrex, which helps. The older models were complicated devices, with a maze of menus, sub-menus and options, so, if you already know and love the Etrex, you may consider the Dakota to be over-simplified.

Many previous set-up options no longer exist: there is no 'Tones' menu, just an on/off switch; the 'Active Track' (your breadcrumb trail) is a heavy black line with no option other than to turn it off; many of the vehicle types under 'Routing' are missing, and so are routing options such as 'off-route recalculation'. If you are a new GPS user, you will be up and running much more quickly and easily with the Dakota, which has additional options for heart rate and cadence monitoring.

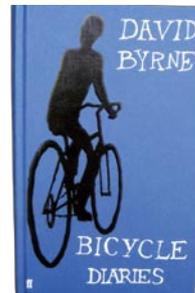
**Details:** Discoverer mapping on preprogrammed microSD™/SD™ card, USB cable, lanyard, quick start manual and owner's manual on disk.

**Details at [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com). Available from [www.ctcshop.org.uk](http://www.ctcshop.org.uk)**

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## Cycle shorts



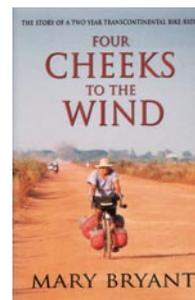
### Bicycle Diaries by David Byrne

£14.99

Reviewed by Debra Rolfe

Talking Heads frontman David Byrne reflects

on his favourite cities, urban planning, art, music, politics and ultimately cycle campaigning. I'd like more on cycling but found fascinating his suggestion that we need artists and the arbiters of culture as well as planners to re-embed bicycles in our cities. ISBN:9780571241026, Faber



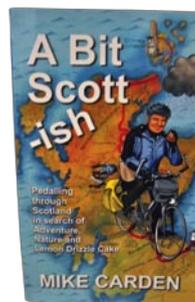
### Four Cheeks to the Wind by Mary Bryant

£17.95

Reviewed by Julie Rand

Not sure about the title, but

Mary's account of her and husband Warren's transcontinental bike ride is packed with fascinating facts, anecdotes and photographs of the exotic places and people encountered en route. Worth its place on the armchair traveller's bookshelf. ISBN: 9781848761292, Troubador



### A Bit Scott-ish by Mike Garden

£8.99

Reviewed by Elizabeth Barner

Garden rode his bike Scott from Orkney to the

English border. He has as a light touch - witty but not cloying, interesting historical tidbits, minimal mechanics. That last makes the author's approach to touring equally light: throw some stuff in a bag and go. Use it to entice a friend to join you touring. ISBN 9780955660214, Bike Ride Books

## BRESSNER PHOTON TORPEDO 1 £130 APPROX

Reviewed by Dan Joyce

High-power LEDs and Li-Ion batteries have made today's bike lights *brilliant*. You can have the 500-plus lumens you want for riding off-road at night without a brick-like battery.

But while performance has improved, it feels like a 'proper off-road light' has always cost £200-£300. A benchmark one like Lupine's Tesla, which produces 700 lumens for three hours, costs from about £275.

So it's eye-opening to find the same technology as the Tesla for just £130 in the shape of this Photon Torpedo torch: same high-power LED, same light output. Its 2500mAh 3.7V battery has half the capacity so burns half as long, but Bressner supply four of them, along with a smart charger, handlebar mount and helmet mount. As each battery is half the size of a packet of Polos, it's no hardship to carry more than one.

On high power the torch is car-headlight bright, lighting

up singletrack sufficiently on its own with a wide tunnel of cold light. On road you'll need to dip your head (if helmet mounted) or click to low power to avoid dazzling drivers. Low power lasts for about 10 hours and is okay for lit-road commuting, but you'll want high-power – and the torch on your bars not your head – to ride at pace on unlit lanes. Both mounts look *ad hoc* but work okay.

For the price, this is an outstanding light. But then: why pay even this much? Go to [www.dealextreme.com](http://www.dealextreme.com) and search for 'p7', 'TR 18650' and 'TR-001' and you'll find you can order a comparable torch, batteries and charger for less than half as much. A Lockblock (Google it) is all you need to fit the torch to handlebar or (with a bit of work) helmet.

*Details: approx 200g inc. one battery and mount, 14.3cm long. For a list of retailers, visit [www.bressner.co.uk](http://www.bressner.co.uk) > Bike Light.*

## Bicycle Dreams

\$19.99 PLUS \$5.99 P&P

Reviewed by Dan Joyce



At 3,000 miles long, with the clock always ticking, the Race Across America is like four Paris-Brest-Parises, back to back. What kind of person takes on a challenge like that? That, and not so much the race itself (here won by Jure Robic in nine days) is the focus of this absorbing documentary. We go beyond the sleep-deprived 1,000-yard stares to find out who these riders are, why they're here, what it's doing to them, and also what it says of them and of the human spirit. [www.bicycledreamsmovie.com](http://www.bicycledreamsmovie.com)



## PedalPower+ Universal Cable

AUD \$89.00 & AUD \$25 P&P (ABOUT £70 TOTAL)

Reviewed by CTC member Chris Wilby

GPS devices with sealed rechargeable batteries demand that you take a charger if you want to use them on tour. Unless you have a dynamo – and this simple device. The cable connects to the dynamo (hub or sidewall) and can be used to power or charge all your portable devices. Multiple types of adaptor can be used so as to attach most phones, GPSes and MP3 players.

I tested the PedalPower+ with satnav running on my mobile phone (pictured). This worked faultlessly because the phone uses its own battery, which is being continuously charged from the PedalPower+. The latest GPS units also work like this, so that they never need to be recharged as the dynamo is doing that whilst you ride. Older ones like my Garmin eTrex Hcx that get directly powered by the cable can switch off when you stop moving. (I added a PowerMonkey emergency charger between the PedalPower+ and eTrex to fix this.)

**Details:** [www.pedalpower.com.au](http://www.pedalpower.com.au)

