

Kit reviews

GEAR

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

Review requests

Is there a product that you would like us to review?

WRITE TO: Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ **EMAIL:** cycle@jamespembroke.media.co.uk

Terra Nova JUPITER LITE

£210 terra-nova.co.uk

IF YOU THOUGHT bivying is not for you, a night in the Jupiter Lite could change your mind. It combines the benefits of a bivi – lightweight, small, easy to set up, discreet – with some of the benefits of a small tent, such as headroom and space to breathe. Packed, it’s about length of a loaf of bread but with half the girth. It takes seconds to set up with six pegs and a hoop pole, and the version I tested weighed 650g (100g more than listed).

Compared to the Alpkit and British Army bivis I’ve used in the past, the Jupiter Lite was luxury. The hooped entrance meant I could read under cover, as well as store some clothing, phone, camera, etc. More importantly, it meant that the claustrophobic feeling you can get with some bivis when you cinch them up against elements will never be a concern. I’m just under 5’8”, but even Cycling UK’s 6’6” Director of Development was able to fit with room to spare.



- PROS & CONS**
- + Lightweight & packs small
 - + Spacious and breathable
 - Expensive for a bivi

I’ve been using it in the hot summer months, and have found a sleeping bag liner sufficient for a comfortable night’s sleep down south, though there’s ample space for a three-season sack. There’s an outer mesh door and an inner waterproof door. With the inner unzipped, I had fresh air, no condensation, and also no bugs. It’s been so dry these past months, I’ve had no chance to test it in the wet, but seeing as it’s popular among walkers in Scotland, I’ve every confidence in its ability to see off a wet and windy evening.

On its first outing, I tore off one of the fittings where the pole attaches, but fixed it

for the night with a little work. The Jupiter Lite is guaranteed for the original owner against defects in materials and workmanship for the lifetime of the product. A week later a replacement was sent, with apologies, from the Derbyshire HQ.

For touring or bikepacking trips where I want to minimise weight but also be comfortable, I can see the Jupiter Lite being my go-to shelter. It is a pretty penny for a one-man bivi, but Terra Nova has a pedigree in building shelters for Everest expeditions, coupled with good customer service. And, ultimately, a good night’s sleep is priceless!

Sam Jones

OTHER OPTIONS



1 RAB RIDGE RAIDER
£300

A harder rival to the Jupiter Lite. Online reviews say it weighs over 1kg and is relatively bulky but that it makes up for it in terms of performance. rab.equipment/uk



2 ALPKIT HUNKA £47

At the other end of the spectrum is the no-frills Hunka (also in XL) from Alpkit. A waterproof jacket for your sleeping bag, it packs small and keeps you dry, but condensation is inevitable. alpkit.com

PROS & CONS

- + All-conditions grip
- + Tougher sidewalls
- Draggy on tarmac/hardpack

Maxxis

MINION DHF PLUS & MINION DHR II PLUS

£64.99 EACH maxxis.co.uk



PLUS TYRES HAVE a bigger footprint than normal off-road tyres due to the extra width (they're 2.8-3in) and lower pressure. In the dry, this provides better grip. In the wet, it's variable: they tend to sit on top of the trail surface, rather than cutting through it, so you can make progress over soft stuff more easily but risk sliding through corners when the mud shears away from hard ground below. The plus tyres initially available had low-profile tread lugs, which compounded the problem. Plus bikes, people said, were awful in the mud.

They're not: you just need the right tyres. For the last few years, from September to March, I've run a Surly Dirt Wizard on the front and sometimes the rear. The issue with Dirt Wizards is that the tough 60tpi version is heavy (1,390g in 29x3in) and hard to get hold of in the UK, while the lighter-casing 120tpi version (1,120g) seems vulnerable. I've torn big holes in two.

So I was interested when Maxxis ported their popular Minion DHF and DHR II tyres over to the two plus-tyre formats, 29x3in and 27.5x2.8in. These are nominally DownHill Front and DownHill Rear tyres. Most users, however, will run them as tough trail tyres. They have huge tread lugs, widely spaced so they don't easily clog with mud. The DHF and DHR II are similar apart from the centre lugs, those of the DHR II being oriented sideways to provide better traction for the drive wheel.

They're tubeless ready and come in 60 and 120tpi versions. The 60tpi ones are £5 cheaper; the 120tpi tyres are a little lighter and use tackier rubber. It's 3C MaxTerra, the middle choice – in terms of speed versus grip – in Maxxis's range of rubber compounds. Both the 60 and 120tpi tyres have folding beads and reinforced sidewalls. Plus tyres are vulnerable to damage here, as the sidewalls tend to be thin and supple to keep the weight down and improve the rolling performance. The DHF and DHR II are robust.

Both the DHF and DHR II offer good grip in a wide range of conditions. I'm no downhill or enduro rider but I still want to stay upright on descents and retain traction on climbs. There is a penalty to pay with rolling performance, and you can feel it on tarmac and hardpack. I'd run the DHF on the front for autumn, winter, and spring, then swap it out for summer. I'm not sure I need the DHR II on the rear of my geared bike; I got by fine with a faster-rolling Vittoria Bomboloni the last two winters. It would suit the rear wheel of my singlespeed, however, where climbing traction is at a premium. Since the singlespeed gets ridden through the worst of the winter gloop, I'd keep a Dirt Wizard on the front. Its shoulder lugs are more prominent than those of the DHF (or DHR II).

Both the 29x3 Maxxis Minions are fairly hefty, at 1,141g for the DHF and 1,154g for the DHR II. On 50mm rims (approx 45mm



internal), they measure 75mm wide across the casing and 76mm across the tread lugs.

As well as 29x3 and 27.5x2.8 plus sizes, the Minion DHF and DHR II come in narrower versions to fit standard 26in, 27.5in, and 29in wheels. If you've got a non-plus 27.5in or 29in bike with room in the fork, I'd recommend trying a 2.6in Minion DHF on the front wheel. It's a very capable tyre that can be ridden hard without worrying you'll tear it.

Dan Joyce

OTHER OPTIONS



1 **SURLY DIRT WIZARD 29+**
£84.99

At 69mm across the casing this is relatively narrow for a 3in tyre, but the tread lugs add 5mm width – and lots of grip. Also available in 27.5x3 and 26x2.75. ison-distribution.com



2 **BONTRAGER SE4 TEAM ISSUE TLR 29x3**
£79.99

Trek have long supported the 29+ format, so it makes sense that they now make an all-seasons tyre as well as the lighter-treaded XR2 (formerly the Chupacabra). trekbikes.com

TUBELESS REPAIR KITS

THE SEALANT IN tubeless tyres plugs most punctures automatically. When the hole is too big for the liquid to seal, you can either fit a spare innertube (check for thorns in the tyre first!) or use a tubeless repair kit. Most of these kits employ sticky strands, variously called ‘worms’, ‘anchovies’ or ‘strings’. You jam one into the hole with a forked tool, usually after cleaning and roughening the hole with a rasp.

1 Effetto Caffélatex ZOT! NANO £10

upgradebikes.co.uk

No worms here: ZOT! Nano is a ‘polymerisation calalyser’. You inject it into the hole and it makes the sealant coagulate better, so it’ll plug a bigger hole. I was sceptical this would work – especially when the outrushing air from the holed tyre sprayed ZOT! Nano into my face. Yet it sealed in moments, with minimal (5% or so) loss of air from a 29x3 tyre. The repair was neater, with no worm tufts, so I used it on a tubeless road tyre with equally successful results. Caveats? You’ll only get two or three applications per 10ml bottle, it’s messier to use, and it’s only designed to work with Caffélatex sealant – although it *may* work with others.

2 MaXalami MAXIPACK £15.95

thecycleclinic.co.uk

Like other tubeless kits, this one has a rasp, a forked applicator tool, and a number of worms. There are two sizes here, 1.5 and 3.5mm diameter, so you can pick whichever suits the hole. The worms are tenaciously sticky and some force is required to get them off the backing sheet, but at least you don’t need to apply glue. The repair process is quick and easy. After holing my 29x3 tyre with a Bradawl, rasping it, and jamming in the



3



worm, I’d lost only 5% of its pressure. Two long tufts are left sticking out of the tyre. These will eventually fall off, but I’d trim them to stop them catching on the frame until then. Packing a penknife means you can cut each worm in half lengthways before use, so you can make twice as many repairs.

3 Weldtite TUBELESS TYRE REPAIR KIT £7.49 weldtite.co.uk

This works like the MaXalami kit except there’s one size of worm and two extra repair steps. You’re meant to glue the (already sticky) worm before inserting it into the tyre, and you cut the tufts to within 3mm of the

tyre with the Stanley knife provided. I found the knife useful (see above). The glue should make the worm more secure but I couldn’t detect any practical difference, and the extra time taken by gluing and by forcing the one-size-only worm into a too-small hole meant that the tyre lost more air – around 50% by the time I’d finished.

The repairs from all three kits have held up well; I’m still using my test tyres. The Weldtite kit is the best value, the ZOT! Nano is better for road tubeless, and the MaXalami kit is the easiest to use and the least messy. I pack the MaXalami kit, plus the Weldtite knife.

Dan Joyce

PROS & CONS

- + Weldtite: value
- + MaXalami: ease of use
- + ZOT! Nano: good for road bikes



1

2



OTHER OPTIONS



1 GENUINE INNOVATIONS TUBELESS TYRE REPAIR KIT £5.99

Five tyre worms and an applicator tool. There’s no rasp, but it’s debatable whether you need one. genuineinnovations.com



2 SAHMURAI SWORD £24.99

The first tubeless kit available for bicycles. The applicator tool and rasp fit into your handlebar ends, which is neat, but you’ll need somewhere to store the tyre worms. sahmurai-sword.uk

Book reviews

BOOKS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST CYCLING-RELATED READS



Mikael Colville-Andersen

COPENHAGENIZE £19.99

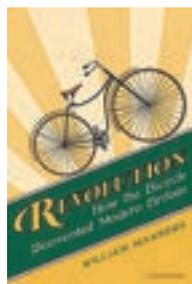
islandpress.org

I KNOW IT'S wrong to eat your pudding first but my principles went to pieces with Copenhagenize: The Definitive Guide to Global Bicycle Urbanism. I looked at the pictures before I read the text. I blame the child on her orange bike, stabilisers lifting off the ground, a giant smile, and daisies strung from her front basket. It's the author's daughter: she's just worked out how to cycle. Then there's the woman on a bike, a cardboard protest sign in her fist, dressed in fashionable red gloves, a white dress, and a scowl; she's on a cycling demonstration in San Francisco, 1972. And what about the hand resting on what looks like a lamppost? I only get to see a turned-up suit-sleeve cuff, bejewelled watch, and two rings. I'm intrigued. 'Light poles near the stop lines for bikes are rubbed smooth in the middle from cyclists leaning', the caption says. I assume we're in Copenhagen.

There's two hundred more photos and graphics to go, all resonating with humanity. This is exactly what a definitive guide to global bicycle urbanism ought to be. Mikael Colville-Andersen, Copenhagenize blogger and internationally-renowned urban design expert, says it all: 'We all have a vacuum and have learned how to use it... We don't dress up in vacuuming clothes or wave at other avid "vacuumists" on the street. The vacuum cleaner is just an effective tool that makes our daily lives easier. Just like the bicycle.'

His book explains how to realise this ideal in urban settings, and the text proves just as engaging as the images.

Cherry Allan



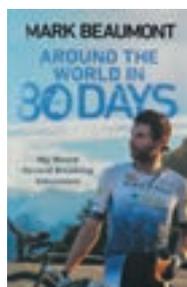
William Manners

REVOLUTION: HOW THE BICYCLE REINVENTED MODERN BRITAIN £20

ducknet.co.uk

WILLIAM MANNERS' RICHLIY researched and beautifully written book takes us on a wild ride from the birth of the bicycle to its height as a modish form of transportation. It delves into sport, fashion, women's emancipation, club life, travel, and even romance. The story is told from the perspectives of novelist Jerome K Jerome, racing legend G Lucy Hillier, rational dress campaigner Lady Harberton, and more. Cycling UK members will be proud to discover the prominent role CTC played.

Sheila Hanlon



Mark Beaumont

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS £14.99

penguinrandomhouse.co.uk

AS MARK IS a member, I have followed both his record breaking journeys around the world. He's a skilled and honest writer, so this book is much more than a cycle log. The first 100 pages explore Mark's fear that he'll fail or not have the right support team. The rest is a page-turning look at the personal psychology needed to focus on and break the record. It was also fascinating to read about the support team dynamics while I simultaneously helped with Jenny Graham's solo record attempt (see p4).

Victoria Hazael



Charles James Pope

A GOLDEN AGE OF CYCLING £16.99

bonnierbooks.co.uk

'DIARIES DETECTIVE' AND editor of this book Shaun Sewell discovered the journals and photos of CTC member Charles Pope at an auction. In A Golden Age of Cycling, subtitled 'A gentleman's adventure on two wheels, 1924-33', we're granted a snapshot of what it was like cycling on English and Welsh roads while motoring was in its infancy. It will be of most interest to historians, but cyclists familiar with the areas Pope toured through might enjoy seeing how much (or little) has changed.

Sam Jones



READ MORE ONLINE

For more reviews of bikes, kit and components, as well as how-to guides, visit cyclinguk.org/cycling-advice