

Bikefinder

Which bike should I buy?

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ELECTRIC TRIKE

For: Michael Wynn, aged 90, from Topsham,



Devon. **Bike needs:** I have two good tourers but am losing my balance so am considering a trike, probably electric. It would be used for shopping, plus some short rides into town and country. I'm thinking of a Scout from Buytricycle. **Must have:** Low gears, and I like simple machines with hub gears. **Must not have:** Multiple chainrings or high gears; 15mph is fine by me. Attract thieves. **Budget:** Less than £1,500.

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RICHARD PEACE

While the price tag of Buytricycle's Scout is attractive – and you are buying direct from a UK-based retailer rather than from a brand based abroad – I would still urge caution. The bike itself doesn't fare too badly on Trustpilot, but there are some vociferous complainants when it comes to customer service, which rather negates the value of UK backup.

Still, the bang for your buck looks pretty impressive with the Scout. I'd recommend avoiding anything similar on eBay and the like. At your budget of £1,500, you may struggle to get out of the 'pile 'em high and sell 'em cheap' market and the associated lack of aftercare.

Jorvik is a step up from the likes of Buytricycle in terms of customer service. As you like hub gears, the Jorvik Rida could tick many of your boxes; it has a Shimano Nexus 3-speed hub. The Rida retails at £1,999 (or £1,665.83 if you qualify for VAT relief). One handy feature of many Jorvik trikes is a low-speed throttle for hill starts. If you are sticking strictly to budget, however, e-trikes do pop up on reputable secondhand sites like mynextbike.co.uk at considerable discounts.

I note you live in Devon so if you regularly head up very steep hills, consider a mid-drive model. Jorvik makes several. They tend to be pricier than hub-motor models. Beyond that, the likes of Cube and vanRaam trikes are of a much higher quality and price, but you would have to be very lucky to find a secondhand model near your budget.

Jorvik Rida
£1,999



Switch GO kit £349

Mission Cycles Industrial Cargo Trike £950



DAN JOYCE

I agree with Richard that the best option would be to raise your budget by £500 and buy a Jorvik Rida. But if £1,500 is an absolute limit, you can still do better than the Buytricycle Scout, in my opinion. Doing so involves buying a budget trike and a reputable, retrofit e-bike kit separately.

For the trike, I'd suggest the Mission Cycles Industrial Cargo Trike (£950, missioncycles.co.uk). This has Shimano Nexus 7-speed hub gearing, along with 24in wheels, a cargo platform and a robust steel frame. The downsides are high overall weight and, if you're not a fan, a rear coaster brake. Other options from Mission Cycles include the Trilogy Adult Trike (£770) and the Semi-recumbent tricycle (£1,310); the latter would be over budget once you factor in an e-bike kit.

For the e-bike conversion, a Swytch front-hub-motor kit (swytchbike.com) is simple and inexpensive: the Swytch GO kit starts at £349, the Swytch MAX at £499. Neither is available built into a 24in front wheel, so you'll need to factor in a wheel build – not a problem, budget-wise, if you get the Swytch GO. Alternatively, the Swytch MAX kit is available with a 20in wheel, which would fit the smaller of the Mission Trilogy models. If you're considering the Mission Semi-recumbent, a 16in Swytch MAX front wheel would fit that.

All the Swytch motors have a maximum torque rating of 40Nm. For the riding you describe, that should be sufficient. If you have steep hills to climb, you could instead get an 80Nm TongSheng TSDZ2B mid-motor (electric-bike-conversions.co.uk). Fitted to a Mission Trilogy trike that could still come in under budget, as the kit costs from £660 with a battery.