

CYCLOPEDIA

Bike finder

Which bike should I buy?
Ask us at cyclinguk.org/bikefinder

Drop-bar step-through, maybe electric

• **For:** Chris Bursnall, aged 84, from North Wales. • **Bike needs:** I'm looking to change my Specialized Tricross, which I love, for something that is easier to get on and off. I'd prefer not to have an e-bike but might consider one. • **Must have:** Step-through frame or dropped top tube; disc brakes for hands that are becoming arthritic, and for our steep hills in North Wales; drop handlebar. • **Must not have:** Straight handlebar. • **Budget:** £2,500



Richard Peace

The only off-the-peg electric option I found that meets your criteria is the **Cairn BRAVe 1.0 Drop Bar (£2,789, cairncycles.com)**, which weighs 18.68kg without pedals. This gravel style e-bike has a drop handlebar, a steeply sloping top tube, and disc brakes. It comes in four frame sizes. The high quality Shimano Steps E7000 mid-drive comes with a very large 630Wh battery. It's just outside your budget, though it's a high quality e-bike that should last a long time.

If you can compromise by dropping the drop bar, there are loads of e-bike options. You may be hesitant of going electric because of the extra weight and price. If so, Ribble make a great range of lightweight, good value e-bikes. The sporty **Hybrid AL e Step Through (£2,399, ribblecycles.co.uk)**, which weighs 13.8kg, has a dropped top tube but a flat handlebar. Conversion to a drop bar would be fairly involved and pricey, and Ribble might argue it invalidates the warranty. Ribble did produce the **CGR AL e Step Through** with a drop bar but say they don't offer it now and are not sure when or if they will.

Also consider a retrofit kit. The excellent **Cytronex (from £995)** adds 3.2-3.6kg, though the battery is relatively small. I've found Cytronex very knowledgeable and helpful. Note that this kit won't offer the high power assist of the Shimano system. Equally high quality but much pricier are **ARCC** retrofit kits. ARCC are Moulton specialists. There are drop bar Moulton models, which have low step-over frames, but only with rim brakes.

RIBBLE HYBRID AL E STEP THROUGH £2,399*



*£2,499 as pictured



Dan Joyce

Richard's given electric options so I'll focus on unassisted bikes. The main issue is that bikes with a step-through frame and a drop handlebar are vanishingly rare. The **Temple Cycles Step Through Tour (£1,345, templecycles.co.uk)** ticks both boxes but has mid-drop rim brakes rather than discs. Swapping the brake pads – e.g. for **Kool-Stop Dura** – might improve the braking enough for you.

The **Airnimal Joey Endurance (£2,250, airnimal.co)** meets all your requirements, having a low-standover, a drop bar, and Avid BB7 brakes. And it folds for travel or storage. You will likely want a smaller chainring for those Welsh hills, however.

If you're prepared to forgo the drop bar, the **Islabikes Janis (£1,099, islabikes.co.uk)** is what I'd recommend. It's designed for cyclists like you, with a step-through frame, hydraulic disc brakes, and really low gears. Other age-friendly features include easy-tyre-change rims and an optional dropper seatpost (+£140) for easier mounting and dismounting. (See cyclinguk.org/bike-test/Icons for my review.)

If a drop bar is essential, budget £600 (or more if your local shop does the work) for: a compact drop bar; a stem that's ~40mm shorter (i.e. 30mm); **Microshift Advent X** levers, rear derailleur, and 11-48 cassette; and **TRP Hy-Rd** callipers. My recommendation, however, would be to stick with the flat bar and just add a pair of **Cane Creek Ergo Control bar ends (£29.99)** for an alternative hand position.

ISLABIKES JANIS £1,099

