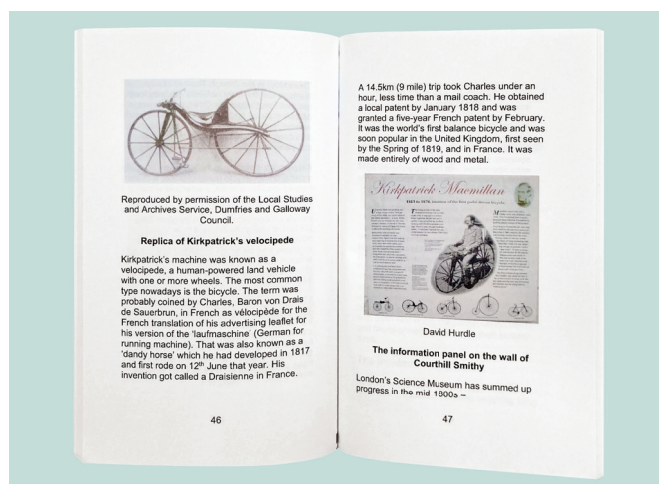


Reviews Books

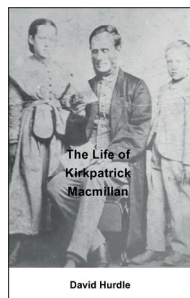
CYCLING INSPIRATION WHEN YOU'RE STUCK INSIDE

Print queue

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The Life of Kirkpatrick Macmillan



Details

By: David Hurdle
Publisher: self-published
Price: £4.99 (Amazon)
ISBN: 9781944156909

of contemporary evidence is a single paragraph, repeated in three different newspapers in 1842, reporting that a 'gentleman from Dumfriesshire' on a velocipede had been charged and fined for throwing over a child. It describes a machine entirely different from the one that is claimed to be the one ridden by Macmillan, but would fit a tricycle.

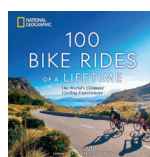
Not surprisingly, this description is not discussed. Instead we have a fictitious quotation supposedly from the magistrate of "a man riding a machine of two wheels and making it progress without having to touch the ground, I just cannot believe it". As no record of any part of the trial survives, let alone transcripts, neither can I. Presumably it's from J Gordon Irving, whose 1946 'history' of Macmillan was almost entirely fictitious.

In the end this book joins a long list of others in perpetuating a myth that should have been put to bed in the 1890s, but for romantic and patriotic reasons just refuses to die.

Nicholas Oddy

THIS LITTLE BIOGRAPHY is written by a distant relative. It covers a lot of significant contextual details – child mortality, the construction of the Scottish road system (shortly followed by the railway system), and waves of rural depopulation in favour of urban life. All this provides an idea of the issues in the Dumfriesshire of Macmillan's time. It could make more of some things, such as the parish school system in Scotland that resulted in a very high level of adult literacy but, in general, it's an enjoyable read.

Where it goes wrong is in crediting Macmillan with inventing a pedamotive bicycle – indeed, crediting Macmillan with inventing the bicycle itself. This is no surprise. Few who have anything to do with Dumfries and Galloway want to admit that the Macmillan story is bogus. The only piece



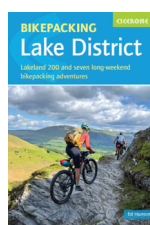
Details

By: Roff Smith
Publisher: National Geographic Society
Price: £30
ISBN: 9781426222658

100 Bike Rides of a Lifetime

FOR INSPIRATION ON these long, chilly evenings, look no further than 100 Bike Rides of a Lifetime. It's a coffee table book full of eye-catching photography and tantalising descriptions. The worldwide rides include a mix of road, gravel and mountain bike routes, with distances, surface types, difficulties and bits of history. I'd have preferred more detail – such as public transport links – but the book serves its purpose: mine is already full of sticky notes, and I can't wait for my next adventure!

Monica Scigliano



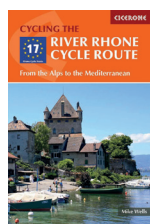
Details

By: Ed Hunton
Publisher: Cicerone
Price: £16.95
ISBN: 9781786311177

Bikepacking in the Lake District

THIS WELL-RESEARCHED book provides eight largely off-road routes in the Lakes that should take from two to five days to ride. Some take in iconic climbs such as Helvellyn, the Old Man of Conistone, Skiddaw and High Street, and they vary from moderate to very hard. Most could be done by gravel bike, although the author recommends full suspension. Useful nuggets include how to access the routes by public transport, where to camp and more. Links to GPX files are provided.

Julie Rand



Details

By: Mike Wells
Publisher: Cicerone
Price: £17.95
ISBN: 9781786310828

Cycling the River Rhone Cycle Route

DESPITE ITS POTENTIAL as a practical assistant, this guide falls short in execution. Its focus on directions seems misplaced, given the prevalence of GPS usage among cyclists, and it leaves crucial practical details unaddressed. The language is dry and the excessive information isn't well ordered. Overall, the guide lacks personal recommendations and experiences, making it less engaging and valuable for cyclists embarking on their own River Rhone journey.

Neal Coleman