

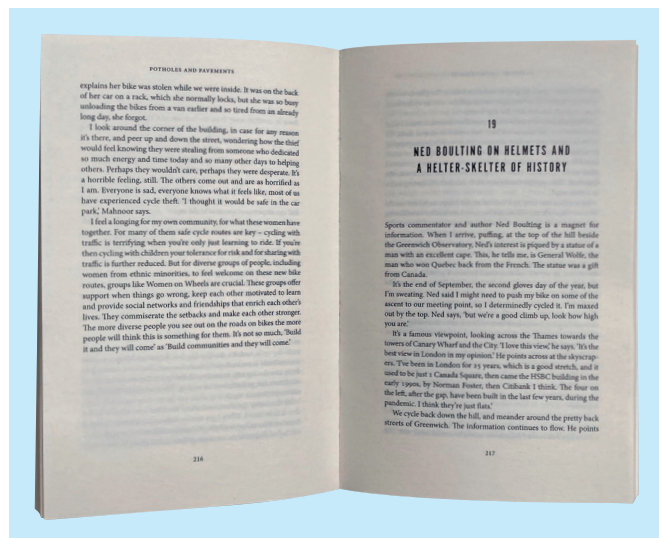
Reviews

Books

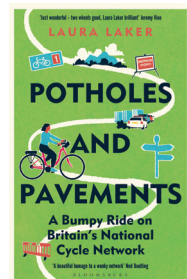
CYCLING INSPIRATION WHEN YOU'RE STUCK INSIDE

Print queue

Cycle doesn't feature all books received. Reviewers pick the ones they think you need to know about from the editor's list. Send books to: Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, GU2 9JX



Potholes and Pavements



Details
By: Laura Laker
Publisher: Bloomsbury
Price: £16.99
ISBN: 9781399406444

POTHoles AND PAVEMENTS IS the story of journalist Laura Laker's post-lockdown attempt to reconnect with cycling using the National Cycle Network (NCN).

My initial expectation was to read stories of getting out into beautiful areas using the NCN. While such stories are included, this is also an account of the remarkable history of how the NCN came to exist in the first place, highlighting how much work was done by so few people.

I've had a troubled relationship with the NCN over the years. Persuading councils to take better care of my local sections of it has been an uphill battle, so the context to how it came into being – with a mish-mash of grants, money from public bodies and sometimes sheer bloody-mindedness – was eye-opening.

Most of Laura's trips around the UK take place on her trusty e-bike. There are the expected tales of our archaic system for taking bikes on trains, and the variable quality of the NCN routes themselves. However, her experiences also serve as reminders that if you're willing to get past those issues, there are beautiful days on the bike and some stunning scenery to look forward to.

The book gives a sense that the NCN has achieved all it can with its current funding model, and Laura proposes a number of sensible suggestions for ways forward. Unfortunately the barriers to most of these are government and public buy-in. While that's a sobering thought, it's a good manifesto for our future campaigning efforts.

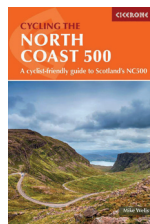
Gethin Pearson



Excerpts

You can read excerpts from some of the books that Cycle has reviewed at

cyclinguk.org/cycle-book-excerpts

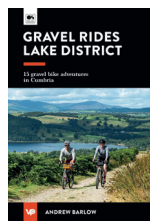


Details
By: Mike Wells
Publisher: Cicerone
Price: £17.95
ISBN: 9781786312198

Cycling the North Coast 500

I WISH THIS book had been available when I rode the NC500 in 2017. Its pocket size, detailed maps, elevation profiles and colourful pictures would have been helpful – especially to one of our group who had no idea where he was! I like that this guide provides alternative route options and advice to help plan your trip and get a feel for the north before you start attacking the hills. Also, if your itinerary allows, Mike Wells has done the research about interesting places to visit en route.

Jim Densham

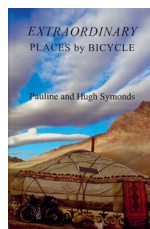


Details
By: Andrew Barlow
Publisher: Vertebrate
Price: £15.95
ISBN: 9781839811845

Gravel Rides Lake District

OFF-ROAD CYCLING in the Lake District can be challenging to plan. There are miles of bridleways but you can't tell from a map which are gravel, which are faint moorland trails and which are rocky chutes beloved of mountain bikers. Andrew Barlow's well written and beautifully photographed guide details 15 gravel rides from 17 to 270km, which will appeal to riders of all ages and abilities. They vary in surface but they're all doable on a gravel bike, and all have OS maps in the book and downloadable GPX files. It's a delight of a book.

Sean Fishpool



Details
By: Pauline and Hugh Symonds
Publisher: Hayloft
Price: £30
ISBN: 9781910237755

Extraordinary Places by Bicycle

WE'VE JUST LEFT Cumbria – can we make it to Mongolia? So begins one of Pauline and Hugh's many epic cycle trips, travelling 60,000km over 10 years. While some of their adventures might seem a bit too intrepid, like crossing 2,500m mountain passes in the depths of winter, it's a joy to join them for the ride. Their affable writing sketches vivid pictures of places and people, and is bursting with useful insights about cycle touring in different countries.

Sophie Gordon