



## **Shiny and New: Report from the 2008 London International Cycle Show**

**by Matt Langridge, PCI #869**

*Thames Valley Police (UK)*

The 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> October saw Earls Court exhibition centre in London hosting the 2008 version of the Cycle Show. Once again I stepped up to suffer the pain of looking at all the shiny new bikes and kit without the possibility of buying anything, all in the name of bringing the word to my friends in the Cycle Patrol world. Yes, I know I'm selfless and heroic in my actions but hey, better I suffer by not buying than have She Who Must be Obeyed carry out a painful surgical procedure on me for spending too much.

What did I see this year that caught my eye? Well, there were shiny carbon fibre road bikes and shiny carbon fibre mountain bikes and shiny alloy commuter bikes and shiny alloy road bikes and shiny alloy mountain bikes and shiny anodized disc brake bits and shiny steel road bikes and shiny bright lights and shiny carbon fibre reinforced light-as-a-feather helmets and shiny new sexy jerseys and shorts and trousers and bags and... and... well, you get the idea!

Once again, walking round the stands was awe-inspiring. The beauty of some of the new bikes and kit on display was undeniable. The following paragraphs detail some of the exhibits that caught my eye as a cycle patrol officer, a leisure cyclist and commuter.

### **Ortlieb Bike-Box 2 & Bike-Box 3**

We are all familiar with the traditional rack top pack for stowing tickets, forms, spare tubes, tools, etc. Well, this year I had a look for some alternative styles. One that caught my eye is from Ortlieb, best known for their outstanding waterproof panniers and bags fabricated from the same material as tarpaulins for HGV's (semis etc). I was seeking waterproof rack packs and they did not disappoint with the *Bike-Box 2* and *Bike-Box 3*. The 2 is a hard shell box with a 9.5 litre capacity, available in black or silver. The lid is secured by a lockable waterproof zip, similar to the heavy duty type fitted to scuba divers' dry suits. The 3 comprises of a hard shell base box with a soft top. It has an 8 litre capacity, is closed with a covered zip, and is available in black only. Both are fitted with carrying handles and are supplied with a shoulder strap. I liked the 2 for its robustness and what looks to be excellent waterproof capabilities. I have lost count of the number of times stuff in my bike bag has gotten wet or squished (or both) despite being placed in plastic bags. The material that the hard shell is made from is also easy to keep clean – a possible bonus for medical applications. Visit [www.ortlieb.co.uk](http://www.ortlieb.co.uk) for more info.

### **Carradice SQR**

For those of you who either don't have the facility or don't like to fit a full rack to your bike, the traditional solution is the seatpost rack. This system works well, but the way they sometimes swivel round if knocked annoys me. Carradice, a stalwart of the UK cycle luggage manufacturing scene, have a system called *SQR*. This is a seatpost-mounted system with a quick release function. A bracket fits to the seatpost and accepts a small rack that is part of the saddle pack of your choice – five or 16 litres. The 16 litre options include the *Tour*, made from cotton duck, a waterproof natural material, which is fitted with side pockets for small items; the *Trax*, made from silicon coated 600 denier polyester, complete with mesh side pockets and compression straps; and the *Slim*, which is also made from cotton duck and is sized to accept files and books. Visit [www.carradice.co.uk](http://www.carradice.co.uk) for more detail.



### **Pletscher Hard Shell Case**

Though not showing themselves, Swiss company Pletscher had products displayed by other companies. Interesting items in their range were their *Hard Shell Case*, a plastic box with rear rack mounting system which has a hinged lid. It appears to be a hard plastic case which may have applications for public safety cyclists with a need to carry a delicate piece of equipment. I can see that, in conjunction with a custom-made foam insert, carrying a camera or other piece of equipment could be done with far less risk of damage. They also produce a good range of traditional rack bags in differing sizes and a range of rear- and centre-mounted kick stands. Have a look at [www.pletscher.ch](http://www.pletscher.ch).

### **USE: Exposure Lights**

On the lighting front, once again I was very impressed with Ultimate Sports Equipment (USE). They produce the Exposure Light range, examples of which I had fitted to my bike and helmet when I attended the IPMBA conference at Baton Rouge. One of the very popular features of the Exposure Light range, beyond the eye-burningly bright beam, is the CFD (Cable Free Design) feature. The battery pack on all the lights is integral to the light itself. The charger plugs into the light so there are no cables to get snagged. Each year the range shows modifications and improvements, the direct result of critique and suggestion by users. Improvements to my lights are that the on/off switch is much easier to operate, and they now have the facility to plug a “piggy bag battery” into the charging socket to extend the running time of the lights. USE have also developed the *RedEye*, a very visible red light. This light is used in conjunction with the other lights in the range, the power cable plugging into the charging socket of the main unit.

My favourite light in the range is the *Joystick*. This is a small light, similar in size to a stubby dry wipe board marker pen. I use mine in conjunction with a helmet mount. This lets me light up where I am looking, a very useful feature when writing notes, searching suspects, etc. The *RedEye* mounted to the back of the helmet and plugged into the joystick would be an excellent combination.

A new feature for all lights developed in response to user critique is the quick release mount. This mount is compatible with earlier lights and allows instant fitting/removal of the lights. Previously, the light was fixed/removed using an Allen key wrench.

USE representative Rory Hitchens also showed me a concept product they are exploring for emergency services bikes – a siren unit based on the Exposure light case. This is a simple unit, powered by a disposable battery. This sits alongside an adaptation to one of their lights (the Race MAXX2, I think) that Charlie Irvine had fitted to his bike at our conference. The adaptation consisted of a front piece that enclosed the front ring of the light. Fitted to this was a section of blue acrylic that rotated in front of the light lens when blue flashing lights were needed.

In recognition of their constant innovation, Exposure Lights were the recipient of the 2008 BikeBiz award for Product Innovation. Well done, gang! Visit [www.exposurelights.com](http://www.exposurelights.com).

### **Knog Frog Lights**

Knog, from Australia, were exhibiting an expanded product range, starting with their simple, fit-just-about-anywhere *Frog* light, through the *Toad*, *Bullfrog* and *Gecko* LED lights, to the high power *Gator* range (I think I detect a theme here). I am a big fan of the *Frog* lights because they make excellent emergency lights should your batteries die; they are so light and transportable that you could have half a dozen in your pack and not notice. They (and I think all the other LED lights) are available as both white and red lights. I have a white fitted to my commute helmet and a red to the seat post of my commute bike to increase visibility. I like having



lights on my helmet for safety reasons. Knog have loads of other funky gear including bags, gloves, cycle computers and clothing. Their website is well worth a visit (with an open mind) at [www.knog.com.au](http://www.knog.com.au).

### **Jelly Belly Sports Beans**

On the nutrition front, Jelly Belly *Sports Beans* were at the show. On more than one occasion when out riding, I have found myself with the shakes and sweats and loss of “oomph” that I associate with a lack of blood sugar. It feels horrible but is quite easy to overcome for long enough to either get home or back to the station to take on some fuel. *Sports Beans* are small (28gram) packets of specifically made jelly beans containing 25 grams of carbohydrates plus electrolytes and vitamins B1, B2, B3 and C. They are available in fruit punch, lemon and lime, orange and berry blue flavours. The packs are small enough that several can be put in a jersey pocket or rack pack and should you get the “knock” or “bonk”, a brief stop for beans and water will see you feeling refuelled enough to get to a more substantial food intake. Check them out at [www.sportbeans.co.uk](http://www.sportbeans.co.uk).

### **Foska Convict**

Finally, clothing manufacturer foska were showing their wares, including a very entertaining new jersey design – the *Convict* jersey, a very fetching black-and-white striped jersey with “Inmate” stencilled across the back and sides and complete with your very own prison number. It made me laugh! Have a look via [www.foska.com](http://www.foska.com).

These are just a few of the many new and exciting items I saw at the Cycle Show, and I look forward to sacrificing myself to the cause again next year!

*Matt was certified as an IPMBA Instructor in 2005 and currently serves as IPMBA’s UK correspondent. He is a devotee of all things bicycle-related and is rarely found too far from [one of] his trusty cycle[s]. He can be reached at [matt.langridge@sky.com](mailto:matt.langridge@sky.com).*

(c) 2009 IPMBA. This article appeared in the Winter 2009 issue of *IPMBA News*.