

[FREE] One Man and His Bike: A Life-changing Journey All the Way Around the Coast of Britain

One Man and His Bike: A Life-changing Journey All the Way Around the Coast of Britain

Mike Carter

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#255475 in Books imusti 2012-06-01 2012-07-09Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.76 x .90 x 4.951, .55
#File Name: 0091940567346 pagesEbury Press | File size: 47.Mb

Mike Carter : One Man and His Bike: A Life-changing Journey All the Way Around the Coast of Britain
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Man and His Bike:
A Life-changing Journey All the Way Around the Coast of Britain:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Simple subject, deep book
By Math Addict
Before I launch into this review let me start by mentioning that I am an avid long-distance cyclist having cycled South Wales, Cornwall, and most of the US West Coast. I'm also an ex-Brit. I really enjoyed this book, like Really, Really enjoyed it. I could have read twice as much. I love the subject matter and I love the author's style, humility, and wit. However, I'm not sure how much of it is true. I suspect the core is factual but some of the encounters are too good to be true. This isn't the first 'Man rides bike to epiphany' book I've read and unfortunately at least one of the others turned out to be a complete fabrication. This one read truthfully though. I don't know how you ride 5,000 miles without describing your bike at all other than mentioning the brand. How do you not include details such as the saddle, shoes, cleats, etc? I don't even know if the rider was on a mountain or road bike. What about punctures? Perhaps the editor thought readers would be bored by 'technical' details - but the editor would have been wrong. By the way, you can't have a discussion about the relative merits of 600cc vs. 700cc wheels because they don't exist. You can discuss 650c vs. 700c but perhaps that's just a typo. So it's possible the author just sat in his room with Google and a list of UK campgrounds - but I don't think so because the book reads true. The overpacking, the bonking, the potholes, and the description of traffic must have come from someone with extensive experience. But it turns out it doesn't much matter because the book is equal parts a travelogue, a text on self-discovery, a revelation of the true character of the British people, a social commentary, and a book about cycling/camping. Who hasn't, at some time, wanted to chuck it all in and go walk-about; return to basics, become self-sufficient, experience something new, take some risk, and have some fun? Obviously we can't all do this at the same time (or can we?) but Mike did it and did it well. He becomes one of those lucky people who says hello to complete strangers and in doing so meets interesting but entirely normal people. Now most people would probably work up to something as epic as this ride. Maybe century or a weekend camping trip. A little bicycle commuting doesn't cut it. Apparently Mike isn't most people and he pays for it (as a long-distance cyclist myself I found this hilarious in a cruel way). But 65 miles on a fully loaded bike on your first day - priceless. All of this would have been wasted if Mike wasn't a skilled writer (or he could have done it for charity). His style is narrative, describing things and thoughts as they occur. He's alive to the humor in everyday events and situations. He's also very well read and constantly references literary works that pertain to the towns and villages as he rides through them. I enjoyed that. He can be humble and funny at the same time; several times I found myself laughing out loud at an observation or description. If you read this book, Google Earth it as you do - it doubles your pleasure. Mike - if you're ever in Southern California I love to buy you a scotch.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fun adventure. If you can't or won't ever make ...
By Sam
This is an interesting book on many levels. A travel adventure, a bit of learning about British history and an update on the current state of the economy in various parts of Britain. Plus a how-to of off-the-beaten-path travel while cycling and camping, with a few gems of mostly undisturbed scenic places. And a bit of a meditation on the difference between people from the big city, London, versus those living in small towns. The author bicycled around the entire coastline of the UK which is much farther than you might first think, because of all the bays and inlets - 5,000 miles he says. Along the way he encounters untold numbers of characters and lots of kind and helpful people. It's well-written too, the author is a professional journalist (the Guardian). A fun adventure. If you can't or won't ever make such a trip yourself this will give you a good feel for it.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Part Bill Bryson, Part Paul Theroux, A Bit of Bruce Chatwin
By RayCam
At times laugh out loud funny like Bill Bryson, at times wistful and penetrating like some of Paul Theroux, this book deserves to become a minor classic. At a superficial level, it fits into the road-trip-brought-on-by-a-midlife-crisis genre, but manages to get beyond the flaws typical of that genre to a more interesting place. Much like Paul Theroux's *The Happy Isles of Oceania: Paddling the Pacific*, the writer begins a trip following the collapse of his marriage in midlife. Unlike Theroux's book, there's no bitterness, but more a sense of dislocation and existential confusion made bearable by looking at the world with good hearted wonderment and self-deprecating humor. He's a lost soul, sure enough, looking for something he doesn't quite find in the pages of the book, bonding long term only with his tent and his bike, but his personal story takes a back seat to the people and scenery he passes by as he circles his native land. A range of characters enlivens the tale, from the unhappiest man in England sitting at the northern end of the Lands End-John O' Groats trail, to passing a fully alive septuagenarian cycling round England in the opposite direction (at a much faster pace than the author), to a motley assembled family gathered at a farm turned flea market in Scotland, to a ferry man who pedaled (bikes and pedal boats) from England to Hawaii (concluding that crossing an ocean in a 23 foot boat or going back and forth a few hundred yards in a ferry is all the same if you just learn to live in the moment). You get a sense for the spectacular beauty of some of the more isolated spaces in Britain, as well as a feel for the hollowed out industrial centers and half abandoned working class seaside resorts left behind in the shift to a finance driven services economy. It's a book I think I will pick up again and reread in whole or part sometime. It's a picaresque tale of the road, but not so much a technical cycling book or a travel guide. The next time I travel around England I'll look through it before going, but it's not trying to do what Rick Steves or Lonely Planet do. In the same way, while to a touring cyclist many aspects of the long distance cycling felt true, it's not really a bike book, any more than Theroux's *The Kingdom by the Sea: A Journey Around the Coast of Great Britain* or Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Small Island* are mainly about the British railways. It's about Britain, and about a funny man trying to find his way, with the bike something more than

incidental but not the point of the story.

One man's fatigue with 9-to-5 led to a five-month journey around the edge of Britain by bike here are his adventures. What would happen if you were cycling to the office and just kept on pedaling? Needing a change, Mike Carter did just that. Following the Thames to the sea he embarked on an epic 5,000 mile ride around the entire British coastline the equivalent of London to Calcutta. He encountered drunken priests, drag queens, and gnome sanctuaries. He met fellow travelers and people building for a different type of future. He also found a spirit of unbelievable kindness and generosity that convinced him that Britain is anything but broken. This is the inspiring and very funny tale of the five months Mike spent cycling the byways of his nation and rediscovering a level of happiness he thought he'd lost forever.

"[Carter is] a likeable and self-deprecating guide, the gentle comedy of his endeavours conceal[s] a vivid portrait of a Britain rarely seen by many city dwellers." Financial Times