



Angle grinders stand no chance

Stuck keys spark anxiety

Squire Defiant £199.99

Sturdy lock but the barrel is sticky



Tested by Dan Sutherland for two years

I've used this Squire Defiant lock across a number of motorcycles, but it now spends much of its time at home, keeping my own Royal Enfield safe in the garage.

Weighing a claimed 1.1kg, it's a hefty unit that packs a 25mm solid hardened steel body and 12mm boron steel shackle. As such, it achieves a Sold Secure 'Powered

Cycle Diamond' rating for attacks against angle grinders – giving me the confidence to leave my bike parked up, safe in the knowledge that it's protected.

You get a stretchy reminder cord from the lock to the handlebar, too.

However, while sturdy, for just shy of 200 quid it would be nice to have an alarm element included for an added theft deterrent. It's also far too heavy to carry on your person while riding, with most modern bikes lacking the space to keep it stored

onboard without luggage.

My biggest gripe is with the keys though. There are a useful 470,000 different combinations, but my pair seem to regularly stick inside the mechanism – making their removal quite awkward. In fact, I'm sometimes fearful of snapping it.

Fortunately, this has never happened, because the lock is so protective that I'm not sure I'd ever be able to cut it off!

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.squirelocks.co.uk

Two years ON TEST

Macna Synchron jacket £599.99

A jacket for all seasons



Tested by Robin Kirkley for six months/4600 miles

I've ridden with the Macna Synchron for thousands of miles and in all seasons. Aesthetically it's very smart and looks good on the bike, plus it's clearly been designed with riders' needs in mind.

The three layers are interchangeable depending on whatever weather you wake up to. If it's a scorcher, the breeze passes nicely through the armoured and breathable core jacket.

When there's a chill in the air I've just zipped in the thermal layer, meanwhile for rain, the outer laminate shell simply shakes off the elements.

I didn't bother taking the thermal layer on last year's Portugal/Spain ride. When it got chilly or wet in the mountains I just donned the outer shell, which was easy enough to take off at a coffee stop once we hit the heat again. But this winter in the UK all three layers were permanent fixtures so that I was always waterproofed from unexpected downpours or insulated from the damp and cold.

Back to the design and construction, a closer look reveals well thought-out features that help



Practical kit for year-round riding

the Synchron stand out from the crowd. I like the cuff system which uses zips to attach the thermal liner to the core jacket instead of those loops and snaps in some jackets that sort of 'float' and need to be adjusted as you ride.

When I use heated gloves in the winter there are a series of loops running along the outside of the removable liner that keep the power cables neatly organised. Meanwhile, on hot days the collar can be held to one side with another convenient loop designed for that very purpose. And the reflective elements around the jacket are a safety feature to boost visibility in low-light conditions.

There's plenty more in terms of features, including a long jacket-to-trousers connection zip for the accompanying Macna trousers (sold separately) and it's a quality piece of gear that's worth the price. Macna have put themselves in a good place with a jacket that adds to the riding experience in all-seasons.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.macna.com

Six months ON TEST

Dainese RSS 4 knee sliders £69

Standard is still better



Tested by Carl Stevens for eight months

I adore scraping 'sliders, and have been through a fair few different brands and products in my time – which is why this new concept from Dainese is rather interesting. Instead of replacing the whole slider, you leave the Velcro base in place and just replace the top, plastic chunk – which in theory, is a good idea as you always know the perfect location.

However, it's an answer to a question that nobody has really asked; I've never had an issue with replacing sliders in the wrong place, especially as it's usually a straight off, straight on affair. The frustrating thing about the RSS 4 sliders is that because the bottom section is



200 miles ON TEST

An expensive alternative

permanent, the top, replaceable part (the meat of the plastic, so to speak) is thin for a slider, and gets destroyed quickly and easily.

Even though the compound feels great to use they work out as a costly set-up, so if you're heavy on your knee sliders it's best to go down the

easy, more cost-effective route of a standard knee slider. They're also quite a pain to remove, as the locating pegs are stiff, especially when the plastic is heavily worn. Replacement pucks are £39.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.dainese.com



Like a bib for your bike...

Oxford Dirt Guard £9.99

Fuss-free chain cleaning



Tested by Justin Hayzelden for 1 year

Although I'm a stickler for chain maintenance, I'm one messy pup when it comes to cleaning and re-lubing. I've traditionally used bits of cardboard or folded newspaper pages to try to mask the wheel, tyre and brake caliper, but no matter how careful I am, I always end up having

to wipe everything down again at the end. Oxford's Dirt Guard saves all that hassle; once the two halves are trimmed it clicks neatly together around the rear hub, preventing over-spray altogether. It even has a built-in drip tray to collect run off, making one of the potentially dirtiest jobs on your bike mess-free.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.oxfordproducts.com

One year ON TEST