



Big, waterproof and comfortable – but at a price

Rain cover
The main compartment is waterproof, but there's also a hi-vis pull-out rain cover to keep the pockets dry as well

Bags of potential

A serious motorcycling rucksack, crammed full of features

OXFORD B35 BACKPACK

■ £90 www.oxprod.com

OXFORD'S NEW FLAGSHIP rucksack has a 35-litre, dry-lined, roll-top main section, secured with three clips and adjusted by a trio of straps on each side. There are two zipped external pockets: a deep one, with an MP3-player pouch and a rubberised hole through which a headphone lead can be poked; one shallower "key pocket", containing a carabiner. On top of this key pocket is both a netted "glove pouch" and an integrated, elasticated cargo net. There's also a fold-out helmet carrier and, in the base, a hi-vis rain cover with a huge, reflective Oxford logo.

The height-adjustable (and detachable) waistband has a pocket on each hip and contains a padded, soft-lined visor carrier, while a hydration pack is concealed within the well-padded back. The broad, padded shoulder straps are adjustable and include both a carry handle at the top and a chest-strap in the centre to help spread the load. Frankly, I'm amazed it doesn't come with its own kitchen sink...

In other words, it's a very well-specified bag. There aren't any internal dividers in the



Fold-out helmet carrier is useful

main bag, so you do end up fishing around for your belongings. The main pocket is entirely waterproof when the seal is rolled over three times. The external pockets have water-resistant zips, but they may eventually let some water by – but only if you're unlucky enough to get caught in several hours of heavy rain.

The bag is comfy, with plenty of scope to adjust where the straps sit. It's well-finished, with tough seams and reflective piping. It's reasonably heavy, but in good way: it feels substantial and heavy-duty, as though it'll last. Which, for £90, you'd want. It's a lot of money for a rucksack – but then, it's a lot of ruckack for the money. **SW**



MERCURY EAR PLUGS

■ £80 01444 400494

IT WAS A strangely pleasurable experience having the moulds done for these custom ear plugs. First my ears were checked, then a small cotton wool bud was inserted before a whole load of goo was syringed in to make the mould. I chose the compound for the finished article along with a choice of colours and whether to have sparkles, balloons, my initials. It took about three weeks for them to be delivered after the moulds were made. I do find them a bit fiddly to put in, but, with practice I'm getting better at fitting them in properly. When I get it right, they work a treat. **CB**



OXFORD OXIMISER 601

■ £36.99 www.oxprod.com

I'VE USED AN (older) Oxford Oximiser to maintain the battery in my Yamaha Fazer 600 for a year or two now. I keep its crocodile clips handy, as every now and then I swap it from the bike to charging my small, unreliable French car. Very easy – very good. This updated Oximiser 601 is the latest version and looks just the job.

It's an easy-to-use, no-frills charger designed to work with gel, acid and lithium batteries. It will do a fast charge to 85 per cent of the capacity, or can be used as a trickle charger (though you can't leave a lithium battery on a trickle charger). It comes with an easily fitted wall-mounting kit, a charger tail to fit to your bike's battery, and with crocodile clips too. **SW**