



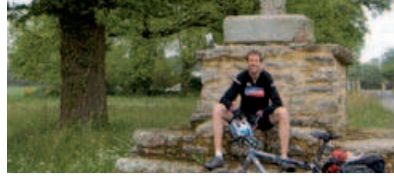
TRAVEL



EVENTS



CULTURE



LETTERS



BUSINESS

The Brooks Bugle

Issue 1



2009 Edition

A RIVETTING READ

Written by The Brooks Team

The emotion of looking at a masterpiece for the first time can be strong, but its full appreciation grows significantly when art experts help us to go beyond the first impression.

In over 100 years of history Brooks has changed ownership a few times. Six years ago was the beginning of a new era, when many of us started working for the company as it changed shareholders. Coming from backgrounds and work experiences vastly different from those in Smethwick, where little had changed in the last decades, our understanding of Brooks was limited. The company seemed like a beautiful painting behind a few layers of dust. It had been declining steadily since the 1950s, when the third generation of the Brooks Family sold the company. It needed a restoration that only patient hands could provide. We wish to thank all those who have helped us in our jobs, sharing with us their experiences, opinions, enthusiasm and work.

At this stage we feel it is important to take new steps, to go beyond the beautiful painting we have been patiently restoring. Not only do we want to show it to you, our customers, under a new light, but also want to give you the opportunity to be part of it. We are convinced that our best ambassadors are our timeless products and the lavish Brooks Cyclists, whose comments and stories keep the Brooks legend alive. After several years of publishing the Brooks Book for Cyclists, we decided to introduce this new publication, which we feel is more in line with the desires of information of our beloved cycling community and the developments of the world of communication. These pages of the Brooks Bugle, in fact, anticipate the spirit of our new website, which will dedicate significant space to user generated content.

Our forefathers in 1890 wrote: "we trust that our present efforts will meet with that approval with which, in the past, our attempts to bring the cycle saddle to perfection have been rewarded by riders of the wheel." We are honoured to be the guardians of such a long living legend of the cycling industry, and we hope that our work and attitude in preserving what to us is much more than a company will be a guide to those who will come after us.



TRAVELLING 500,000 KM ON A BROOKS

Written by Frank van Rijn
World Cyclist and Author

"Long ago a little bit of the fun of my bike trips was spoiled by saddle soreness. After experimenting with all kinds of shorts and underwear in combination with several saddles, a bike repairer remarked: "Why don't you try a Brooks?" "A what?" I asked. "A Brooks! A Brooks Saddle, I mean.

Just make a test ride on this bike," and he pointed me to a bicycle with a rather wide leather saddle. The two springs underneath it gave me instant confidence. After 200 meters it became clear to me that I was entering a new world and the 4000 km long bike trip across Spain that I made shortly afterwards on the Brooks B66 was a revelation. The saddle soreness was over and never returned on the following 465.000 km: the Andes, Sierra Madre, Rocky Mountains, Sahara, Sahel, Great Victoria Desert,

Himalaya and Holland's long windy dikes slid along without any sit comfort problems.

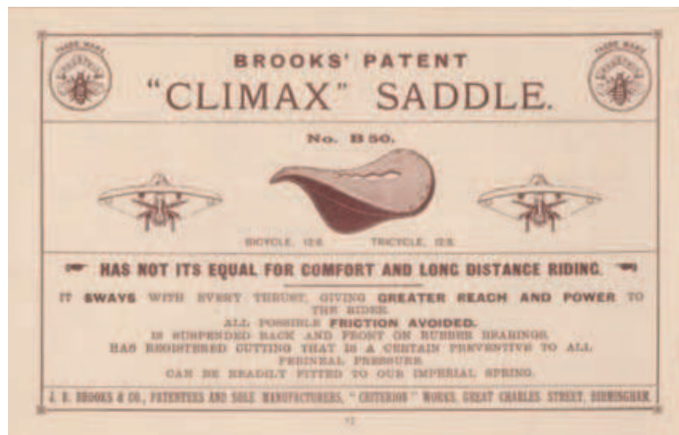
This great saddle turned out to comfortably survive for many tens of thousands of kilometres over rough stony roads."

We wish to thank Frank van Rijn for his words on how he became a Brooks Cyclist. We proudly announce that Brooks supports the publication of Frank's book "Revanche in de Andes". First published in black and white in 2002, this book tells

the stories of Frank's bicycle journeys in South America during the 1990s. The second edition of the book features 100 full colour photos taken along the 15.000 km of the adventurer's trips on the Andes and 10 maps showing the routes along the world's longest exposed mountain range.

For more info visit:
www.frankvanrijn.nl
www.uitgeverijelmar.nl

DESIGNED IN THE 1890s



Nowadays most saddle manufacturers are offering a range of anatomical saddles, claiming that they were the first to find this solution or that their invention works best. We recently discovered that Brooks offered saddles with cutting over 100 years earlier than any other saddle maker. In many pages of the 1890 Brooks catalogue you can read that the Imperial, Long Distance, Climax and many more saddles have "registered cutting that is a certain preventive to all perineal pressure".

Continues on page 7

SINCE 1866

BROOKS
ENGLAND

SADDLES
BAGS
ETC.

THE PACIFIC RING OF FIRE

Written by Pierre Bouchard & Janick Lemieux



We started from Vancouver in April of 1999 and continued south to Santiago, Chile. A 25,000 km ride over 25 months, during which we learned all the basics about volcanism. We also realised the journey was going to be much lengthier than anticipated due to dead-ends, loops and side trips the fire mountains commanded. We then decided to divide the journey in three separate legs.

In November 2002, we flew back to Santiago to patrol the volcanoes of South Chile and Argentina, after which we embarked on a crazy crossing of the South Pacific to Jakarta in Indonesia via Easter Island, French Polynesia, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua/New Guinea. That leg was an 18-month sweet logistical nightmare involving

55 boat rides and 12 flights! In all we were able to ride some 10,000 km on 30 islands!»

The Pacific Ring of Fire, part 3, is still ongoing. After the Philippines, where we landed in February 2006, we rode some more in Indonesia. Taiwan was a great biking discovery as was Japan, where we roamed for 8 months in a state of bliss. From Japan, we hopped on some of the Northern Mariannas in Micronesia and spent an epic summer in 2007 riding on the Sakhalin and Kuril Islands as well as the Kamchatka Peninsula, all in the Russian Far-East. Our cyclo-computers tell us that just on the third leg we have already climbed 20 times the height of Mt. Everest from sea level! So now the plan is to bridge the gap between Vancouver and the

Aleutian Islands in Alaska, something we are doing right now. After the completion of «The Ring» we shall spend November and December on it's «belly button»: Hawaii! A sort of cherry on a cake: flowing lava and some great climbs! After that? A book, a presentation series and more adventures!

Although our expedition has a definite geographical emphasis and some encounters with our planet's magic and beauty have brought us to tears, it is mostly meetings with our fellow humans, burdened with the same needs and desires, that pop into our heads as the truly unforgettable moments, may it be the bright eye and white smile of a roadside Flores weaver, the wisdom of an Indian guru, or the camaraderie between bike

travellers. Earthling generosity doesn't stop to amaze us. Invitations to spend moments in a family home in any country is a learning and comforting experience, a kind of soul food for the way traveller.

We favour a question period at the end of our public presentations and one inquiry that keeps coming back is the state of our «derrière»! With over 200,000 km pedalled in around 70 countries, to some, we look like experts on pain in the butt! Bruising and irritation can put a damper on the most inspired travels. A not-well-kept secret amongst initiate long-distance riders: Brooks Saddles!

For more information visit www.pedalmag.com



Above:
Bicycle Route of "The Ring of Fire"

PILGRIMAGE ON A BROOKS SADDLE

Written by Kazusuke Koike

A great friend of mine and I did a Buddhist pilgrimage in Shikoku Island of Japan. As we were pursuing a relaxed time and a spiritual retreat, we used bikes with up turn handle

bars. And also we chose Brooks 66 Aged saddles, which gave us the best possible comfort during the pilgrimage. We rode approx. 70km every day for weeks. And we took a pilgrimage foot-path which was opened more than 1000 years ago. It is a tour to visit 88 temples. We saw quite a few pilgrims on foot who had sore feet problems and were resting beside the road. Owing to Brooks saddles we had no such pains. And at the end of the grand tour, our saddles were becoming almost a part of us! The saddle bag showing in the photo is old; it is more than 60 years old Brooks!



ACROSS THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES

Written by Elizabeth Howe



In the dead of winter, Jason and I headed out on our first fully-loaded bike tour across the Southern United States. Things were going surprisingly well for such touring novices...until about day three when we realized where our planning went terribly wrong. We did not have Brooks Saddles on our bikes! (gasp) Being in the middle of nowhere, we had to keep riding and hope that in the next major city we would find some B17's. After a few more bum-burning riding days, we got to Phoenix, made some calls and found a shop with TWO B17s and they just happened to match our bikes, green and honey. PERFECT!

As we rode away in style on our newly outfitted seatposts, we had no idea what type of adventure lay on the road ahead (*aside from road kill that is*). After 56 days, over 3300 miles, countless flat tires, a few too many dog chases, and the most diverse, amazing scenery, people and culture that spans the US, we arrived in St. Augustine, Florida. While no people were cheering for us at the beach, we were instead greeted by a light rain (one of three on the entire trip), a rainbow, warm waves and a beaming sense of accomplishment. Whenever people ask how we did it, I just say, "Put it in your granny gear, don't stop pedaling and eventually you will make it." The human body and spirit is enduring. Warm nights and tail winds to you all.

VELOCOS WORLD TOUR

Written by Monika Estermann & Robert Spengeler

For us, Moni and Robi, the bicycle adventure around the world began 4 years ago in front of our home in Zürich, Switzerland. When we left our small safe "island" in the middle of Europe, we were absolutely greenhorns without any experience. Our plan was to cycle through Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iran and Southern Pakistan as far as India.

The first stage was an appetizer which made us hungry for more! We decided to continue our journey and went back to Pakistan. This time we cycled the Northern part along the Karakorum Highway into China. It followed a 4 months indescribable rough journey through Western Tibet until Lhasa. From the roof of the world we made our way along the Friendship Highway to Kathmandu. Along this mainly bumpy and stony road I never suffered any sit comfort problems. Monika was always a bit jealous of my Brooks, this fine piece of leather :-)

After we spent a couple of months in colorful and unique India, we were ready for the mountains again. We set off for the legendary Ladakh and Kashmir and escaped the simmering heat in the Indian plains. The Indian Himalaya is a paradise for cyclists,

motorcyclists and other high pass maniacs. We recommend it, a great and unforgettable experience! After a few high passes, many higher than 5000 meters above sea level, we set off for a totally new experience. From the thin air of the Himalayas, we headed to tropical Southern India. There we packed our bicycles and all our stuff on a 40 feet sailing yacht, which was our home for the next 6 weeks. The sailing trip was an intensive time with heights and depths. The long haul was not only a big challenge for us, but also for the bicycles and the saddles which had to resist the forces of marine nature too. After we reached South-East Asia, we still suffered from the aftermath of malaria, which we picked up in Goa, just before we got on the boat. Our experience with malaria certainly counts to the rare negative experiences.

Along the mainly flat stage up to Laos through Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, we took it easy and so we recovered very well. The route from Northern Laos to South-West China and all the way up along the Tibetan border to the Qinghai Lake and the source of the Yellow River was quite a mountainous affair. We had to climb daily almost 1000 meters of height.

We didn't regret our "detour" through the mountains, as we were rewarded with unique scenery and a lot of fresh air. This area is very rugged and not very populated, a perfect

Saddles to suit every taste!

As you can see, BROOKS quality is well appreciated. In your own interests ensure that every cycle you stock is fitted with a BROOKS Saddle — it is one of the first things the discerning cyclist looks for when purchasing a new machine.

and CYCLE BAGS too..

BROOKS

The Finest Saddle in the World

THE MOSSBROOK
A fully stiffened Leathercloth Bag with two large side pockets, and fitted with the BROOKS patent quick release attachment.
Size : 13" x 8" x 9 1/2"
Price : 41/6

B. BROOKS & CO. LTD., BIRMINGHAM, 3

region, where you can pitch your tent close to a small and clear stream. In these moments you wouldn't swap places with anybody, you forget the efforts you made along the way and this counts the most, besides the meetings with the locals. We will never forget all the hearty invitations from locals, even when they had almost nothing to offer. When we were tired, hungry, freezing and needed a roof over the head, they offered us food and shelter. After a Loop through South-Eastern China and more than 35.000 km on our bicycles, we are heading now to Japan. There we will pick up a Brooks Saddle for Monika, since only with the right companion you can keep going! We will cross Japan's Hokkaido Island from South to North and move on to Russia, where we will track back through East Siberia and Mongolia to China again. But that's definitely another story!

For more information visit www.velocos.ch

Left:
Brooks Advertisement of the 1960s

MY EROICA RIDES

Written by **Richard Hallett**
 Editor RoadCyclingUK.com and SHIFT magazine

In just over a decade the Eroica, which started with a handful of enthusiasts, has blossomed into one of the premier cyclosporitive events in Europe, with some 3000 riders expected to take to the route of the next edition. In 2004, when I took part for the first of four times, the ride welcomed fewer than 500 entrants, but its growth since comes as no surprise; this is the most enjoyable randonnee, sportive, "granfondo", call it what you will, on the calendar.

It is also one of the hardest, as I found out on that first visit. On receipt of an invitation from event sponsor Brooks England, I took a look at the prospectus, noted the various pictures of the moustachioed Luciano Berruti, the face of the Eroica, and decided to find a bicycle similar to the one he was riding. I turned up armed with a 1932 Raleigh Record expecting a relatively straightforward ride and spent 12 hours repenting my choice of machine as I repeatedly turned the back wheel around to change gear, walked many of the incessant steep climbs and pedalled the entire 200 km because I had no freewheel.

Vowing not to repeat the exercise, I returned the following year with a racing bike I owned back in the 1980s and flew round three hours quicker. With down tube-mounted gear levers, brake cables waving in the wind and toeclips and straps, the 1981 Roberts easily qualified for the title 'Heroic' bike, which is partly what the event is about. Entrants are encouraged to ride older cycles and wear matching garb, and the 'expo' in Gaiole in Chianti, home of the Eroica, does a roaring trade in woollen jerseys, many made specially for the ride by Brooks, as well as fat tubular tyres suitable for the gravel roads over which much of the route passes.

These "strade bianche", or white roads, are the real reason for the existence of the ride. They are dusty, bumpy and hard on cars and cycles alike, and are disliked by some local residents for the wear they cause to their vehicles. Already many have been covered with Tarmac and more are under threat. Nevertheless, the strade bianche are a typical feature of the Tuscan countryside and when Giancarlo Brocci, organiser of the Eroica, wanted to find a way to publicise their plight, he came up with the idea for the ride.

Combining as it does a savage route with more than 4000 metres of climbing (and descending), beautiful scenery and an unmatched opportunity to indulge in a nostalgic appreciation of the virtues and challenges of old-time cycling, the Eroica now attracts entrants from all over the world, most of them decked out in and riding the oldest kit they can find. So successful and influential has the event become that it has inspired the founding of the Retro Ronde in Flanders, similar in concept but much shorter and less arduous. Even more telling is the instant success of the Monte Paschi Eroica, a road race for the professionals run over many of the same strade bianche as the randonnee itself. Run just a couple of days after the amateur ride, the first edition, won by Alexandr Kolobnev of Team CSC, was such a hit that the second took place less than six months later, with superstar Fabian Cancellara the clear winner. The pros make it look so easy I might ride a modern bike this year... www.eroica.it



BROMPTON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Written by **Katharine Horsman**
 Marketing Executive
 Brompton Bicycle Limited

The 3rd Brompton World Championship will be held on Sunday 28th September 2008 at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, as part of the Bike Blenheim Palace event. Building on its first two successful years in Spain, the Championship will be bigger and better than ever before, with up to 500 competitors taking part. First held in 2006, the event grew strongly in 2007; both races were held in Barcelona, and organised by Brompton's Spanish distributor. 2008 sees the Brompton World Championship come home to England; competitors will take to the track in the country where the iconic bike is designed, engineered and hand-built to order.

The Brompton World Championship

is not a mass participation ride, it is a race registered with British Cycling. As in previous years, participants will be timed whilst completing a set number of laps on a specified course. The 2008 event will be held over 2 laps of a 6.5km course set in Blenheim Palace's famous grounds, and will take in many of the key landmarks of this World Heritage site.

Rules for the event are not overly onerous, but poor dress sense will not be tolerated: a suit jacket, collared shirt and tie are de rigeur for participants; sports attire is not permitted, and Lycra shorts/leggings are specifically named, shamed and excluded. This is a serious race, but it has a sense of humour!

There are a number of competitive categories; as in previous years there will be prizes for the fastest three males, females and teams, and the Best Dressed. In addition to this we will be introducing two new categories: Junior (under 17) and Veteran (60 plus). Brompton will be giving away

two S2L-Xs (superlight bikes with titanium componentry) to the fastest male and female, and Brooks England will be sponsoring the second place positions and the team event.

The deadline for registration is Sunday 14th September 2008, but if you are late take a look at:

www.brompton.co.uk
 and find details for the next edition!

Top:
 Picture of the professional road race "Monte Paschi Eroica" (www.bettiniphoto.net)

Center:
 The Brooks peloton during one of the past editions of "L'Eroica" vintage ride

Left:
 Picture of a recent Brompton World Championship

Events

THE BICYCLE FILM FESTIVAL IN NYC

Written by Suzette Ayotte

New York City is a city unlike any other, permeating the very core of its contents. Take a person, place them in another city, the saunter changes. Take a building, plant it in another city; the façade looks different in the light. Take a bicycle, ride it in another city; its journeys change. But take a Brooks saddle, put it on any bicycle in any city, and – like New York – its soul remains intact.

It was no surprise then that almost every organizer from 17 major cities, representing nine countries where the Bike Film Festival (BFF) is shown was in attendance for the 2008 premiere in New York City. Having begun here eight years ago, the NYC BFF kick-off is vital not just for film viewing but for understanding the foundation of the BFF and its urban spirit. Each organizer will take with them a tiny fragment of New York, as the BFF makes its annual global sojourn. It's an unswayed Thursday evening. The traffic seems melancholy, as though



someone has depressed a mute button on standard city din. Riding a bike in NYC is the penultimate pleasure of urban cycling. There's a feeling of full integration with the City. You feel as though you belong there, on your bike and yet there is a certain degree of kinship with the cars.

Winding around the corner to the buzz outside 40 Great Jones St, we arrive at the makeshift Art Gallery opening, featuring two wheeled

sculptures and cycling photography – much but not all, generating from local artists. Bikes adorn the exterior walls and sidewalks like scaffolding, locked to meters, to each other – ultimately unsafe in New York but on this evening, spared loss by the presence of gallery goers spilling onto the street.

Two hours later we are at the BFF staff and sponsor dinner. BFF organizers are here from London, Tokyo, Melbourne,



Sydney, Vienna, Toronto, Minneapolis and Portland. It's introduction time and the word "Brooks" elicits raucous applause from the fifty-strong room. I'm swept up in the energy, emitting a consenting, "Whooooo hooooo!"

The urns of red wine emptied, we trickle out onto the streets, to our unmetered parking spots. The unease in my gut will become commonplace over the next three days knowing that each second of bike exposure to

Top center:
People at the BFF in New York
Top right:
The Green Swallow BFF Limited Edition
Center:
Playing Bike Polo in London
(www.roxyerickson.com)
Bottom:
Flyer of the Shoreditch Bike Polo Invitational

urban wilderness – locked or not – is a gamble in possibility. The risk of loss is greater than that of any other US city. My TSR Moulton is parked next to Trystan's ultra light fixie-disguised-as-beater and his saddle is gone – stripped from its clamp. The TSR's shiny new \$350 B17 affixed atop its carbon seat post is still there. We're baffled. We know we've just experienced urban roulette and that was New York, permeating our core. Over the next three days, the fixie, messenger and cycling lore of the City will pass through Anthology Film Archives to digest a selection of over fifty films that make up the Bicycle Film Festival. They'll pass by the Swallow Tree, and shortly upon taking their seats, the Brooks film trailer will roll. Whether they own a Brooks saddle or not, they will feel an affinity and familiarity. They will understand that Brooks, like New York City, has an impenetrable soul.

www.bicyclefilmfestival.com



SHOREDITCH BIKE POLO INVITATIONAL

Written by Roxy Erickson

"Like horse polo only on a bike?!" he asks me. I went through my rehearsed answer of "Yes, but we play with a street hockey ball on a hard court, concrete", this passerby with a million questions looks at me quizzically. He has stopped me to ask about my strange looking bike; tiny handlebars, a disc wheel made with zip ties securing a cut apart estate agent's sign to my front wheel. He points to the wheel. "It makes for great defence, to block the goal and to prevent mallets and balls from getting caught in my spokes and putting me over

my handlebars." I explain London Brick Lane Bike Polo started only a year ago but we have created quite the scene. There are now offshoots of the group in South, West, and North London. There is even an all-women group called the Trixie Chix who also play. The major newspapers have all come around, but that's not what it's about. It's a community, it's a time to catch up with your friends, and let's be honest it's fun to play such a silly looking sport.

A sport however, it is. It was included in the Olympics in 1908 and there are photos of Prince's Harry and Will playing, though on grass. Now there are hundreds of teams around the world, where many clubs have been playing together for over five years. The rules are simple: first to

five points, play never stops, and if you put your foot down you have to tap out before you can get back into the game. Contact between players is part of the sport, and it's aggressive and fast, but playing like a gentleman is the number one rule.

This August 17th brings London's 2nd tournament ever. All participants will be riding bikes that they've built up to their own specs; handmade disc wheels, one-to-one gear ratios and Brooks saddles. The tournament will be hosting teams from Berlin, Paris, and across the UK. As part of Shoreditch Festival and Tour de Hackney we are expecting thousands of spectators. But again, that's not the point. Bike Polo, separate from other sports I've been a part of, has a camaraderie that's rarely seen amongst

competitors. It is played by a group of friends whose team-relationships only exist at tournaments. Week to week, (4 different days organized across London) it is friends, not rivals that are meeting up. And it will be friends training together in these upcoming weeks until the morning of the tournament. That day however will see friends become adversaries gearing up to break each other's bikes and become London's Bike Polo Champion for the next year.

For more information on Brick Lane Bike Polo, Roxy Erickson, Trixie Chix or Shoreditch Festival please check out the following sites:

bricklanebikepolo.wordpress.com
www.roxyerickson.com
www.myspace.com/trixiechix



GREAT INSPIRATION FOR MORE BAGS

Written by **Andrea Meneghelli**

Looking at the past is the likeliest thing to do when working for a company with such an unexplored heritage as Brooks. The many products in the pages of thick patent books bound in leather and worn period catalogues full of pencil notes whisper to us: "Get me back to life! Reintroduce me!"

We are easily tempted to go back to the past as we see the designs of a variety of products, ranging from clothes to shoes, body belts and braces, from chain guards and gear cases to bicycle brakes, from leather punch balls to motorcycle tools, from car trunks to suitcases, cycle and motorcycle bags. As we turn the pages looking at the different drawings and reading the texts of old patent applications, we wonder what is the right thing to do. There is certainly more than one rea-

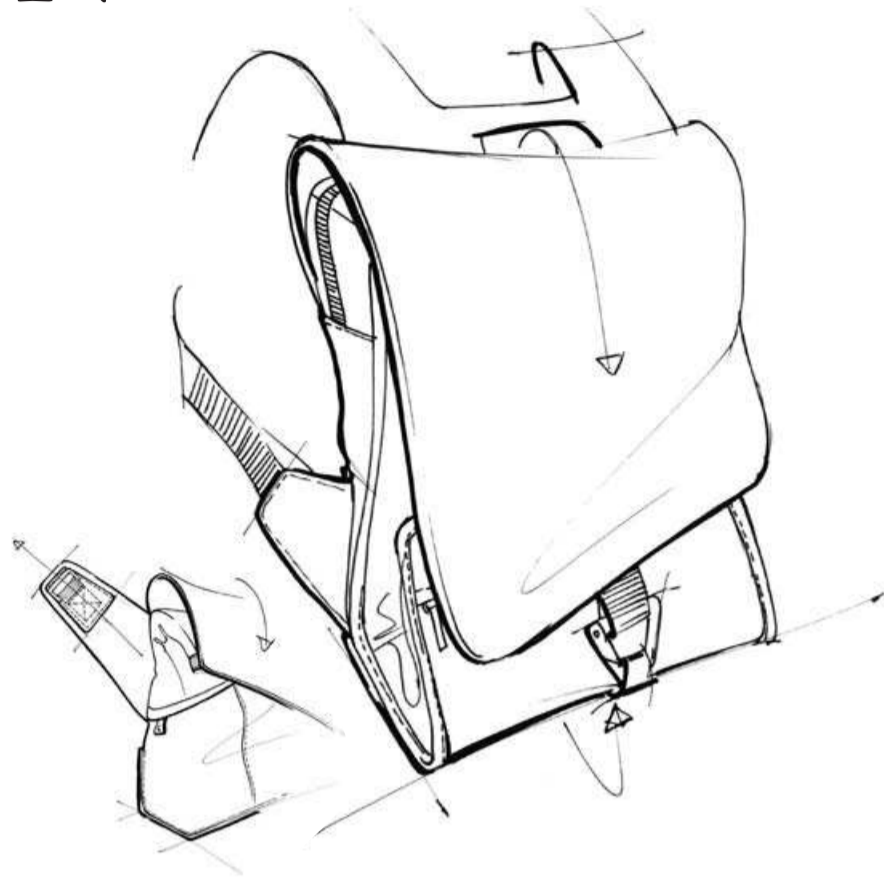
son why Brooks Saddles have survived for over a century while other products have not. We have already done the exercise of bringing back to life old designs of saddle bags. Reviving the 1896 Challenge and the 1910 D-Shaped Tool Bags has been a success, but we desire to do more than just bring back to life a great old product.

What would John Boulton and his son Boulton Brooks do if they were still alive? Would they do a contemporary product? Probably yes, as they have always done. The image we have of Brooks now is that of a traditional company, because we are used to associating it with Leather Saddles. It is difficult to imagine what the perception of Brooks was to the eyes of a customer going to buy a Brooks Bag in a shop in the 1920s and 1930s. It is less dif-

icult to imagine what it was during the 1950s and later, after Brooks split his bags and suitcases division into a different company. This company, called Antler, is still alive and on the market with modern bags and suitcases.

The Brooks company and business nowadays is very different than what it used to be. Besides the great heritage in saddles we also have one in cycle bags, dating back to the patents of 1909 and 1910. This is where we want to focus in the next few years. We share the inspirations from the past and mix them with our new ideas. The design group started working on more cycle bags a few months ago, and a new range is about to sprout.

We share with you some of the earliest drawings of what will be the next collection.



EXPLAINING THE BROOKS BARBICAN

Written by **Vincent Bourgeois**



Carry, wear, pull, fasten and ride. These words together with the illustrations is what explains the functioning of the Barbican's shoulder belt. This is in fact the innovative part of this messenger bag (patent pending). What is normally done by two belts on other messenger bags, the Barbican does it with one. Once adjusted to the desired length depending on the height and size of the cyclist, the bag can be casually carried or properly worn over one's shoulder. Pulling the two ends of the belt, this can be fastened around the waist for better load distribution and increased stability during the ride.



Above:
Barbican Messenger Bag and illustrations explaining the functioning of the belt

Top right:
Drawings of 2 bags from the 2010 collection
Center right:
The Camden in the Hoxton



CAMDEN TO COMPLEMENT HOXTON

Written by **Cristina Würdig**



Street markets are one of the many attractions offered by the boroughs of London. When looking for a name for our tote bag and handlebar basket we thought about shopping by bicycle. This is a common practice on the continent, especially in Amsterdam and other big European cities. In London it is slowly becoming more popular.

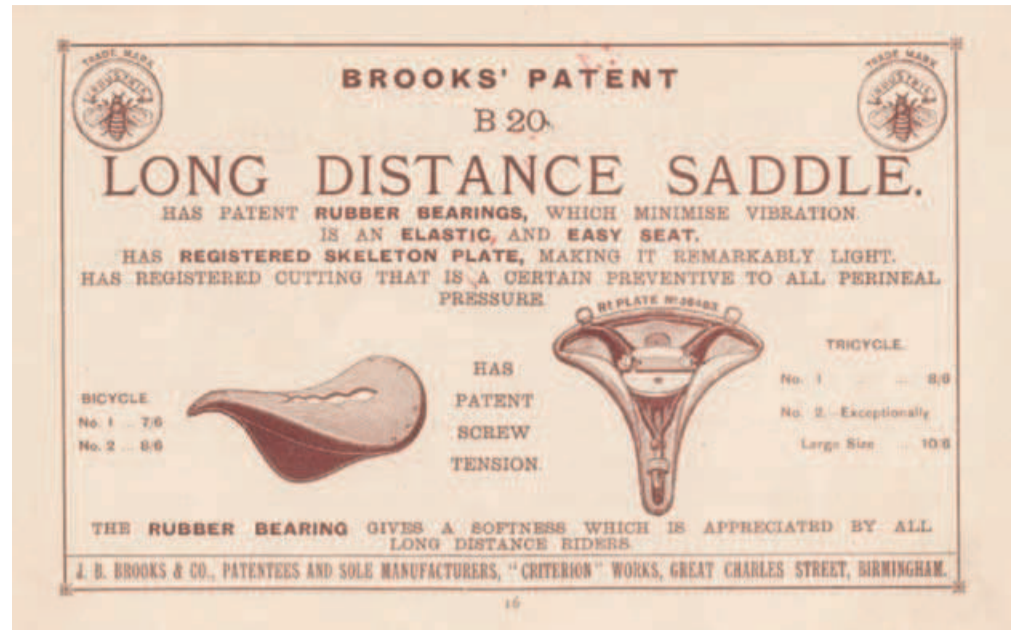
After the successful introduction of the Hoxton Wire Basket last year, we are glad to present our Tote Bag, named Camden after the most visited market in London with approximately 100,000 people each weekend.

The Camden Tote Bag is designed to be the complement to the Hoxton Basket, having dimensions which make it fit perfectly into it. The Camden is made of water-resistant fabric with leather handles. It is available in colour combinations to match the style of the Brick Lane Roll Up Panniers and of the Barbican Messenger Bag.

DESIGNED IN THE 1890s

Written by **Andrea Meneghelli** — *Continues from page 1*

Discomfort in the genital area is definitely not a new issue. Brooks has produced saddles with cutting for over 50 years, till the 1950s we may suppose from the catalogues we preserve in our archives. This feature eventually went out of production after World War II. For many decades nobody spoke about the cutting anymore, until today's saddle makers introduced this feature on modern "plastic saddles". Why was the production of leather saddles with cutting discontinued? We don't know, but certainly it is now time to reintroduce this line of saddles.



FROM THE FIRST SAMPLE TO 100 TEST PROTOTYPES

During the last year we have produced a number of prototypes of the Brooks Imperial Saddles and distributed them to our best dealers and partners, as well as to over 100 passionate cyclists. This focus group was including Brooks and non-Brooks users, cyclists who like saddles with cut-out and those who don't. These people have thoroughly tested the B17 Imperial and B17 Narrow Imperial on various types of bicycles, terrains and weather conditions. On this page and on the next you may read a selection of their comments. Many more are still being written on BikeForums.net.



THE NEW IMPERIAL

From the 1890s to the 1950s Brooks developed many shapes and sizes of cutting. When redesigning the cutting we prototyped a few of the original shapes and our final choice was the form found in a drawing of patent N° 20,144 of 1898. We slightly changed the length and width of the cutting and developed 2 distinct versions of it: a longer and wider one for men and a shorter and narrower one for women. These address the different needs of pressure relief of men and women.



EXPERIENCE THE BROOKS MYSTIQUE

Written by
Daniel O'Connor, California
(‘bottomfeeder’ on bikeforums.net)

I was excited about being selected for the Brooks Imperial focus group for a few reasons. First and foremost; I have suffered from perineal induced numbness all my 30 years of adult cycling. I have tried a myriad of saddles with only occasional, moderate success. So I sincerely believe I am an ideal candidate. Also; I had never tried a Brooks saddle of any type. So I jumped at the chance (as did a legion of other BikeForums.net participants) to apply to test one free of charge and finally experience the Brooks mystique. I am, after all, the “bottomfeeder”!

But it's not all about getting free saddles. After monitoring the Brooks testing thread, I believe the BikeForums.net group has done a great job of providing enthusiastic, valuable feedback on a “new product”. And so here are my thoughts in a nutshell. Well the bottom line is; after riding the Brooks Imperial for nearly 2000 miles

over the last 3 months, I can honestly say that it is the most comfortable saddle I have ever ridden. I really have to look hard in order to find anything to complain about. And at worst, I would only be able to dredge up some very occasional slight sit bone tenderness. When you compare that to the fact that I no longer experience any perineal induced numbness, whatsoever, it simply pales into insignificance.

So in my opinion, Brooks has succeeded with the Imperial, where others have failed. As I said previously, I have tried many other saddles, of varying dimensions, all with anatomical cut-outs intended to relieve pressure on the perineal area. After comparing these other saddles with the Imperial, I am convinced they failed due to even a moderate amount of padding. Simply put; the sit bones sink into the padding, allowing the perineal area to contact the saddle, creating enough pressure to impede blood flow. On the Imperial, my sit bones support my weight, and allow the perineal area to ride above the firm leather saddle, maintaining enough clearance and lack of pressure to keep blood flowing where it should.

I would say that it took me about a week and 4 or 5 riding sessions for the saddle to break in to the point where my sit bones were not tender during or after my 30 mile, one way commute. During this time I did experience some limited, but in no way as severe, perineal numbness. However, I believe that this was due to not having yet fine tuned the saddle position. I will say that the Imperial is ultra sensitive to even the slightest adjustments in saddle tilt, height, and fore/aft positioning. There is even lacing tightness and saddle tension issues to consider - but I have only tightened the laces once.

And so it cannot be stressed enough, that the new Imperial owner should pay careful attention to set up, and know that further adjustment can make all the difference between a bad experience and a great result. After reading reports from a few other testers who had problems, I believe my initial experience with the Imperial has been blissfully easy. But I will say again that it has been nothing short of amazing.

Thanks again for a great product. I think you have a winner.

THE HOLY GRAIL

Written by
Adam Hicks, Colorado

Having biked for many years, searching for a saddle that feels good has become akin to searching for the Holy Grail. I'm not the first to make this allusion, nor will I be the last, but it's a fitting one. Discomfort of the butt, perineum and inner thighs has almost become an accepted fact of life for cyclists.

I started commuting long routes, full time, about a year ago. Up to that point I had raced mountain bikes, raced track bikes, raced some cyclocross, even criteriums on road. I had taken up utility cycling for around the town duties which was very convenient seeing as how I lived in small-ish towns. When I moved to the city we decided to live a ways outside to keep our sanity, and thus began my

“long” commute of what was then 15 miles one way and is now 17 miles one way. I usually put at least 200 miles during the weekdays on the saddle.

I rode the most comfortable saddle to me, which was a far cry from being ultimately comfortable. It was doable, but as I mentioned, pain was an accepted fact of life. Then I read about Brooks. As soon as I had saved my money I bought a B-17 Champion Standard. Immediately I could tell it was better than anything I had ridden. I put about 2000 miles on it in a very short period of time and it seemed to conform well to my personal shape. My only complaint was that it is a bit hard, despite the miles, and there seemed to be a ridge forming in the middle that put a minor amount of pressure on my perineal area. However it had completely eliminated prostate and other rearward soft tissue discomfort.

Then along came the Imperial. Loving Brooks already I was extremely interested, more for the added flexibility of the leather on the sit-bones than for the alleviated perineal pressure. In fact, the perineal pressure

I was dealing with on my B17 Std was minor enough that one could almost say it was neglectable.

Sitting upon the Imperial for the first time I knew instantly I was on a better product. The perineal pressure was gone. Furthermore it was indeed more flexible thanks to the cutout, and more forgiving on the sit bones.

I rated it outstanding out of the box. I didn't adjust a thing, but it was already almost perfect. I've ridden it almost 1500 miles now, and it only seems to get better. The one thing I've noticed, though, is that the added flexibility also means that it changes more, and more often. Thus I feel it is an ongoing battle with positioning to keep it where it is most perfect. I have still not used the spanner nor have I touched the lacing.

As of now Imperials will go on all my bikes. The success I see in the saddle is in the flexibility, not just the relief from pressure. In my opinion a cut-out design on all Brooks models would be a resounding success. All too many people shy away from sit-bone distress when it could be alleviated by the cut-out.

Letters

LIKE A GLOVE

Before trying the Brooks Imperial, I had always regarded the B17 as a comfortable saddle. However, I could only use the regular B17 on bikes with a fairly upright riding position or I would experience excessive perennial pressure, leading to numb genitals. I was excited to hear that Brooks was considering the idea of producing saddles with cutouts, and was ecstatic to hear from Brooks that I had been accepted in the Brooks Imperial pilot program. I mounted the Imperial on my recently completed randoneering bike, a 2007 Salsa Casseroll. This bike has 1" saddle to bar drop, and after trying for 700 miles, I couldn't make a regular B17 work comfortably. No matter how I adjusted it, I'd get perennial pressure and genital numbness. This isn't a failing of the B17, it's just engineered for bikes that have the handlebars approximately level with the saddle. The first 400 miles on the Imperial were somewhat uncomfortable. I was expecting the saddle to break in after about 100-150 miles like my other B17s, but this one took much longer. The laces make the saddle stiffer, and the leather seemed a little tougher and thicker than it is in my other B17s (but this could be my imagination). But even though the saddle was still breaking in, I noticed a major positive change - the problems with genital numbness and perennial pressure were gone! After about 500 miles, the Brooks Imperial showed definite dimple marks from my sit bones (indicating that it was breaking in), and it started getting much more comfortable. After 700 miles, the Brooks Imperial fits me like a glove and it's honestly hard for me to ride any other saddle. I pamper this saddle out of fear that Brooks will never put it into production. I rate its comfort as a perfect 10/10 and I can't think of how Brooks could make it better. Please put this saddle into production, I'm begging you. I plan on buying three of them for my other bikes.

Matthew Deaner, Indiana

PURCHASING AT LEAST ONE MORE

The perineal pressure differences were alarmingly apparent. On the whole, I have been quite pleased, and I am looking forward to some opportunities I have over the upcoming few weeks to boost my mileage totals significantly. The Imperial is so much more comfortable than any other saddle that I've ridden over longer distances that, yes, I will definitely be purchasing at least one more - possibly 2.

John Barry, Pennsylvania

B17 IMPERIAL VS. B17 CHAMPION STANDARD

The initial 'break-in' period was much shorter with the Imperial than with my B17 Std. I was concerned at first, that I might run into hammocking problems as I put more miles on it, but the lacing has kept things taut; just like my B17 Std...

I've done 2 century rides so far (200 km and double century planned over the next 2 months) and over 300 commuting miles on the B17 Imperial and I don't plan on switching to a different saddle. Especially for long

distance riding and lots of climbing (7000+ feet) the B17 Imperial is the most comfortable saddle I've been on. The cutout really helps to alleviate the pressure I was getting from my B17 Std when sitting for a long climb.

Jason Dul, Washington

A NEWLY PERSUADED BROOKS JUNKIE

Count me in as a newly persuaded Brooks junkie. As I've said earlier, the B17 Imperial that I received gave me the desired relief with my first ride on it - a 60 mile ride. Not many seats come out of the chute like that. With over 1000 miles on it in the last month, it hasn't had a noticeable change in ride characteristics since about 200-300 miles. It's a class act. Classic good looks, durable and time-tested materials, and no intrusive ride qualities. After a few hundred miles you just don't notice it. For me, the Imperial is pretty close to perfection. I'm looking forward to putting another 400 miles on it in the next week as I step up my endurance training. I'll let

ya'll know how it performs on Seattle-to-Portland in mid-July, which I'm going to do as a 200 miler.

Paul Vincent, Oregon

BACK TO THE ORIGINAL

BEFORE - All of my vintage bikes came with what apparently was the original saddle. Not one of them came with a cut out. I've switched almost all of them to a saddle with a cut out. Even though I am a woman, I still don't like my sensitive bits to get numb! I have longed for a Brooks saddle for several of my bikes for a number of years. I have always decided against it because I really prefer a saddle with a cut out (Specialized Dolce).

AFTER - Nothing but love for this saddle. I received a Brooks B17 Imperial, and so far have around 150 miles on it. My average speed is up, climbing up hills is easier, and absolutely no problems with chafing, soreness, or numbness of tender parts of my (female) anatomy. I look forward to obtaining at least a couple more of the Imperials.

Margaret Laverty, Washington

HUGE IMPACT ON CYCLING ENJOYMENT

One of the opinions I have regarding the saddle durability is that most padded saddles on the market begin breaking down in 6-12 months of serious riding. If the Brooks saddle will last two years, it will do as well as any other comparably priced saddle and probably be more comfortable. Most Brooks owners expect 15-20-25 year from their saddles. Even if it only lasted five years before complete breakdown, it would still be great. After all, we put up with changing tires and drive train components much more often than saddles, yet a saddle has a huge impact on enjoyment.

Bob Davis, Texas

VERY PLEASED OVERALL

I have found the cutout to be very useful allowing a lower saddle to bar drop that was not achievable with a regular B17. It was comfortable from the second I sat on it. I actually got

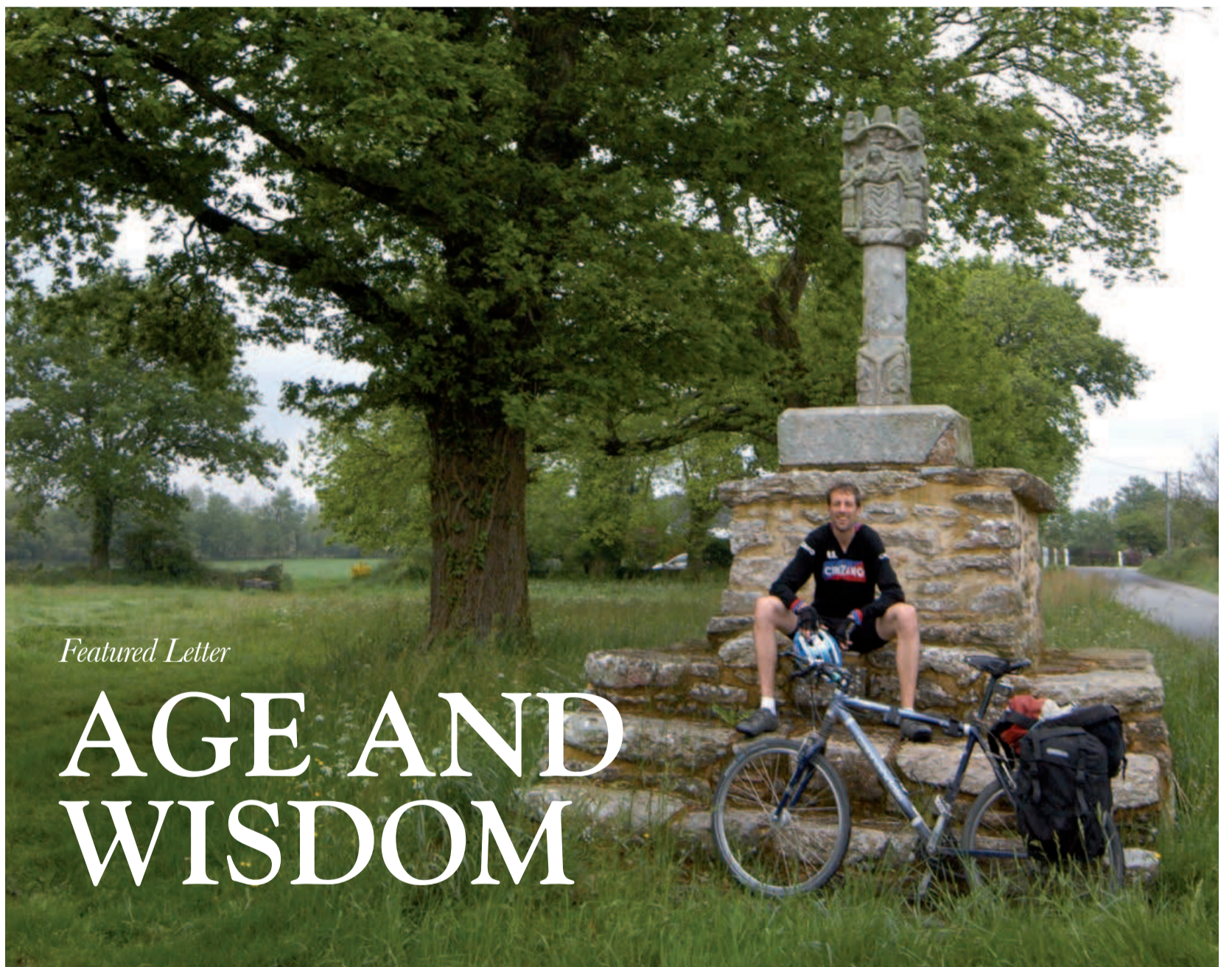
to test out the B17N Imperial as well. I find the B17N to be better than a regular only because I have thick thighs so the narrow profile is very nice when I am pedaling fast. Overall I am very pleased with the saddle and the cutout is a really large improvement.

Dominique Partin, New York

NEARLY IDEAL SITTING PLATFORM

This Brooks Imperial saddle has a nearly ideal sitting platform which seems to add confidence in bike handling. In the drops the saddle avoids the dreaded perennial pressure and resultant numbness issues which many other saddles stand guilty of by providing some "give", or "compliance" in his area with the cutout design. The saddle seems equally adept to the rider who prefers a more upright position as well as the rider who prefers a more aero position.

Neal Hood, North Carolina



Featured Letter

AGE AND WISDOM

I am now 36 years old and I have been on a bike saddle pretty consistently since I was four, but I never owned or tried a Brooks saddle till now. I had heard that they were very comfortable but heavy. When I was younger, I didn't even think of a Brooks because I had to have the lightest and highest performance component that I could buy on my bike. Now with a little age and wisdom, weight and performance are not so much of an issue. Getting there first and fastest is no longer an imperative. Quality, comfort and durability are now more important factors to my cycling lifestyle, with an emphasis on quality. My current bicycling activities are now centered on daily commuting, weekend rides and touring, activities where these parameters are the most important. I received my Brooks B17 Narrow upon return from spring vacation in April. I immediately replaced the original plastic saddle on my Cannondale F900 turned into a daily commuter. The Brooks Saddle was a bit heftier in the hand, but once on the bike, the extra weight was not noticeable compared to the old saddle. I positioned the saddle with a slight nose up position from suggestions on bike forums, and put a coat of Proofide on the saddle for the commute the next morning. The commute to work is about 13 km, one way, and I usually put on some cycling clothes that I change upon arrival. The Imperial shined in the fact that it was mostly unobtrusive and reasonably comfortable for a short ride. (...). Since receiving the saddle, I have logged approximately 400 kilometers and it is just starting to form dimples from breaking in. It has been getting progressively more comfortable and it is holding up quite well. I took the bike on a two day weekend tour with my wife from Rennes to the Southern coast of Brittany. We accumulated about 80 km of cycling per day. The Brooks Saddle was imperceptible and no discomfort was discernable at the end of the day. My wife, on the other hand, with a gel saddle, had a sore rear. (...). To sum up for now, the B17 Narrow Imperial is a good saddle for its application in an aggressively positioned bike with low handle bars. The cut out does relieve some pressure and works well in conjunction with padded cycling shorts.

Laurent Griscom, France

Letters

OBVIOUS RELIEF IN THE GENITAL AREA

Thanks for sending the imperial B17 saddle. I'm using it on a trekking bike with a nearly athletic seating position. The saddle is being used for everyday commuting around town (mainly shorter rides, around 20 minutes) as well as weekend touring at a speed between 20-35 km/h.

The saddle felt very comfortable from the first moment, break in time seems to be reduced by the cutting. There is an obvious relief in the genital area in comparison to my Brooks Flyer. **Alex Vogel, Germany**

RIDING IN JEANS

It took about 5-7 adjustments to get the tilt and set back of the saddle 'dialed in' to where it was comfortable. Once the set up process was completed, I found the saddle to be very comfortable on both short 3-10 miles rides and longer 30-50 miles rides. This is the first saddle that I have used that felt good while riding in jeans and regular cotton or nylon shorts.

Ben Hrouda, Ohio

FLEX CONTROL BY THE LACING

Wow. When I got my first BROOKS B17, back in January, initially, I was rather dismayed by its firmness. It took a few months but eventually, my boney butt pressed itself into the leather and I was officially hooked. When the Imperial arrived, I was expecting to go through the same discomfort. However, right out of the package, this baby felt like it was made for my rump. I know lacing is nothing new for BROOKS saddles, but I was really taken by how much control they allow the user in getting the "flex" right where it is needed. My interest in having a cut-out saddle is due to my perianal fistula. This was due to my having Crohn's disease. This fistula occasionally becomes inflamed and turns into an abscess in a most undesirable area. Any time that it has happened in the past, I have had to forgo cycling for a week or so. Last week, it flared up again and I had some tenderness in this area. I was prescribed antibiotics, which did clear it up, but I didn't miss a day of riding. This very incident has made the Imperial tops in my book. I'm even considering a cut-out and laces for my original B17. Awesome saddle. I can't say enough about the comfort.

Michael McNair, Texas

CHRONIC SORE SPOT FINALLY HEALING

The Imperial is a beautiful saddle. It's style is more retro than modern, but it looks good on my Serotta road bike, if I do say so myself.

I had resigned myself to saddle area soreness as a fact of life I must accept to continue my passion for cycling. I am so pleased to say that in my initial rides on the Imperial (only 150 miles so far) I am experiencing much longed-for relief of the ongoing and chronic soreness I have been experiencing in the perineal area. Oh, my husband thanks you as well.

With my Terry Butterfly I had developed an ongoing sore spot that I was constantly tending. I was always

Featured Letter

THE B17 IMPERIAL

The Imperial virtually eliminates the perineal pressure that hounded me with other saddles. I had a surgery that left me with a very sensitive bottom, and the only saddle that I've been able to ride since then has been the Brooks B17 Std, but this B17 Imperial has changed the game. Even with the B17's comfort level, I've been limited to rides of about 40 miles or so... but I've found that I can ride the Imperial on rides of 50+ miles for three consecutive days! I cannot tell you how I love this saddle! The Brooks Imperial has given me my bicycle back...

Bobby J. Huckaby
Georgia



in various stages of either healing or exacerbation, depending on my riding schedule. After the last 150 or so miles on the Imperial, it seems like this chronic sore spot is really, actually FINALLY healing (insert hallelujah chorus!)...thanks to the Imperial, I am very sure of that. Needless to say, this single factor alone makes me highly favorably predisposed to the Imperial. **Colleen Linn, Ohio**

REPLACING THE STOCK SADDLE ON MY SPECIALIZED

I purchased this saddle for the ability to experience the Brooks design for myself. Yes, I will purchase another Brooks Imperial, presently considering a B17 to fit to bike I will be completing its restoration by months end.

The Brooks B17 Imperial saddle was installed to a Specialized Crossroads Sport, replacing the stock saddle. The new Brooks improved the comfort of the sit position instantly, and improved as it was ridden each time. This was the best investment I have made to improve my bike and riding experience. Before i always felt I was wearing the saddle for a few moments after riding, with the Brooks Imperial, no longer that ghost saddle sensation. I will also note that my rides are done in street type trousers/shorts, not biking type, and no issues on my evening rides.

Gordon VanderWeele, Indiana

I WOULD BUY ANOTHER IF...

This saddle was mounted on my brand new touring bike. I had planned on using this bike as my commuter and as my main touring bike this year. I applied one coat of Proofide and rode it the next day. My commute is 40km round trip, about 200 km weekly, and I ride as long as the temperature is above -10. Amazing! No sit bone

pain or perineal numbness, which has always effected me. I can ride in the drops all the way home into that damned wind and I get zero numbness. After 3 weeks on the saddle I posted this comment on BikeForums.net: "With 50-80 kmh winds and -11 morning temperatures, the last thing I need is an uncomfortable saddle. And with the new Imperial I had no worries about that. It disappears beneath me when I'm riding." That is the key for me. I do not notice this saddle. I do not shift around trying to find "the right spot". That said, I spent considerable time adjusting the position of my saddle until it was perfect. I plan on touring with this saddle in the next month. I now have no worries about how it will feel as I have already completed a metric century and I felt like I could do another 100 km. I was planning on taking my Sherpa's factory seat but that is no longer a consideration. I would buy another if they become available. **Darryl Gottselig, Canada**

UNDER ALL WEATHER CONDITIONS

My experience after I have been using gel saddles for several years is that when using this Brooks Saddle you don't get sweaty and that the comfort is far better than you would expect when you look at the saddle. I was surprised that the Brooks Imperial, that seemed so hard when looking at it, after a very short while became very comfortable, better than my previous gel saddle. I've been riding on the Brooks Imperial for 1200 km. The bike has been used under all weather conditions: rain, snow, sun...It still looks as new. I've put on Proofide once and tightened it 1/4 of a turn once.

My conclusion: I'll only use Brooks Saddles on my bikes in the future. Currently I also use a Swallow with Brooks Grips on a more sporty bike.

PeO Helge, Sweden
Owner of Skeppshultcykeln AB

THIS SADDLE IS NO EXCEPTION

I now have approximately 945 miles on my test saddle and I have to say I love it. I've been riding it on a non-suspension MTB that has been converted to a commuter and all around duty bike. Two days ago I switched it out and put it on my Trek 7.3 to ride that bike for a while. I also have a B17 Std on a comparable bike (Giant FCR3) that I can do a side-by-side comparison with. I'm really pleased at the difference in this saddle. I take really good care of my stuff and this saddle is no exception. It hasn't shown any signs of wear or breakdown. You could probably rub a little Proofide on it and put it in a box and sell it for new. I was a bit concerned that it would give some because of the size of the cut-out. I haven't noticed a thing. I haven't done anything to alter the lacing either. I just took it out and bolted it on as-is.

Others have provided feedback about how hard the saddles are, how long it takes to break in, slipping around...etc. I don't find any of these characteristics to be a problem. In fact, I wouldn't be entirely displeased if the saddle stayed hard. I think squishy, lesser quality saddles have been part of what has contributed to the perennial pain I've suffered over the years. I'm not sure what originally drew me to the B17, but it's been my personal choice since. I wouldn't buy anything else. If I had to give up my B17's, I'd probably just hang the bikes up for good. I haven't found anything that provides this amount of comfort and quality and I've tried other options. I think this new design is just going to give people like me one other option to keep on riding without pain or numbness. I think you guys have a winner. Thanks people...GREAT products. I'm a Brooks lifer!

Jeff Campbell, Indiana

IN BRIEF

This Brooks was typical of all my others in the fact that out of the box it was hard as a rock.

Michael L. Crawford, Washington

The Brooks Imperial is an extremely comfortable saddle, and takes care of the only complaint I had with the Brooks saddles I have ridden in the past: some pressure on the perineal area during longer rides (3 hours or more).

Stephen Chan, California

The Imperial keeps me in the saddle, if you know what I mean.

Robert Nutt, Kentucky



Above: The B11 and its single wire version, the original B17 with cutting, in the 1898 Brooks catalogue

JOIN THE 2009 DEALERS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

001/100 SHAGGY B17 LIMITED EDITION



We are honoured to present to you the first Shaggy B17. This is a limited edition of maximum 100 pieces, which will not be for sale. This exclusive product is dedicated to our best partners; those dealers who not only sell Brooks Saddles, but who are deeply in love with them also.

Remember - The Shaggy B17 cannot be bought. Registering with the 2009 Dealers of Excellence program, our best stockists can only receive the Shaggy B17 as a reward for their passion and commitment in selling Brooks.



01/50 WHITE SWALLOW WON BY GAMLA STANS CYKEL STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN



We are glad to announce that the Dealers of Excellence program is continuing in 2009. We are well aware of the fact that Brooks products are sold not only thanks to their irreproachable quality in every detail and to the reputation that over 100 years of history have built, but also to the word of mouth publicity that Brooks users keep making. Amongst our most precious ambassadors are our "Dealers of Excellence", which we are starting

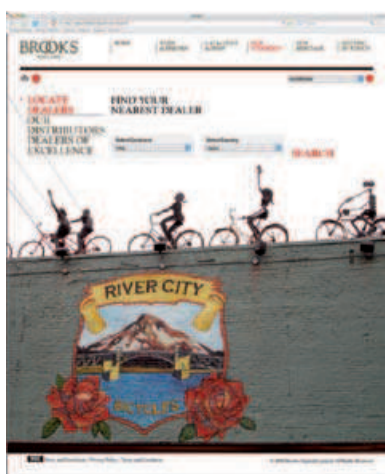


to know through this program.

We wish to thank all dealers who have registered with the program. So far we have just about 200 listed dealers, but less than 100 have taken the time to fill in the information to get the rating. We remind all dealers that in order to be rated it is necessary to fill in the information and, most important, to post some pictures of their shop. This can be easily done at www.brooksengland.com/dealers

NEW BROOKS WEBSITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

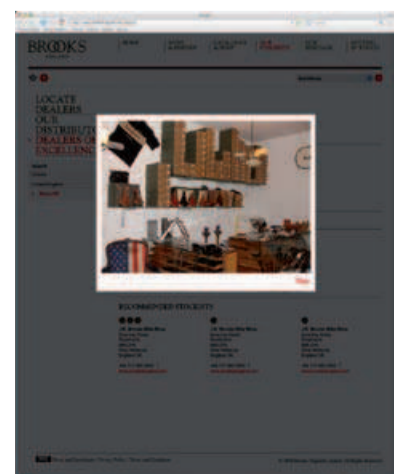
The new Brooks Website is under construction. It will dedicate major space to user generated content. Not only cyclists will be able to share their cycling experiences, writing their stories and posting their pictures, but also our dealers and our customers who build bicycles will have significant visibility. We plan to go online by February 2009.



PREMIUM LISTING FOR OUR STOCKISTS

When the new Brooks Website goes online, dealers will be listed in order of rating. Dealers with 4 or more rivets will also have pictures of their shops visible to the visitors of our website and a direct link to their website. Moreover, Supreme Dealers getting 6 rivets will be awarded each year with a special limited edition Brooks Product.

Manola Missaggia



BIKES OF DISTINCTION

PROMOTING HIGH QUALITY BICYCLES

One of the Brooks Saddles slogans used in the past was “the finishing touch to every bicycle”. Noticing an increase in demand of Brooks Saddles for original equipment manufacturing over the last few years, we suppose bicycle builders are newly putting more attention in the selection of this bicycle component. Although other details are also important, certainly Brooks can add quality, comfort and style to a two wheeler. We are particularly proud when our products enhance the personality of a bicycle, and we are going to support the promotion of such high quality cycles with our new “Bikes of Distinction” website section. Soon we will release the details of this program.

For more information visit <http://gb.cannondale.com/g-star/>



MY FIRST YEAR AT BROOKS

If you don't have a nickname at Brooks you don't exist. I joined Brooks as Ellen. 10 months on I'm now known as 'Rottweiler' or 'Growler' at the works in England. My Italian colleagues call me 'Cruella'!. I can only assume I have made an impression somewhere but, if things have improved since I've joined then I'm happy to bare my teeth (or my rule - as some workers will testify too) when the occasion is called for (make of that what you will)!

Brooks for me has become part of my life, I love being part of something steeped in tradition that in the cycling world means top quality and class (that's how I see myself !!!). Becoming part of a team that cares about what they do keeps me coming back day after day and doing my best for a company that is the best.

Ellen Pottinger

BARBARA LAWRENCE WORKER OF THE YEAR 2008

In over 30 years at the Brooks Works, Barbara Lawrence has gathered an impressive experience in all production departments: from blanking the hide to rivetting she knows every detail of the operations in-between. In the last few years she has been responsible for packaging the saddles. This operation is critical at Brooks, because, before packing, the saddles are carefully checked to guarantee that each of them meets the company's quality standards. In 1904 our forefathers wrote: “No saddles are like Brooks. Even copies have not the detail improvements which we are continually introducing and it goes without saying, they have not the QUALITY, COMFORT, and STYLE.”

Well, we have inherited the comfort and style from the designs developed by our predecessors, so guaranteeing the quality is the key responsibility at the works nowadays. Long and thorough experience is crucial to be in charge of quality. Barbara has shown to be up to the task.

Paolo Milani

TRIBUTE TO THE PASSING OF A GOOD COLLEAGUE

In February 2008, Brooks heard the sad news of the passing of one its keystone employees of recent times, Mr Derek Joseph Gardner. Brooks folk would often joke that Derek had made more comebacks in his Brooks service than Frank Sinatra. Indeed, he had 4 separate spells as a Brooks employee, clocking up 15 years service over a time span of 22 years.

Derek was a lively and popular member of the Brooks working “family”; he was the prankster amongst us, always thinking about his next joke, whilst cheerfully hammering away at those large rivets heads in the Solid Riveting Department, where he spent most of his Brooks time.

It is probably for his 4th and final time back at Brooks for which he is best remembered. Already over pension age at 67, he returned to help Brooks through a crisis. Back on the hammer himself, but more importantly, passing on his skills and experience to a couple of younger protégées. Skills that they are still using in Brooks today.

He is sadly missed by all at Brooks, not

least for all the delicious pastries that he would regularly bring us from the bakery where his wife, Margie, used to work. Derek may be gone from us, but he remains in our hearts and we

will keep the memories of happy times together. God Bless and RIP, Derek!
Steven Green



The Brooks Bugle

We wish to thank the contributing editors and our special correspondents. We take the chance to invite everybody who has an interesting story to tell for one of the next issues to post it through our website or send it to us at: thebugle@brooksengland.com

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