

## Velo Vision Sample Article

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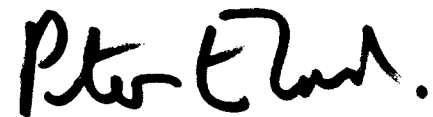
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[peter@velovision.com](mailto:peter@velovision.com)

I hope you enjoy the read.



Peter Eland  
Editor and Publisher,  
*Velo Vision*

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### Small print

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VELO VISION AND VELO-VISION  
We weren't first with the name. *Velo-Vision* (note the hyphen) is a progressive HPV-friendly bike shop in Körten, near Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany, who also make their own recumbents. *Velo Vision* magazine is working in friendly harmony with *Velo-Vision* in Germany.

*Velo Vision* is printed on paper produced from sustainable forests to Nordic Swan standards.



**COVER PHOTOGRAPH:** Riding the Esprit. Photo by Peter Eland.

**OPPOSITE:** No fare dodging for *Velo Vision*! Waiting for a train, Tikit at the ready (sorry!) at Berwick-upon-Tweed station. Photo by Peter Eland.

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### BUILDING THE FUTURE

Ample proof this issue, if any were needed, that the instinct for innovation is as strong as ever in the cycling world. We have clever, novel and functional solutions in all of our test bikes and accessories, particularly perhaps the Bike Friday Tikit with its ingenious cable-actuated folding system.

Then there are the reader contributions: people who, having come up with an idea, haven't just talked the talk, they've actually gone and built bikes to put their concept into practice. And then boldly shared the

details with us, for the feedback of fellow cyclists and designers. Each stage of the process requires some determination, some get-up-and-go, some skill and a certain bravery, and for this alone they deserve our congratulations and thanks.

Whether the ideas 'catch on' or not, we're all richer for the experience. It's a privilege that so many innovative designers have chosen *Velo Vision* as the forum to share their ideas, and we'll keep on doing our best to do them justice.

Peter Eland

## No more neckstrap

**A photographer's harness pitched at 'hikers, bikers and birders' promises to relieve the strain of a camera hung from your neck as you ride. But does it work? We tried it to find out.**



The press release looked promising: Epic Software in the USA had developed a harness which, they said, was ideal for photographers involved in all sorts of active sports, including cycling. They'd noticed a number of cycling-related e-mail addresses among their customers, and so contacted *Velo Vision* and other cycling mags to try to build on this. I do quite a lot of photography by bike, and realised some time ago that having the camera instantly to hand as you're riding along is near essential. Especially if you're with a group, you just can't keep stopping to get the camera out. It's also often good if I can ride alongside the brave volunteer modelling a review

bike and snap away when road conditions are clear. So the camera needs to be instantly accessible with one hand – but I also need to be able to put it away quickly so both hands are back on the bars for a fast descent or corner. A year or so ago I switched over from a compact digital camera to a digital SLR for the photography in *Velo Vision*, and this immediately meant a much heavier camera. While my old compact could easily be stored in a padded bag on the bars, and this worked well, the SLR and lens would take up most of a full-sized handlebar bag. They're also not as easy to lift out one-handed. I've ridden with the SLR simply



PHOTOS: SUE ARCHER

hanging from my neck by its strap. This works reasonably well. Lifting it to the eye to shoot is easy, and you can just release it to hang again when done. But after a few miles the strap starts to dig into the neck, and it can swing around rather alarmingly if your speed builds up. So I was keen to see whether this harness could be the answer. It turned out to be a sort of rucksack-style harness without the bag: a padded hip belt (with plenty of loops to hang stuff off) and adjustable shoulder straps. It's all very well made in heavy duty webbing. The idea is that by hanging your heavy photo gear off the harness, you distribute the weight between

the broad shoulder straps and the hip belt. The waist straps are ideal for lens bags, they say. But there weren't any instructions as to how it could be used on a bike, and Epic told me they didn't actually know either – they were keen for feedback. So I had to make it up as I went along. After a few unsuccessful attempts with bits of string I came up with two climbing karabiners hooked through the shoulder straps and onto the loops in the camera strap. This was promising. It certainly takes the weight off the neck as you ride, and is a fair bit more stable. It's easy to raise it to the eye for shooting. But in the leaned-forward cycling position the waist band rides

up your back as the camera pulls the whole thing forward, and frankly it all looks a bit daft, too.

A normal rucksack would probably work better – you could attach the camera to the shoulder straps in the same way as I did with the harness, and put stuff inside it for counterweight. Extra lenses are an obvious candidate: I did try attaching them to the waist strap, but they seemed rather vulnerable and flop round alarmingly if you cycle at all vigorously.

I could tweak the set-up a little more – perhaps using 'not for climbing' mini-krabs instead of the massive full-size climbing-style ones. And I can see how the harness would work really well for photographers on foot: with the body upright the problem of it being dragged forward and up your back will be much reduced.

But for me, the harness's real value has been in providing the inspiration to adapt a normal rucksack to support the camera. There's some experimentation needed to work out just how short I can make the attachment straps, exactly where they should join the shoulder straps, and so on. I'll report back.

This very nearly didn't make it into the review pages at all – Epic were kind to send me one, but it didn't really work out for cycling use, at least for me. But I hope the thought process it provoked might be interesting for other cycling photographers. If any reader has come up with a better solution, I'd love to hear from you.

### Peter Eland

The 'Heavy Duty Camera Harness Strap' costs \$29.95 in the USA. Contact Epic to determine overseas shipping rates. It can be found in the 'eStore' section of their website.

Epic Software: Tel +1 281 363 3742 or see [www.epicsoftware.com](http://www.epicsoftware.com)

## Over the moon

**Cath Neal, unable to cycle in comfort for nearly 20 years, found new freedom to ride with the Moonsaddle, a new design from the USA.**



In 1988 I had my first child, and following the stitches (amongst many other indignities) I found that I was no longer able to ride my bike for enjoyment as it was far too uncomfortable. Two more babies were born in the 1990s and I had little time to think about cycling for pleasure, using

my bike instead for short journeys via cycle paths to child minders and nurseries, often with two children attached to my bike in their small seats.

When the children were young we could only cycle as a family a few miles at the most and I always knew it would be uncomfortable for me, but foolishly I thought as the labours grew more distant things would improve! Of course the reality is that as I got older and cycled less, on the occasions that I did cycle the pain became worse. I began researching anatomically different bike saddles in 2006 but was unsure, without trying them, which would be best for me and I didn't know anyone who had tried a different saddle.

Thing came to a head in the summer of this year when, enticed by my husband and the glorious weather, I decided to accompany him on a ride to some friends of ours which involved an eight mile round trip. Things were very painful for me on the way home and for the next two days I had discomfort whenever I sat down. I had virtually decided to give up cycling altogether when a friend suggested that I test the Moonsaddle.

The 'MoonSaddle' was quite simple to fit to my bike using the instructions provided (so simple that I did it myself), requiring just a new bolt for the saddle post as the old one was distorted. Once the seat was fitted I had my first experience of comfortable cycling



for nearly twenty years. I did not really appreciate the significance of this at the time as the sensation of pedalling and balancing without the traditionally shaped saddle for 'support' was quite odd. The whole family tried the seat and everyone decided that you get used to the new sensation quite quickly, certainly within the first two or three days. I have been out on my bike regularly in the last eight weeks and I am very impressed with the comfort aspect of the saddle. I never thought that I would be able to enjoy cycling again and am very grateful to *Velo Vision* for letting me try this saddle out. I am really looking forward to spring now when I can get out a little further afield. I will possibly make some adjustments to the fitted position of the saddle, which may not yet be optimum for me. My only concern is when the bike is parked as the innovative design might make it attractive to others.

Since everything about the new saddle has been easy I am disappointed that I didn't invest in one sooner but hopefully by writing this piece and promoting this saddle it may mean that other women in similar situations (and there must be a lot of those) might give this saddle a go!

### Cath Neal

The Moonsaddle is currently available direct from the manufacturer in the USA, although as we go to press they are negotiating with dealers in the UK and other countries to set up local distribution. Check their website for latest details. In the USA the saddle costs \$60 plus shipping. Moonsaddle: Tel +1 406 859 1963 or see [www.moonsaddle.com](http://www.moonsaddle.com)

