

OUTDOORS



KIT OF THE WEEK

Pearl Izumi have come up with a clever solution for women cyclists who prefer to wear bib shorts.

The design of the Elite LTD shorts means women do not need to take off top layers when nature calls.

Instead, they can use a unique "drop tail" for more convenient toilet stops.

Other features include high-wicking fabric, an anatomic multi-panel design, flatlock seams and female-specific padding.

The bib shorts are for warm conditions and are rated UPF 40+. See pearlizumi.co.uk

GET INTO NEW SLEEP CYCLE



A new concept in cycling holidays has been launched by an Edinburgh company.

The first of its kind in Europe, Velodreams Cycling Tours offer cycling trips on a luxury sleeper bus.

The French tours are for up to 15 keen cyclists, who travel between classic French cycle routes and mountain passes while sleeping overnight on the bus.

The seven-day trips take place from May to September. See www.velodreams.co.uk

ON MARKS FOR 50K ULTRA RUN

A new 50k ultra running event in East Lothian will take place next month.

Foxlake Adventures have launched the John Muir Way Ultra Race between Port Seton and Foxlake HQ near Dunbar.

The event on April 23 is part of the inaugural John Muir Coast Festival weekend.

More than 100 places are open for solo runners and teams of two can participate, running 25km each.

There will be prizes for the first, second and third male and female. See www.facebook.com/johnmuirwayultramarathon



New way to head for hills

WATER BEAUTY
The new route takes walkers and cyclists out into the hills



FIONA RUSSELL

Five-mile walking and cycling trail to open up the beautiful Kilpatrick Hills officially opens next weekend with a special launch day designed to highlight its attractions

A new way-marked walking and cycling path in central Scotland officially opens this Easter.

The off-road trail provides a scenic re-routing of the long-distance Scottish coast-to-coast route, the John Muir Way.

The five-mile trail also aims to open up the beautiful Kilpatrick Hills, north of Glasgow, to more people.

The natural-looking man-made path includes a circuit of picturesque Burncrooks Reservoir.

The £500,000 Burncrooks project has been funded by sportscotland, Legacy 2014 Active Places, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Matthew Buckland, Forest Enterprise Scotland's community & recreation manager, said: "This is a really exciting development for the Kilpatrick Hills and we're delighted the path is now open."

"We are encouraging everyone to visit the hills for the amazing views, sense of space, rugged beauty and wildlife."

"The path also creates one of the wilder sections of the John Muir Way and offers walkers, cyclists and horse riders a more dramatic element to their experience of the long-distance trail."

"We believe that all of these qualities reflect what John Muir was all about, which is why we're delighted to be part of this project."

To find out more about the new path, the public can attend



PICTURESQUE A circuit of Burncrooks reservoir is included

an opening day next Saturday, March 26, from noon to 4pm.

The event will be held in Auchinaden Forest and those attending should meet and park at the Edenmill Farm Shop.

A shuttle bus service will take them from the car park to the forest entrance.

There will be a host of family activities, including free bike hire and workshops.

WALK THIS WAY

The easiest access point to the new path is from Edenmill Farm Shop, just off the A809 at Auchengillan. Walkers and cyclists can leave their cars in a large parking area.

The way starts on a tarmac road before heading uphill and on to a wide offroad trail.

After about 100m of ascent over 1.2 miles of walking, a path heads south (left) into Auchinaden Forest.

A right turn then reveals the new path around the edge of Burncrooks Reservoir.

On a fine day, the views over the reservoir, the wider Kilpatrick's hill range and towards Loch Lomond and the

Trossachs are stunning. At the northern end of the reservoir the path splits.

Taking the left path, and heading northwards, walkers are led away from the reservoir and towards Balloch.

This is part of the re-routing of the John Muir Way, which runs from Dunbar in East Lothian to Helensburgh in Argyll.

To complete the Burncrooks circuit, walkers should take the right-hand path and then join a wider trail along the edge of forestry again.

To enjoy a longer route, walkers and cyclists can start at Milngavie, heading to the Kilpatrick's via Carbeth and finishing at Balloch.

It's possible to return to Milngavie by train from Balloch, changing at Westerton Station.

This route also provides a fantastic upland experience for John Muir Way walkers.

New JMW signs point the way from Carbeth, via Burncrooks, and across the hills to Balloch.

● **Find out more at** www.facebook.com/visitkilpatrickhills

Advice and ideas

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk – you'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running, other outdoor activities and kit reviews.