

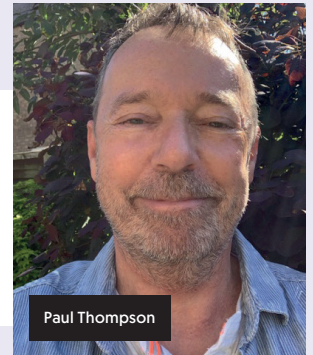
CYCLOPEDIA

Bike finder

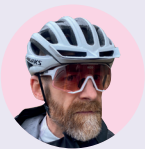
Which bike should I buy?
Ask us at cyclinguk.org/bikefinder

Rigid mountain bike

• **For:** Paul Thompson, age 55, from Milton Keynes • **Bike needs:** I'd like something for commuting and fun. Not long rides, but lots of short ones. I love going off-road, but I'm not very rad. So: forest trails, canal-side paths, bridleways, as well as badly-maintained cycle paths. • **Must have:** I'd really like 1x11 or 1x12 gears. • **Must not have:** Suspension. • **Budget:** Ideally £1,000. I guess I could go to £1,200



Paul Thompson



Guy Kesteven

One thousand pounds is a decent amount of money but not wanting suspension narrows your options considerably. Most mainstream brands assume that everyone wants the extra cost and complexity of a suspension fork.

On-One have two options, the best of which will depend on your attitude to weight. The **Bootzipper (£763.99)** at time of writing, planetx.co.uk is their all-steel, rigid-fork adventure bike. The slim steel tubes and fork give a smooth, gliding ride, particularly in the 29er wheel format. It comes with all the fixtures you're likely to need for bottles, cages, mudguards and bikepacking bags, and it has 1x12 speed SRAM SX Eagle gearing.

The only downside is that the frame and fork are pretty heavy, so it's no lighter than a bike with an alloy frame and suspension fork. I'd suggest upgrading the tyres to something faster and lighter than the standard Fire XC Sport tyres. **On-One** let you tweak the build if you ask nicely, though, and generally have a good stock of **Vittoria** rubber – in which case the **AKA** would be a good choice.

If you want something faster and feistier, then the **On-One Whippet** (currently **£999.99**) has a full carbon frame and fork. It's a lot lighter and has a sportier ride in general. Broad WTB rims and a wide riser bar still give it a surefooted, power-assisted steering feel if you end up going quicker than you expected in the woods. It too comes with SRAM SX Eagle 12-speed, but there are fewer fixtures for bags, mudguards, etc.

ON ONE
BOOTZIPPER
29ER SRAM SX
£763.99



Dan Joyce

The **Sonder Frontier** (from **£849**, alpkit.com) ticks all your boxes. It's a cross-country aluminium hardtail that you can buy with either a 100mm suspension fork or a rigid aluminium fork. Other options include: 1x12 Deore or 1x12

SRAM SX Eagle (Deore adds £100); and 29er or 27.5+ wheels (no price difference).

I tested a rigid SRAM SX model with 27.5+ wheels earlier this year (cyclinguk.org/cycle-magazine/bike-test-sonder-frontier-rigid-275). It was £50 cheaper then but it remains good value for money. There are frame fittings for mudguards and luggage cages, so it'll work for commuting or bikepacking as well as mountain biking. You could fit a rear pannier rack if you added a seatpost clamp with integral eyelets.

For the riding you describe, I'd recommend 29er wheels rather than 27.5+. It doesn't sound like you need the cushioning and rough-surface control that plus-tyres provide, and 29er tyres will be less draggy on tarmac and smoother trails. Wide gravel tyres such as **Schwalbe's G-One Allround** in 57-622 (**£59.99** each) might work better than mountain bike tyres for the same reason.

The combination of a rigid fork and a flat or riser bar can be hard on the hands, even with 29er tyres. If it's a problem, try comfy grips (e.g. **ESI Chunky Grips, £16**) in combination with **Cane Creek Ergo Control bar ends (£29.99)**. A back-swept loop handlebar like the **On-One Geoff (£29.99)** also works well, but you'll need to fit longer brake hoses and a longer gear cable. ●

SONDER
FRONTIER SX
EAGLE RIGID
£849

