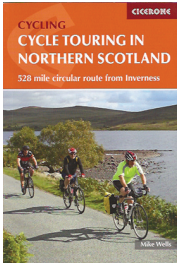


# BOOKS

## Reviews of new books and publications

### Cycle touring in northern Scotland



Mike Wells  
*Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss,  
Oxenholme Rd, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7RL*  
978 1 78631 002 6  
170 x 120mm  
201 pages, paperback  
2019  
£14.95

Mike Wells' cycle guides to the Rhine, Moselle, Rhone and Loire have already appeared on these pages. Slightly different, this book is a guide to a circuit of Scotland north of Inverness, mostly around the coast. It begins by heading west across the country from Inverness, skirting various lochs and rivers including the Bran and Carron, after which it is usually as near the coast as roads go. There are alternative routes at times, a line down the centre of the flow country following Loch Naver.

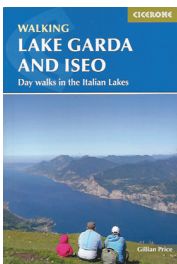
There seem to be more maps than pictures but pictures often bleed off the page, making the book bright and attractive.

The introduction includes the history, wisely stopping just short of the present day. The geography, geology, wildlife, logistics and a range of practical issues are addressed, particularly matters which arise from being in what is largely a sparsely populated area. Village facilities are listed, including accommodation, often more important than elsewhere, even cashpoints being few and far between.

One matter which does get overlooked is from the 'when to eat' section. Getting an evening meal in Scotland generally means not leaving it too late, even if the extended daylight does encourage delaying. Scottish dishes are described but are unlikely to be available far into the evening. There may be a choice of Indian or Chinese, Italian if you are lucky in larger villages but smaller ones might offer nothing. In the ferry port of Mallaig I found even the chippy had closed by 9pm and had to get my evening meal from the sandwich rack in the Co-op.

While the cycling directions will not be of interest, any book featuring this area cannot fail to be attractive, as this is.

### Walking Lake Garda & Iseo



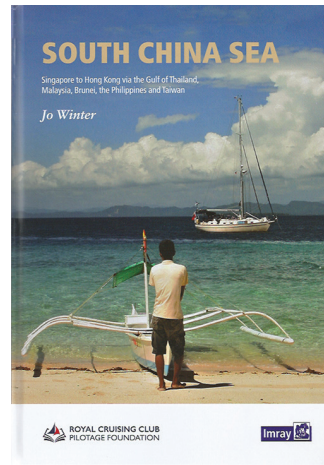
Gillian Price  
*Cicerone*  
978 1 78631 024 8  
170 x 120mm  
123 pages, paperback  
2019  
£14.95

We have reviewed Gillian Price's guides to the Amalfi coast, Sicily and Corsica at various times. Now she adds a book on the Italian lakes Garda and Iseo to a previous guide to lakes Como and Maggiore.

Intended for walkers, this latest guide sets the scene for visitors to the two lakes. Indeed, it complements *Water Activities* (May, p36), which gives technical information for water users but little off the water. This latest book puts everything into context, particularly the introduction which looks at logistics, timing, accommodation, food and drink, cartography, wildlife and an assortment of other practical issues. The chapters present much local detail, not least the history from geological times via warfare to present industry.

Photographs include waterfronts and panoramic aerial views of the lakes from the surrounding mountains. For those wanting to take time out from the water there are details of the various chairlift, gondola, cablecar and funicular railway options to get your own panoramic views. Visitors to the lake will frequently be there for recreational purposes and may wish to add walking into the mix of activities, trying some of the suggested walks from the waterside.

### South China Sea



Jo Winter  
*Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson,  
Wych House, St Ives, Cambs*  
PE27 5BT  
978 184623 186 5  
A4  
320 pages, hardback  
2019  
£55.00

This probably the most expensive book we have ever reviewed, a reflection of the amount of work that has gone into preparing it for the number of visitors that will reach this remote and rarely visited area. However, if it prevents just one encounter with undesirable wildlife, pirates or typhoons it will have earned its cost many times over.

Successor to volume 1 of the *Cruising Guide to Southeast Asia*, it covers Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Cambodia, the eastern coasts of Thailand and Malaysia, Singapore, the northwest Malaysian coast of Sarawak, Labuan and Sabah, Brunei and the whole of the Philippines but not China.

Intended for yachtsmen, it has been compiled as a Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation title. Others of their titles we have reviewed here feature Norway, the Baltic, the southern Biscay coast, Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal, Balearic Isles, Corsica, northern Sardinia and the Atlantic Islands, reliable information from a known British nautical source.

Typhoons are the main climate concern with weather split into NE and SW seasons, the book giving much attention to anchorages and sheltered typhoon boltholes. There can be 8m storm surges, tidal flows to 14km/h, overfalls to 3.3m and bores which might be 3.7m high in various places. There is weather forecast and tsunami information with tide chartlets and wind roses. Crystalized ginger is suggested as a cure for seasickness.

Warnings are given on theft, where pirates operate and wildlife from insects to where crocodiles hang out. There can be unexpected interactions, such as snakes getting onboard boats to avoid typhoon conditions. Commercial shipping is limited but some busy locations are picked out.

Chartlets are included, not always with scales but showing the extend of coral, and mention is made of where commercial charts are known to be in error.

Country introductions give valuable advice on history, ethnicity, etiquette, dress code, economy and cashpoints, embassies, language, time zone, business hours, communication, travel on land, health and hospitals, visas, winds, currents, tides, buoyage, water potability and more. Suggested dinghy trips for more restricted waters could apply equally to kayaks and there are tourist sights suggested to visit. Pictures of tea plantations and the Cameron Highlands in Malaysia are a reminder of the whole day four wheel drive convoy to the start of the Cameron Descent marathon.

Annual calendars of public holidays include national dragon boat racing holidays for some countries, suggested as worth experiencing, and there are plenty of photographs including canoes, multihulls and bancas with mention of races for the latter. Several surfing venues are pinpointed.

Readers are advised where English is spoken but there is a brief dictionary for relevant terms at the back for each language, including Malaysian where, confusingly, 'air' means 'water'.