

# GEAR UP

Components, kit, and accessories reviewed by specialist journalists, CTC staff – and you.

**This issue:** a chainset, a car rack, and more

REVIEW OF THE MONTH



- PROS**
- + Touring chainring size options
  - + Impressive build quality
- CONS**
- Only one crank length

## Sugino OX601D CHAINSET

£199.99

hubjco.co.uk

**THE SEARCH** for the perfect touring chainset isn't quite over; Sugino's OX601D is offered in the UK with 170mm crank arms only (some markets get 165mm through 175mm), and they aren't hollow. But it's close. It features two sets of chainring mounting bolts with Bolt Circle Diameters of 110 and 74mm, an arrangement labelled 'Compact Plus'.

Compact Minus might be more accurate, as the 74mm BCD bolts accept the fitment of an inner chainring with as few as 24 teeth. The distributor lists a choice ranging from 44-30 to 48-32, the 44-30T rings shown suiting riders looking for a range of gear ratios usefully lower than possible with the usual 'compact' 50-34 combo. Used in conjunction with a 27 rear sprocket and 700x25C tyre, it gives a bottom gear of 29in. Dropping to 24 at the front gives about 23.5in, all but

obviating the need for a triple.

The five-arm spider is part of the right-hand crank forging, which is a permanent splined press fit on the 24mm hollow steel axle. Installation is easy: the system works in the same way as Shimano's Hollowtech II. The BSC-threaded external bottom bracket bearings fit the standard Shimano tool. The axle end cap needs a 5mm hex key where Shimano's has a lobular interface with a small (and easily-mislaid) plastic thumbwheel.

Tread, or Q-factor, is narrow at 145mm. The chainrings, designed for 10-speed chains, feature shifting pins and ramps and perhaps the only significant question is whether the tail of a standard double front mech correctly positioned for a small outer chainring might foul the top of the chainstay on any given frame.

Richard Hallett

## SUBMIT A REVIEW

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## Dr Steve Melia Urban Transport – without the hot air

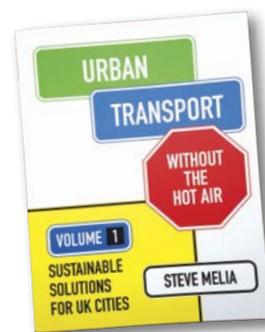
£19.99

uit.co.uk

**THIS BOOK** is an entertaining and persuasive read from an author whose starting point is 'a belief that maintaining the conditions for life on Earth is more important

than increasing consumption or maximising individual freedom'. Steve Melia addresses perceived problems like the 'war' on the motorist and the idea that we'll never get British people cycling like the Dutch. Then he considers solutions – not necessarily simple ones – based on progress made in London, Bristol, Cambridge and other European cities, plus interviews with experts. The final chapter ('What can I do?') prompts professionals and campaigners who call on others to change their travel behaviour to look at, and adjust, their own habits. 264 pages, ISBN 9781906860264

Cherry Allan





- PROS**
- + Easy to manoeuvre and fit
  - + Clever tilting & folding
- CONS**
- Cable vulnerability

## Witter ZX503 CYCLE CARRIER

£490.80

[witter-towbars.co.uk](http://witter-towbars.co.uk)

**THIS TOW-BAR** rack will carry three bikes weighing up to 20kg each. It weighs 21.2kg, yet it's easy to move as it has small plastic castors. It folds to around 109x69x25cm, making it easier to carry when you have to. Attaching the rack is simple. It goes on vertically, folded. As you unfold it, it tightens onto the tow-bar. A green-and-red indicator strip shows whether you've unfolded it enough that it's sufficiently horizontal and secure. I was often unsure, as it was only just 'in the green' and the rack had an inward tilt. Witter's online video suggests this is normal.

The rack sits quite close to the back of the car, and the inward tilt of the rack emphasises this. There's less weight cantilevered far back, but on the test car (a Citroen Berlingo) it meant that the

handlebar of the innermost bike hit the rear window; only a flat-bar bike with the bar turned 90 degrees would fit.

The rack can be tilted with the bikes in place for access to the boot – so long as your car doesn't have a huge tailgate like a Berlingo. With the bikes removed, the rack can be folded up against the back of the car to enable easy parking. You fold it every time you attach or remove it from the tow-bar too. Take great care not to do what I did and jam the lighting cable in the folding mechanism! (I had to disassemble the rack to release it) That lighting cable has both 7-pin and 13-pin connections.

I'd balk at the price of the ZX503: it's £200 more than a simpler tow-bar rack such as Thule's EuroRide 943 (the current equivalent of the older Euroway 946 I own). The Thule design fits my car better and has a reassuringly manual tow-bar clamp. Yet the ZX503 is decent rack with some clever features. If you would struggle to manhandle a tow-bar rack *and* you have a saloon car, it's well worth a look.

*Dan Joyce*

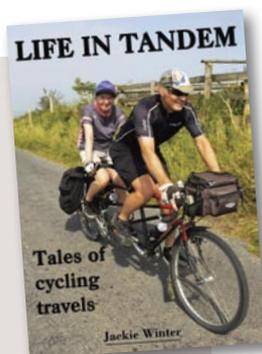
## Jackie Winter LIFE IN TANDEM

£6.77 (£1.99 KINDLE)

[amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

**IN THIS ENTERTAINING** book, Jackie Winter shares the highlights of her tandeming life. In the 1980s, she and her husband cycled with the Wessex Road Club, leaving few Dorset lanes unexplored. Jackie recounts four decades of touring holidays in the UK. The first of these was in Yorkshire in 1976, when they toiled through Fryup Dale in 96.6 degrees. 'Top Tandem Tips and Trivia' give practical help about buying and riding a tandem – and advice to help couples keep on speaking terms. There's a surprising revelation too: despite 100,000 miles on the tandem, Jackie has never learned to ride a solo bike.

*CTC member Hugh Ward*



- PROS**
- + Lightweight
  - + Stiff
- CONS**
- Complex front strut fixture

## Tubus Fly Classic

£72

[tubus.com](http://tubus.com)

**THE TUBUS FLY** has long set the industry standard for minimalism, its inward-sloping profile keeping weight down although reducing its capacity to support a load on top. It carries two small ('front') panniers and, despite a weight limit of 18kg, is impressively stiff thanks to its well-triangulated shape.

Weighing 520g including fittings, the Classic is marginally heavier than the original Fly, due to the complex mounting system for the single front strut. Where the old model used a grub screw to grip an aluminium rod sliding inside a central horizontal tube, the new arrangement draws an eyebolt through a spacer ring to clamp the rod. This allows the strut to be angled as it leaves the rack, but it may still have to be bent to suit a frame's seat stay boss.

The Classic is supplied with a pair of spacers for use where the rack feet are too widely spaced for the frame. I'd prefer to see the Fly built to fit cycles with 135mm rear dropout spacing (roughly 150mm across rack boss faces) without recourse to the spacers. Otherwise, it remains the go-to rack for the weight-conscious tourist. It's available painted black or silver, and in stainless steel.

*Richard Hallett*





» **Osram**  
**FX70 AND RX2 LIGHTS**  
**£109.99 & £9.99**

**osram.co.uk**

**CYCLING ALONG** country roads at night using the FX70 was a pleasure. Its wide beam angle meant that the whole road was lit up, allowing me to spot road hazards easily and make myself visible to oncoming drivers. At 70 lux, it's bright enough to see where you're going off-road too, but unlike most high-power lamps it doesn't dazzle on road. It's has StVZO (German safety standard) approval, which makes it an approved lamp under UK lighting regulations.

While the light output is excellent, the mount refused to sit tight and the lamp itself didn't feel robust. Changing the five light settings is not intuitive, so I stuck mainly to the brightest, which lasted for about 5 hours from a 4hr charge. The RX2 is a handy light for the price, with one constant light setting; I'd like a flashing option as well. It too feels a little flimsy. I'd hesitate to buy either due to fear of breakage, but they could suit the careful commuter.

*Sam Jones*



- PROS**
- + StVZO approved
  - + Great light output
- CONS**
- Mount & build quality

**Restrap**  
**DIAGONAL STRAPS**  
**£29.99**

**restrap.co.uk**

**AS A LONG-STANDING** user of PowerGrips, I was interested to see this new alternative from Restrap. Both are broad, flat toe-straps that sit diagonally across the pedals to offer an alternative to traditional toe-clips and straps. They are suitable for cycling shoes without cleats and normal everyday shoes. It is easy to accommodate bulky shoes (such as outdoor styles), and the toes of more formal shoes will not be scuffed. A Velcro-style hook-and-loop adjustment allows for infinite and immediate length adjustment.

Using recycled and scrap material from car seatbelts, the Diagonals are made in Leeds. They will fit onto any pedal that would accept bolt-on toe-clips or reflectors, and mounting hardware is included. In use, you will find that the 'stiff, tight-weave webbing' gives these straps a natural arch, and the 'twist action' required to secure or release the foot is second nature to those used to clipless pedal systems. The thickness of the strap means that it may rub on your cranks at times.

*Richard Peploe*



- PROS**
- + More versatile than toe-clips
  - + Suits ordinary shoes
- CONS**
- Can scuff cranks

**Genetic**  
**SILICONE BAR TAPE** **£19.99**

**ison-distribution.com**

**BAR TAPE** should be spongy for comfort, soft to the touch, durable, easy to fit, visually appealing and grippy. Make it reusable and it ticks all the boxes. Genetic Silicone tape is all of these and reversible too. It's made of super-stretchy, high-density foam with an inherent tacky feel. This ensures that, despite lacking

an adhesive strip, the tape stays put once wrapped. It is highly elastic, so can be applied with as much or as little tension as needed to obtain the desired thickness. It shrugs off most dirt and is tough enough to be leant against rough brickwork. Comes in black, white, red, blue or pink.

*Richard Hallett*



- PROS**
- + Comfortable
  - + Reusable
  - + Pleasant feel