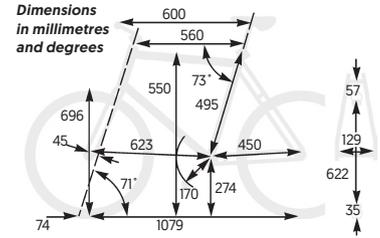




Biketest



Tech Spec
LIGHT BLUE PARKSIDE 5SPD

- **Price:** £649.99
- **Sizes:** Step-through 17.5, 19.5, 21.5in; diamond 21, 23in.
- **Weight:** 15.51kg
- **Frame & fork:** TIG-welded aluminium 6061 frame with fittings for mudguard and rear rack. Steel fork with threaded steerer and fittings for mudguard.
- **Wheels:** 35-622 (700x35C) Halo Tourist tyres, Halo White Line aluminium rims with stainless steel spoke eyelets.
- **Transmission:** Aluminium pedals, aluminium chainset with 170mm cranks & 38t steel chainring, square taper BB, anti-rust chain, 17t Sturmey Archer C-50 sprocket. Sturmey Archer 5-speed thumbshifter and RX-RF5 5-speed hub. 5 ratios, 38-96in.
- **Braking:** Unbranded V-brakes with non-slip brake lever rubber inserts.
- **Steering & seating:** Ergonomic grips, North Road style high-rise aluminium handlebar, quill stem, threaded headset. Passport Upper Class saddle with Squidge-tech gel padding, 27.2mm plain seatpost.
- **Equipment:** Aluminium rear rack (18kg load), chromoplastic mudguards, aluminium kickstand.

Light Blue Parkside 5spd

Roadsters with hub gears are as practical today as they ever were. **Richard Peace** reviews a £650 model

The Light Blue name dates back to 1895 when the frames were handbuilt for wealthy members of Cambridge University. Despite the fact that the alloy step-through frame is now made in the Far East, the Parkside has retro looks and is very much the kind of practical roadster you'd expect to see in cities like Cambridge and York, where everyday cycling remains popular.



Above: The 5-speed drivetrain has a good range (256%) but outside of flat terrain the hub needs a larger sprocket

At 15.51kg it was surprisingly weighty on the scales but didn't feel that heavy in use. It's on a par with last issue's Trek Loft 71 EQ, which boasts a front hub dynamo and a 7-speed hub gear.

The Sturmey Archer RX-RF5 hub gear is large and feels solidly built, its weight approaching 2kg. A hub gear unit with an aluminium shell, for example Shimano's

Nexus 7, would have saved around half a kilo. The RX-RF5 needed some careful indexing at first but soon settled in to give responsive changing. It has enough range (256%) to tackle moderate hills. I felt it was a little over geared and didn't much use gears four and five. You could change the 17-tooth sprocket for a sprocket up to 22t in size to

lower the gearing.

Despite its weight, the Parkside felt nippy and agile. The riding position is very compact and comfortable. It feels like a small frame size, even though it's the middle size out of three, and it's reassuringly upright too. The old school quill stem allows plenty of handlebar height adjustment.

The V-brakes behave exactly as you would expect them to, giving a decent

amount of stopping power. Disc brakes would have been a lower maintenance option with added stopping power. Halo Tourist tyres look spot on for urban riding, roll well, and have some puncture protection.

The Parkside is a step up from many other more budget roadster options in terms of material and spec. A rack, chainguard, and kickstand come as standard, so dynamo lighting is the only thing missing from a complete package, although that would add a little more weight. ●

Other options

ELOPS 900 LOW FRAME CITY BIKE
£549.99

Aluminium frame, 7-speed hub gear, hydraulic disc brakes, and auto-adjusting hub dynamo lights. deathlon.co.uk



BOBBIN BROWNIE 7 DUTCH BIKE **£549**

Aluminium framed roadster with 7-speed derailleur gearing, calliper brakes, rear rack, and kickstand. bobbimbikes.com



Verdict

A practical, well thought-out roadster with a lovely retro look. If you want a lighter option, Light Blue's Chesterton is essentially the same bike with a 7-speed derailleur.