



First look
The e-bike bits are the front hub motor and bag-mounted battery. The rest is basically standard Brompton



Left: Motor noise isn't intrusive in the country
Above: Controls and display are on the battery not the bar. Folding is unaffected

Biketest

Brompton Electric

The long-awaited electric version of the iconic compact folder is finally here. Journalist **Richard Peace** puts the six-speed through its paces



RICHARD PEACE

Cycling journalist and author

Richard is the author of *Electric Bicycles* and the *Ultimate C2C Guide*

The Brompton's fame precedes it: it's a benchmark folder that packs down quickly and extremely compactly yet rides reasonably well. These aspects have already been well covered in *Cycle* (cyclinguk.org/cycle/bike-test-compact-folding-bikes), so this review will focus on the new bike's electric-assist aspects.

Design-wise, even though Brompton developed its own system in association with Williams (of Formula One fame), it is a pretty conventional solution.

Incorporating the electrics

A slim and sleek hub motor sits in the front wheel, with an easily-removable battery mounting where the front luggage block usually fits. The only other sign that this is an electric bike is the small 'black box' that is part of the battery mount and acts as a kind of junction box for the hub motor and LED lights wiring.

This isn't a radically new design approach for a Brompton electric bike; retrofit options preceded Brompton's own electric version and some favour a similar approach. Brompton have replaced the potential to carry capacious front luggage with a 312Wh battery (with an integral USB port for charging your phone and other devices on the go).

It's great for getting the battery off in a trice, as you'll want to do when folding the bike, as it cleverly leaves you with two lighter items to carry rather than one heavier one. But it does limit your luggage carrying capacity to 1.5 litres. There is an optional bigger bag (+£130), rated at 20 litres, which gives some storage space either side of the battery. The Brompton website doesn't appear to offer a rear rack as an option, which would increase luggage capacity further.

Still, on the bike it looks a very smart design, with the electric cabling very neatly routed and the front wheel easily removable (in the event of punctures etc) via a 'screw and pull' connector in the power-feed cable. The LED cable runs are similarly neat and tidy.

The top of the battery unit features an on/off button, which also lets you toggle between the three power settings, and an on/off button for the lights, which also have an automatic option. This arrangement has the advantage of not needing a cable run to a handlebar control but the disadvantage that you need to lean over the bars to adjust power levels. The bank of blue LED lights is highly visible and it's easy to see the

Other options

NANO BROMPTON ▶ +£785

Less sophisticated than Brompton's e-bike but a proven system and attractively priced for a retrofit kit. nanoelectricbikes.co.uk



GOCYCLE GX ▶ £2,899

With a claimed weight of 17.8kg and a range of "up to 40-miles", the new quick-folding GoCycle GX looks like a Brompton Electric competitor. gocycle.com



