



Tailoring my tourer

Everyone customises their bikes a little. Being an engineer, Highpath's **Chris Bell** went further to create his perfect touring bike

I wanted a folding bike to expand my public transport options, one that didn't compromise ride quality. I almost got a Thorn expedition bike with S&S couplings. Then Dahon launched their Cadenza range.

I bought two – one for me and one for my neighbour. The basic bike was a 2008-model mountain bike with a folding aluminium frame, 26" alloy wheels, disc

brakes, hub gears, and straight handlebars. It suited my neighbour just as it was. Mine wasn't exactly what I wanted, so I wheeled it into the workshop and set to with all the engineering facilities at my disposal.

Both Cadenza frames needed corrective work. Poor hinge tolerances and unfaced headtubes caused creaks when the bikes were ridden, crooked front disc brake mounts resulted in uneven pad wear, and the dropouts were too narrow to get the rear wheels in and out easily. I've fixed these things but bike shops might struggle. Dahon



more stable when loaded and handles very well off-road too. Basic folding is achieved with an allen key in seconds and the most compact package takes just a few minutes.

The disc brakes are basic cable-operated ones but they're amazingly powerful and easy to control, even on the steepest descents in the rain. And the new Alfine 8-speed hub gear is brilliant. It's rated for tandem use, and unlike other gears it's totally silent, even when freewheeling, since it uses sprag clutches instead of ratchets and pawls. The Jtek bar-end shifter works well but it took me a

while to get used to the hub's configuration (up for high gears, down for low ones). I mustn't comment on the Oval chainrings, which I make, but I was surprised at how well the front derailleur copes with such a large 23T jump.

Last June I undertook a 2,100km tour in Norway with full camping gear, riding on roads and rough mountain tracks. The bike was a joy to ride and the fold made it easy to get there and back by public transport. It has turned out to be my best bike ever!

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Chris's customised Cadenza

Italicised items were added. An asterisk denotes customisation.

GEARS

17-101" range, provided by:

- Shimano Alfine 8spd hub gear
- Truvativ crank, *modified** to take 2 oval EGGrings (48T 20% and 25T 30%)
- Deore front mech, *modified** to increase its capacity
- Stripped-down 105 rear mech* for chain tensioning
- Jtek bar end rear shifter
- SunTour bar end front shifter

BRAKES

- Shimano mech. disc brakes
- Dia-Compe drop levers
- Promax inline (top) levers

COMFORT

- Schwalbe 50mm Big Apple tyres
- Giant leather saddle with hole
- Syntace drop handlebars, Raleigh foam padding and Velox cotton tape
- Tortec reflector mudguards
- BBB touring pedals, Christophe toe-clips & straps

OTHER

- Extended alloy pannier rack with custom frame fixings*
- Pulse front lamp bracket
- Custom computer transmitter bracket*
- Ortlieb bar bag bracket lock removed* and custom strap retainer* added
- All QRs replaced with stainless cap screws or nuts*
- Several frame holes bushed with threaded inserts*
- Frame stand removed*
- Custom padded bike bag* that doubles as sleeping mat

Basic folding is achieved with an allen key in a matter of seconds

say future frames will be made more carefully. I also replaced the Shimano hub gears under warranty as they both slipped in 4th gear.

The finished bike weighs 3kg more than my Dawes Galaxy, but I don't notice this when riding. Instead I'm aware of how much more comfortable I am, no doubt due to the cushioning effect of the fatter tyres. And not only does it roll as fast on the road, but it's