

# The Ultimate Freedom Bike

*Riding the Brompton foldable bike*

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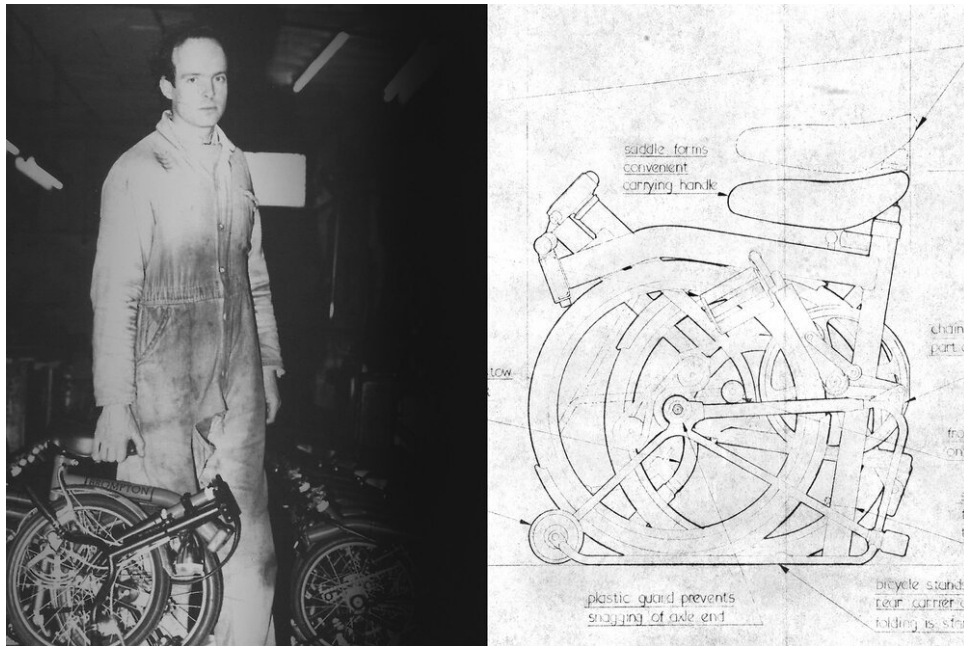
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Rarely have I been so amazed by a bike: the past 5 months since I've picked up my Brompton foldable bike in Amsterdam have been great fun! About 500KM down the road, I'm happy to share some of my experiences with this ingenious piece of engineering, read on!

## About Brompton

In 1975 Andrew Ritchie invented a bike with an 3-part fold: a vehicle that transformed in a small package and could go anywhere with him. The following years Andrew obsessively honed his invention from a rented workshop in a local engineering company.



*Andrew Ritchie inventor of the Brompton 3-part foldable bike*

Despite the demand, Andrew faced endless rejection letters from banks and bike companies to invest. Things changed in 1987 when an impressed Brompton owner and founder of Naim Audio, Julian Vereker, stepped in: the Brompton folding bike won the coveted Best Product Award in the Cyclex Bike Show in London. The rest is history, as they say!



*Early Brompton model*

## Iconic design

Today there are more than 1500 official dealers and 15 Brompton Junctions around the world, including one in Amsterdam. The original design has influenced many other bike

makers, it can therefore easily be considered an iconic bike with a proven track record and fans from all around the world.



*The Brompton Junction in the "Negen Straatjes" in Amsterdam is missing one bike... guess where that one went? HA!*





*My modern Brompton foldable bike - note how similar it is to the earlier model*

## Modern Brompton

My orange M6L Superlight Brompton takes everything that defines a Brompton to a next level using lightweight parts made of titanium. My bike came with 6 gears (2 using a derailleur, 3 inside a hub) and dynamo lights. I installed a Brooks cambrium saddle and opted for an integrated toolset. Equipped with my favourite [puncture resistant tires](#) from Schwable, I figured this bike would be perfect for some serious action.



*Lights are powered using a dynamo - never have to think about batteries!*



*The front-carrier block enables easy clicking on and off of bags and frames, and is compatible with all Brompton models*





*I hope that I won't need it anytime soon; but my bike has a perfectly fitting toolkit inside the foldable bike frame - how clever!*



*My bike has both a 2-speed rear derailleur and a 3-speed internal gear hub, making a total of 6 gears with a very wide range*



*You can tell the Brompton bike design is both refined and matured: things like the super strong reinforced mudguards give you plenty of confidence to simply use the bike - also note the titanium rear frame*

## How does it ride?

Unfold the bike in 20-ish seconds and you're ready to ride! The first few kilometers I needed a little getting used to the agility of the steering. Compared to my [single speed Schindelhauer Siegfried Road](#) bike, the Brompton accelerates quickly and handles very direct. The smaller wheels are not a problem as the gears and frame are well balanced for them. Thanks to simple geometric science, the smaller circumference maximises the efficacy of the brakes.





*My Brompton foldable bike compared to my Schindelhauer Siegfried Road: two very different machines*

As [I like cycling](#), my trained legs allowed me to easily go much faster than I thought was comfortably possible on a foldable bike. The Brompton quickly gives you the confidence to handle it like a *normal* bike. While great handling may be considered table stakes for any bike, I am sorry to notice that many modern "designer bikes" seem to have missed *that* memo. Any bike should be a pleasure to ride - before anything else!



*Riding the Brompton foldable bike surprisingly doesn't feel much different from a normal bike: it quickly gives you the confidence needed to go faster (if you wish)*





*Watch the GCN video on YouTube where pro cyclist Andrew Feather compares the Brompton to a super road bike in a hill climb*

Don't take my word for it, you should definitely check out the [video from GCN where they find out what happens when you put a pro on a Brompton](#), taking it out of its comfort zone? Can a folding bike climb? How does it compare to a top of the bill road bike? They have brought along multiple British Hill Climb champion Andrew Feather to find out!

### **Where it shines: versatility**

While riding the Brompton is a pleasure, it really shines when you step off. You can take it with you, pretty much anywhere! Combine your cycling with public transport: metro, bus, tram and train. Heck, you can even check-in your Brompton on the Airport!



*Combine your cycling with public transport: reach any station or nearby address with ease*



*It's compact and lightweight, easily allowing you to move it around the platform and trains (<10KG)*





*No need to pay extra for the foldable bike in the train: it is considered "normal luggage"*

If you have family or friends with a car, you'd be surprised how many extra possibilities there are to use the foldable bike *and* hitching a ride. You can join and/or split whenever you feel like doing so. Unlike a regular bike, the foldable bike doesn't require a bulky bike carrier to be mounted on the car.



*The Brompton in our family car: taking up less space than a baby stroller!*

If you live in an urban area you might enjoy the fact that it is very easy to bring the bike with you inside. No need for bulky locks or to unnecessarily expose it to the elements or thieves. Chances are that you can always find a place for your bike, even inside [your favourite coffee bar](#).



*The bike is small enough to bring with you: it certainly won't look out of place while you enjoy your latte!*





*In my small apartment in Amsterdam I put my Brompton bike on top of the fridge - one might even consider it another piece of art, ha!*

## **Conclusion**

The Brompton is a great bike that folds into a small package: making it very versatile. I'm still discovering ways to use this bike that I haven't imagined with any of my other bikes! It can go where other bikes can't: maximising the freedom you enjoy as cyclist!



*Wherever and whenever you go: the Brompton foldable bike is like a friendly companion ever willing to join you!*