

## GEAR UP

**FOLLOWME****£210**

*Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden & Cycling Development Director Rob Fuller*

Tandems are expensive, so most parents tow a trailer-cycle when their kids are old enough to pedal but too young to ride in traffic. But it's good if they can go solo on cycle paths, hence the popularity of tow-bar devices that hitch up the child's own bike – even though most of them are awful! They invariably couple to the seatpost and have loose pivots, so they wobble and often lean the child over at a crazy angle. Breakages are not uncommon.

The Swiss designed FollowMe is different. It couples to the rear axle like a Bob-Yak trailer – a tried and tested arrangement in which the trailer closely tracks the towing cycle. My colleague Rob Fuller and his daughter were the test team, and I supervised fitting to their bikes.

The FollowMe's special quick-release skewer replaced the one in Rob's rear wheel (other adaptors are available e.g. for hub-gears), longer nuts replaced the ones securing his daughter's front wheel, and a plastic block was attached to her down-tube – and that's all the permanent hardware. The crucial operation is adjusting the cradle for a snug fit around that wheel, which can be from 12 to 20 inches. But



Your child's bike detaches from the FollowMe in seconds, allowing them to ride solo and leaving the 4kg towing unit attached to your bike

the instructions were clear and the whole process was completed in about 30 minutes. After that, coupling and uncoupling the bikes takes seconds. The towing device weighs 4kg and can be detached just as quickly when the adult bike is used normally. When going solo during family rides it remains attached, and it's simply hitched up by a nylon strap to a rear carrier or seatpost.

Over to Rob: 'The FollowMe was a delight to use. It feels really stable, with none of the wobble and sideways drift that can be felt with other styles of tag-along. As the point of attachment is closer to the child's front wheel, it can run closer to the ground, giving them a more realistic and enjoyable riding experience – as the expression on our four-year old tester's face shows!

'In solo mode, the unit does noticeably add to the weight of the rear end of the adult bike, but the feel is no different from carrying luggage. Another advantage of this design is you can also use panniers whilst towing, or even carry another child in a rear childseat.'

So long as some kind of towbar can be had for 50 quid, most parents unfortunately will balk at £210. If safe and fun family cycling is worth that much to you, however, the FollowMe is an elegant solution.

**[cyclesense.co.uk](http://cyclesense.co.uk), 01937 530303**