

Outstanding contributions to cycling in Derby Awards, 2011

Awards were presented at the recent AGM for individuals and organisation's special contributions to cycling in Derby.

The first award was to A-one+, the contractor working on behalf of the Highways Agency on the Raynesway development. The award was in recognition of the contractor's attempts to keep all the cycle facilities in the area open and their prompt response to problems as they arose. Tony Roelich from Derby Cycling Group (DCG) said "Whilst it was a team approach from A-one+, we wanted to acknowledge the great work that Tommy Cheng did in ensuring any problems were dealt with quickly and properly to ensure cycling continued in particular along the riverside path."

The second award was to Connecting Derby and was collected on behalf of the team by Dave Powner. Dave Clasby from DCG said "As a group we opposed in principle the building of the inner ring road. However once the decision was taken we wanted to ensure the best possible facilities for cyclists. Dave Powner and his team were always open minded. It was clear from the start that they wanted the best for walkers and cyclists. They were always happy to listen to ideas and many of them were then incorporated into the actual design. We had initial consultations with Dave and his team and a number of on site visits. We believe that together we have helped to create some of the best cycling facilities in the city. It is an example of best practice for working with stakeholder groups".

The third award was a personal award to Stan Werbinski. This award was for the 30 plus years of service that Stan has given to the City of Derby and in particular its young cyclists. It is not overstating things to say that Stan is a bit of a legend. For years he personally developed and delivered a lot of the cycle training for young people in the city. It was under Stan's watch that Derby started to apply for national projects to support cycling in the city, first the Sustrans Bike It project and then the big one when Derby became a Cycling Demonstration Town and Cycle Derby was created but also now working with the CTC and British Cycling. With Stan we saw Derby adopt the National Standard Bikeability cycle training programme. Derby now has a National and European reputation for excellence in its cycling training. Dave Clasby from DCG said "For many of us he is simply Stan The Man. Stan has been a tyreless(!) supporter and advocate for cycling

and walking in the city. His passion and enthusiasm are infectious. You just don't forget meeting Stan Werbinski. Derby cyclists owe him a huge debt of gratitude for all his years of service for Derby City Council. Thank you Stan."

MAYBE A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY FOR DERBY?

If you're cycling around Copenhagen, keep your eyes peeled for this bike. You should be able to see it coming.

Nordisk Cryobank (European Sperm Bank) is one of Europe's leading sperm banks and the company was looking at environmentally-friendly alternatives to how they could transport their sperm samples to the fertility clinics around Greater Copenhagen. Inside the head of the giant sperm cell is a cooler compartment designed so that the metal containers with sperm donations can fit snugly inside and be kept cold.

Maybe someone will start a similar business in Derby?



SpermBike in use in
Copenhagen

Membership renewals

A gentle reminder to any of our members due to renew this year and who haven't yet got around to it. Please send in your renewal forms as soon as possible. If you have misplaced the renewal letter then you can download a membership form from the website - see http://www.derbycyclinggroup.org.uk/documents/DCG_membership.pdf. If you have any questions about your membership then please email membership@derbycyclinggroup.org.uk.

FOLDING BIKES

By LES SIMS

Bikes that fold up are not a common sight on the streets of Derby, but they do have many advantages over a conventional

rigid bike with large wheels, particularly if at times you have a need to carry your machine on other forms of transport.

Although you can take your full size bike by train at no extra cost (providing that you obtain a free bike ticket in advance), trains do not really have adequate capacity to carry more than a few bikes. A folded bike is classed as hand luggage and there are no restrictions.

You can carry a full size bike by car on a roof rack or rear mounted external rack, but few cars are big enough to carry a bike inside the vehicle. Outside the vehicle a bike is subject to the weather and is less secure. Neither problem exists if you have a folder.

Generally bikes are not permitted on buses, but most of them have adequate space for a folding bike, although this will be at the discretion of the driver.

Another advantage of the folding bike is security, since you can take your folder into the office and store it under your desk, instead of leaving it locked to a lamp post in the street, and if you live in a flat you can store a folding bike indoors.

As with most consumer goods the design of the folding bike is a compromise of conflicting requirements, and it is as well to study the specification very carefully before buying one, as the best ones do not come cheap. The main conflict is between foldability and rideability. The machine should fold quickly and easily into the smallest possible package with no bits sticking out, and no greasy chain exposed to lubricate the neatly pressed trousers of your fellow travellers. Light weight is nice, but it should be possible to wheel the machine in its folded state, and then it is only necessary to lift it up steps and into other vehicles. To achieve a neat package, the majority of folding bikes have small wheels, but these can make for a rough ride over our urban potholes, so another dilemma here, but only a choice between 16 and 20 diameter, since wheels outside these sizes make for an unacceptably rough ride or an unacceptably large package.

Those unfamiliar with small wheel bikes will no doubt consider small wheels to give twitchy steering, and this is due to a reduced gyroscopic effect which on a larger bike will keep a bike upright long after the rider has fallen off, providing that the wheels keep rotating. However, one soon becomes accustomed to the light steering and to resist the unnecessary temptation to ride hands off.

Although the better folding bikes are quite expensive, you get what you pay for, and a cheap one will fold badly and the ride will be unbearable for all but the shortest distance. The Brompton Folding Bike is very popular, particularly in large cities where there are lots of commuters, who perhaps cycle from home to the railway station, board a train, and then cycle on to their workplace. For this you need a bike that folds well and the Brompton is arguably king here. For longer cycling commutes, you may require a folder which rides better and so you need one with front and rear suspension or fatter tyres.



Brompton

Look at the German Birdy and the wide range of Dahons.

Most folding bikes will come with a choice of variable gears, the two options being hub gear or derailleur. Each have their advocates. Hub gears are slightly less efficient but need less maintenance and run with a straight chain line. These days either will come with enough gears to satisfy most people, even in hilly districts.

So you pay your money and you take your choice, but test ride as many folders as you can before buying. There are some poor quality bikes out there, but also some well designed machines. None are perfect in every way, and it is my opinion that the ultimate folding bike has not yet been invented, and may never be, since as we said earlier, the design of the folding bike is very much a compromise.

Ucycle update

Ucycle Nottingham is a partnership project between Sustrans, The University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University and the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Choosing cycling over car travel can play a role in addressing a number of problems faced by society, particularly in relation to health and obesity and pollutant emissions. With this in mind, the Ucycle project seeks to increase cycling levels amongst staff, students and visitors at the universities and hospital and also to increase awareness of the benefits that cycling will bring to those individuals. In addition to this the project is also developing a best practice toolkit in order to be able to share the experiences of running the scheme and encourage widespread replication of the project. Ucycle Nottingham is now in its second year. The project seeks to increase cycling levels and awareness in the city through various means, the most visible of which is the Student Bike Hire scheme, and large scale infrastructure improvements at all three of the partner institutions. The bike hire scheme, which involves 460 bikes across the two universities enables students to hire the bikes for the academic year at a cost of £49.00 plus a returnable £100 deposit. Within the package the hirer gets lights, a D-lock, free maintenance and access to free cycle training. The scheme has proved extremely successful, especially at the University of Nottingham where there are currently 206 bikes hired out, and a further 20 allocated to a staff hire scheme. There are 23 students on the waiting list due to lack of availability in their size.

Other elements of the Ucycle project include a number of direct engagement activities, with second hand bike markets, cycling road shows, and the enduringly popular Dr Bike free maintenance sessions. The Dr Bike sessions are usually fully booked, and take place once a month at each site, of which there are 8 across all institutions. There is also a monthly project newsletter that is read by nearly 2500 people across the 3 organisations, and we hold regular campaigns surrounding issues such as bike security or starting cycling.

In addition to these elements of the project, the Ucycle project is working with all three of its partner organisations to improve the cycling infrastructure at all their sites. Whilst this can prove to be a challenge in some areas, as the organisations have such a large and disparate number of sites, effective communication with the various interested parties has enabled an effective platform of infrastructure improvements to be erected. Communication and direct engagement with members of the existing cycling community at these institutions has been paramount to the project as it has enabled the team to acquire a realistic perspective from which to evaluate the existing infrastructure provisions and propose improvements and the development of new ones. New restricted access cycle storage is currently being installed at each of the three Nottingham Trent sites, and the University of Nottingham has substantially increased the amount of cycle lanes across its University Park and Jubilee Campuses as part of the ongoing restructuring of traffic flow across the sites. Recently, the project has been broadening its scope and developing links with a number of Further Education colleges in the Nottingham area. This has allowed the project to begin placing emphasis on work within the local community, and promote cycling as a sustainable means of transport to young people at a key point in the transition to adulthood.

For more information about Ucycle Nottingham or Sustrans and the work being done in the East Midlands, please email: ucyclenottingham@sustrans.org.uk.

Electric Bike?

Do any of the readers currently use an electric bike? If so, and you'd be happy to share your experiences with the rest of the DCG membership, we'd like to hear from you so that we can create an article for a future newsletter. Please get in touch by emailing articles@derbycyclinggroup.org.uk.

ONLINE
By IAN DENT

Please visit the DCG website for up to date information on the Group's activities. In particular, try the "Discuss" forum where you can see the latest situation with the various campaigns we're involved with as well as get information on forthcoming events. Your contribution (either on new events or comments on our approach to existing campaigns) is really welcomed.

If you are on Facebook you are encouraged to join the Derby Cycling Group Facebook Group. Login to your account and then search for "Derby Cycling Group". You should find the group information and there should be a "Join" icon at the top of the page - click on that and you're joined!

DCG EVENING SOCIAL PUB RIDES

By IAN ALEXANDER

The following rides are planned and are open to all members. Meet Derby Market Place, near to the Tourist Information office in time for a 7pm departure. Lights are compulsory on both rides.

- Tuesday 21st June (Summer Solstice) Holly Bush, Makeney
 - Friday 22nd July Short ride to a hostelry returning for further drinks at the Flower Pot, King Street.
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Forthcoming events

Derby Sustrans Rangers organise occasional family rides and some are coming up in June. These provide an excellent opportunity for you (and any friends or family who perhaps don't cycle often) to join a mass ride on off-road cycle paths and to then enjoy a BBQ in picturesque surrounding. The next is scheduled for:

- Sunday 12th June Mickleover to Etwall Swimming Pool including the opportunity of a free swim. See <http://tinyurl.com/mickleover11>

11am start for the ride. All are welcome but children must be accompanied. Free to attend (pay for what you eat).

DCG COMMITTEE

The DCG committee is keen for any members interested in becoming more involved in the group to join the committee, either as one of the vacant committee positions (chair or newsletter editor), or as a general "without portfolio" member. All are welcome to attend the monthly meetings at the Brunswick PH (first Tuesdays of the month, 7:30pm, upstairs).

A Cyclist's Plea

By DAVE WEBSTER

Just doing my bit
Day after day
Riding my bike
Pedalling away

Thoughts of the environment
And its possible decay
Global warming

Surely on its way

But let me explain
About the danger I'm in
When I get on my bike
I think it's a sin

This plea's to you drivers
Who have no patience for me
Hey! I'm on the roads too
But you don't care to see

Honking your horns
Get out of my way
Behind your wheels
Typically plenty to say

Your cars speeding past me
More important things on your mind
Like tuning in the radio
A good tune trying to find

Texting your boss
"Sorry I'm running late
Real heavy night
In a bit of a state"

No awareness at all
No courtesy to be had
Real inconsiderate drivers
Really making me mad

A letter to the council
A petition to lodge
About all of the potholes
Which I have to dodge

As for the bike lanes
Too few and far between
Take a trip to Holland
Then you'll see what I mean

But I digress, back to you drivers
I have a few more things to say
Please have a bit of consideration
When I'm heading your way

If you cycled just one mile
In my cycling shoes
I am one hundred per cent sure
That you'd soon change your views

Thanks to Dave for contributing this poem (copyright Dave Webster, 2011). If any other members wish to contribute their work please send articles to the newsletter editor.

Safer surfaces and help for HGV drivers

By LUCY CARE

Campaigns on two changes to improve road safety for cyclists are making headway: A practical alternative for slippery manhole covers and extra sensors to warn HGV drivers of people in their blind spots.

The national campaign organisation, the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), is running a campaign, "Get a Grip" (see www.getagripuk.org), to replace cast iron manhole covers with composite ones. They say that these will last as long, cost little more and will mean that there is virtually no change in the slipperiness of the road surface compared to tarmac.

MAG has already got the agreement of Severn Trent to use composite manhole covers, if the local Highways Authority (Derby City Council or Derbyshire County Council in our case) agrees. Derby Cycling Group has written to Derby City Council to ask for them to at least allow some manholes covers to be installed in composite as a trial.

Lib Dem MP, Alan Beith has presented a Bill in Parliament to require better safety equipment to eliminate blind spots on Heavy Goods vehicles (HGVs). This is in support of the "See me, Save me" campaign (see www.eilidhcairnns.com/seemesaveme) calling for new technology to be fitted to all HGVs to give drivers more information on people and cyclists close to them.

Injury statistics in London show that HGVs are disproportionately involved in deaths and injuries to cyclists and the London Cycling Campaign has collected over 10,000 signatures in support of the campaign. This is also a problem internationally and over 400 MEPs have signed a written declaration requiring the European Commission to propose changes to address the problem for the whole of the EU.

See the websites given or contact the council, your MP and MEPs to support either or both these campaigns.

Cyclenation

By IAN DENT

The DCG is a member of Cyclenation, a national organisation of cycle campaigning groups. One of the benefits of membership is access to the Cyclenation newsletters which DCG members can access at <http://www.cyclenation.org.uk/newsletters.php>.
