

## CLOSED ROAD CYCLE CIRCUIT

By *TONY ROELICH*

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Derby Cycling Group supports the creation of the proposed closed road cycle circuit on Pride Park in Derby. In giving our support to the closed road circuit, we recognise the massive part it will play as a cycle training facility to develop the riding skills, in a safe environment, of existing and new cyclists of all ages and abilities. It will give people who do not currently cycle the confidence and the competence to make cycle journeys to work, for leisure or for other everyday journeys. We are also very excited at the prospect of such a high class sports training and competition facility being available in the city, allowing sporting and club cyclists of all ages and abilities to train for competition at all levels within the sport. We are aware of and support the inclusivity of the facility; the intention for example to utilise it for disabled people to experience cycling and to learn how to ride a wide variety of adapted cycles, the development of more aspects of cycle sport in schools through the use of the circuit's various routes and courses, and of the intention to encourage other wheeled sports and activities as well as cycling to use the circuit. For all of these reasons, we see this facility as a major asset to Derby and this has led to our support for the project.

We do however deeply regret the incursion of the closed road circuit into the neighbouring nature reserve and are disappointed that the original route plan which was largely outside the boundaries of the nature reserve and was more acceptable to the nature conservation groups was abandoned. That change of plan occurred because of an ill-conceived

view that the previous level of dedicated car parking was to be maintained for Pride Park stadium. The new car parking which occupies the land which would have been the closed road circuit are hardly ever filled and could have been found instead from existing parking spaces within the Pride Park area which are vacant at weekends and evenings when football matches take place. Because the majority of the nature reserve is unaffected by the closed road circuit, and because of the increased level of cycling in Derby as a consequence of the closed road circuit (which provides additional environmental benefits) the issue of land use is not enough for us to object to the project.

Derby Cycling Group hopes that Derby City Council will, in consultation with the nature conservation groups, work hard to identify and put aside more than the equivalent amount land lost to the closed road circuit for nature conservation in the nearby area as some compensation for the loss of the affected parts of the current nature reserve.

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## SKILLED VOLUNTEERS WANTED

By *IAN DENT*

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The last newsletter briefly described the plans for a Derwent Valley Cycleway running through the Derwent Valley World Heritage site from Derby to Matlock and linking with the Peak Cycle Links circular route around the Peak District. A working party has been formed to progress the establishment of the Cycleway. It is still very early days for the project and much remains to be done. However,

it has been identified that particular skills in the areas of civil engineering, law (particularly with regard to charity and community organisations), and accountancy will be needed as the project progresses. Can you help?

This is a request to find people with free time, who are interested in the project and have some of the necessary skills. This would be an unpaid volunteer role but gives the chance to get involved in the early days of what could become a very interesting project. If you think you could assist then please contact the secretary of the working group (Ian Scott) on [ianvscott@btinternet.com](mailto:ianvscott@btinternet.com)

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## WHAT GEAR ARE YOU IN?

By *LES SIMS*

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Many bikes have gearing which is too high for people who live in hilly districts or are advancing in years and find that the local gradients appear to be getting even steeper. No matter how many gears you have, the one that really matters is the lowest. If that is too high then climbing hills becomes more difficult. Having a lower bottom gear will transform your bike from a lumbering carthorse into a sprightly pony. Most bikes have derailleur gears with a rear wheel cluster of six or eight sprockets driven by the chain wheel which may have one, two or three rings. To lower the gearing, it is necessary to have a larger sprocket at the rear or a smaller chain wheel. Changing the chain wheel will alter all the gears but you can, more cheaply, change the rear cluster for one with more teeth on the largest sprocket.

A modern mountain or hybrid bike will have a rear cluster (cassette) with a range of teeth from about 11 to say 28, 30, or 32. And this could be replaced by one with up to 34 teeth. Best to go for one with say 2 teeth more than you have at present, and this will give you a worthwhile reduction of bottom gear without having further complications with chain length or exceeding the capacity of your rear operating mechanism.

Bicycle gearing is expressed in numbers ranging from about 20 to over 100 and is calculated by a simple formula, which is:- Number of teeth on chain wheel divided by number on rear sprocket, multiplied by the wheel diameter. This is basically the distance travelled for one revolution of the pedals. It derives from the days of the Penny Farthing (or Ordinary) which of course had no gears as we know them, but the bigger the wheel the faster you could go. The limitation was the inside leg measurement of the rider, so for a guy with 36" legs he could have a gear of 72, which is not high by modern standards. That is why we use the diameter of the wheel rather than the circumference, which would give a more accurate figure for distance travelled per revolution of the pedals. Having established what is a reasonable number for average gearing, we can look at the extremes. A fairly high gear would be around 100 and a fairly low gear about 35, so we are looking for a gear of 30 or even below for the best hill climbing.

As with most things these days it's all on the Internet, and to save all this tiresome mathematics you can look at gear tables which cover all possible combinations of numbers of sprocket and chain wheel sizes. So count the numbers of teeth on all the sprockets and chain wheel rings on your bike and see what changes can be made to give your bike a lower bottom gear, then check what replacement sprockets are available. A special tool is required to remove the rear cassette, but this is not an expensive item, or you can ask your local bike shop to do this.

If your chain needs replacing due to wear, then this is a good time to make the change. New chains do not go well with old sprockets anyway. It is often best, though expensive, to replace the whole transmission system at the same time. For hubgears as fitted to Bromptons and such, it is only really possible to lower all the gears at once by fitting a smaller chain wheel or a larger rear sprocket. The latter is not only much cheaper, but a very simple operation. The rear sprocket is held in place by a circlip, which can be removed without special tools. A new sprocket only 1 tooth larger than original will give a worthwhile reduction of bottom gear without too much compromise on top gear.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR - DERBY TELEGRAPH

By *IAN DENT*

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There has been extensive coverage in the Derby Telegraph of the closed road circuit planned for Pride Park with lots of misinformation (e.g., "predators will perch on top of the lampposts and then pounce on wildlife below" - thank you Councillor Wood!) confusing the situation. The headlines give the impression that a well-loved public nature reserve is being destroyed by the planned circuit. This isn't true.

The reserve is an old waste site that is fenced, has no public access (except by peering through the fence), and which nature has started to take over. There are a privileged few who have keys to the reserve but there is no general public access (as for instance there is at Allestree Park and other reserves around Derby).

The original plans have been adapted to meet various objections resulting in a package that retains the majority of the existing reserve, creates a new reserve nearby and allows the creation of a very useful closed road facility. After a lot of representations from official bodies and the public (both for and against the plans) the Council Planning Committee carefully considered the proposals and, on balance, decided that they should be passed as the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. That is the democratic process. The closed road facility is a road which has no other traffic and is thus really useful for any activities that cannot, for safety reasons, be done on the public road network including bunch cycle racing, training of children and novice cyclists, wheelchair sport, roller skating and road running. Some of the biggest benefits are from the opportunities the circuit provides for young people to take up and improve their sporting skills.

Whilst a lot of misinformed discussion has revolved around alternative sites for the closed road circuit it is clear that, if the current plans are cancelled, the external funding will be lost (and spent at another city more supportive of developing sporting facilities) and there will be no closed road

circuit in Derby. This would be a disaster for our youngsters.

Surely the option of retaining most of the existing nature reserve, creating a new reserve and getting a closed road circuit is obviously better than the alternative of keeping the existing fenced reserve, no additional reserve and no road circuit?

Is it a coincidence that the people who continue to try to delay this project are the same small elite group who have privileged access to the current reserve? It is now time for this very vocal group to recognise that their views have been heard and taken into account and that an excellent compromise has been reached. They should concentrate on spending their charitable revenues on developing the new reserve rather than wasting their money (and the Derby taxpayers') on expensive lawyers.

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## LIST OF LOCAL BIKE SHOPS - DERBY

By *PETE GREENFIELD*

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Following are the list of bike shops available in Derby.

- [be]spoke, 01332 989254, 159-163 London Road, Derby, DE1 2SU, <http://www.bespokecyclesderby.co.uk/>.
- BikeBack Derby, 07710 632999, Unit 3A, 1 Canal Street, Derby DE1 2RJ, <http://www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/derby>.
- Buzz Cycles, 01773 821082, 8 Bridge Street, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1AX, <http://buzzcycles.co.uk/>.
- Cyclomonster, 01332 902701, 76 Derby Road, Spondon, Derby, DE21 7LX, <http://www.cyclomonster.com/>.
- Hawk Cycles, 01332 756666, 960 London Rd, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 8PY, <http://www.hawkcycles.co.uk/>.
- Holts Cycles, 01332 344193, 87-89 Nightingale Rd, Derby, DE24 8BG, <http://www.holtscycles.co.uk/>.
- Lovevelo, 01332 295934, Darley Abbey Mills,

Derby, DE22 1DZ.

- Mercian Cycles, 01332 752468, 7 Shardlow Road, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0JG, <http://www.merciancycles.co.uk/>.

- Samways, 01332 368849, 20-22 Ashbourne Road, Derby, DE22 3DR, <http://www.samwayscycles.co.uk/>.

- The Bike Shop, 01332 382227, 100-104 Monk St, Derby, DE22 3QB, <http://www.thebikeshopderby.co.uk/>.

- Velo Bavarian, 01332 841950, 113 Derby Road, Duffield, Derbyshire, DE56 4FQ, <http://www.velobavarian.co.uk/>.

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## **DERBY SHAMED ON CYCLE COMMUTING - CYCLE COMMUTING STATIC FOR 10 YEARS**

By *TONY ROELICH*

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The latest census results show that in contrast to most other urban areas in England and Wales, the proportion of journeys to work by bike in Derby remained static between 2001 and 2011. Almost all the other ex-cycle demonstration towns (CDTs) have witnessed significant growth in cycle commuting as well as almost all our biggest cities, led by London. I know our CDT project focussed on children and the cycle to school figures were not in the report (if they were even captured), but I find this figure for Derby amazing and disappointing.

There are a huge number of projects underway in the city which could bring huge benefits for cyclists and encourage lots more people to travel to work by bike. If the city council were cycle focussed that would make a huge difference, but as an organisation it is not. The council's new Connected Project aims to get more sustainable journeys to work, and some of it's officers and a few councillors think about cycling, but departments and across departmental boundaries, examples of good practice are anecdotal. The secure parking planned for so long in the new council house was thrown

out (literally to outside, to insecure cycle shelters) at the eleventh hour. The much lauded pedestrian and cycle "boulevard" from the railway station to Traffic Street will now just be a road with lots of on-street parking and wide pavements; the cyclist gets a poor deal. There is no cycle path from the velodrome to the riverside cycle path; it was deemed "too dangerous" because it ran next to a car park - now cyclists are urged to ride through the car park to reach the velodrome. Somebody just didn't "get it"! So much for Derby's aspiration to become "the most active city in Britain by 2020".

We need our city council to manage it's own planning controls much more cycle-proactively and be more forceful at encouraging developers to be so. DCG is campaigning hard to get cycling at the core of many projects, but in this day and age the council should be doing that - so many other towns and cities are. A sample of the projects we are campaigning on:

- Retaining a dedicated, off-road cycle path from Midland Place to Traffic Street as part of Castleward Urban Village.

- Upgrading of the cycle routes on Traffic Street and Morledge feeding into Castleward.

- Getting a proper cycle route created from the Riverside Path to the Velodrome so that families can cycle there and Pride Park Stadium for sport or for concert going.

- Having cycle travel a major focus of travel planning to and through the new Global Technology Cluster business park on Sinfin Moor: routes, facilities at every unit, services to enable people to cycle.

- Inclusion of new cycle routes as part of the A38 "flyover" junctions.

- Ensuring the new London Road rail bridge has good quality cycle paths on both sides.

Most of all we will be lobbying the council to take a more proactive approach to cycling. They need to get the fine words of "more cycling" translated into projects delivered, on the ground, by people taking a cyclists view, which enable people to cycle to work. In terms of the 2011 census returns, Derby City Council "must do much better"; can they turn this round by 2021?

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