

# Newsletter MMXIX

DCG leads the campaign to save Friar Gate Cycle Lane



DCG members and supporters were out in force on 16th February in a demonstration to show their anger at Derby City Council's proposal to scrap Friar Gate cycle infrastructure. Also showing their support was Chris Williamson MP and several Derby City Councillors. Part of the demonstration was for some protestors to strip down to their underwear as a sym-

bolic act to highlight that the closure of cycle infrastructure was the 'stripping away' of cyclists safety, leaving cyclists exposed.

BBC East Midlands filmed and broadcasted the protest which included an interview with DCG

acting chair Tony Roelich. Articles also appeared on the BBC News & road.cc websites.

The DCG led demonstration made a strong statement to Derby City Council—that their proposals will increase the risk to cyclists using this route into Derby and that this is not acceptable.

Some of Derby Cycling Group's opinions:

We believe facilities like these should either remain unchanged or be upgraded to something better, but not removed.

The cycle/bus lane is a "safe haven" for getting access to the cycle/bus "gate" onto lower Friar Gate, it enables many people to cycle along here into the city centre.

Removing the cycle lane will make the road more dangerous for cyclists. The changes will force cyclists to ride into the

outside lane, into faster traffic, to get onto the lower Friar Gate cycle lane.

At the very least it will make this manoeuvre feel dangerous

and many people will simply stop cycling here.

The facility opposite Brick Street is poorly designed, but it is used. This was witnessed by DCG on a site visit with council officers. A better alter-



Spring 2019

native should be installed instead of removing it altogether.

Derby's clean air strategy must encourage more cycling and walking; the council's proposal will reduce active travel by removing infrastructure which supports it.

More cycling and walking are the best way to reduce pollution and congestion. This is recognised both by the council, Public Health England and DEfRA.

Please look out for further action and campaigning by Derby Cycling Group on this issue.

## DCG to host 2019 East Midlands Cycle Forum

DCG will be hosting the 2019 East Midlands Cycle forum—a meeting of the various cycling campaign groups in the East Midlands.

Date: 22nd June 2019 Time: 08.00am—5.00pm Venue: TBC

### Calling all Historians by Ian Dent

DCG maintains an archive of old newsletters but this is currently very incomplete particularly for issues before 2005. We're hoping that long-standing members may have retained paper copies of older communications that could be scanned and updated on the website.

The current list can be found at:

### https://derbycyclinggroup.org.uk/blog/documents/latestnewsletter/

If you can fill in any of the gaps then please send scans to <u>webmaster@derbycyclinggroup.org.uk</u> and we'll get them added to the website. You might be interested to see Issue number 1 from 1980. A lot of the cycle related problems don't go away. Issue 1 includes a call for work on Derby's potholes!

### One in a thousand chances by Ken Timmis

I recently came across an interesting quote in a cycling book 'Bike Nation' by Peter Walker. He states that in the 1950s Alan Lennox-Boyd, the minister for transport in Winston Churchill's then government, said something very wise about road crash-

es. "Accidents in the main arise from the taking of very small risks a very large number of times," he said. "A thousand-to-one chance against an accident may not be rated very high, but for every thousand people take it there will be an accident."



A risk of one in a thousand appears to be very small but how big is that in a real world context? To make sense of this small risk I set out to put it into an everyday perspective of the average driver and what they would experience driving on the UK's roads. A search for information revealed plenty of casualty data but no accident data.

Analysing the government casualty statistics I found that typically the number of serious injuries is about 10x the fatalities, and similarly slightly injured are about 10x the number of serious injuries. To predict the number of collisions I made an assumption that the number of collisions on the roads are 10x the number of slight injuries. The 2017 transport statistics indicated there were about 1800 fatalities on the road, using this figure the following table was produced;

Fatalities	1,800
Serious injuries	18,000
Slight injuries	180,000
Collisions	1,800,000

Now using the low risk one in a thousand chances resulting in collisions the number of chances taken by drivers on the road can be evaluated;

Chances	1,800,000,000

Having established that drivers take about 1.8 billion chances a year, what does this represent in relation to the distance driven. The transport statistics indicate the distance driven by all road vehicles in 2017 was about 327 billion miles. So dividing this figure by the number of chances we arrive at the distance driven between chances being taken;

Distance between chances miles 182
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Using the transport data I have calculated the average distance travelled by road vehicles to be 8674 miles per annum. Knowing the average distance driven, this can be used to evaluate the number of chances a driver take each year and then predict how many years would pass between being involved in a collision, the one in a thousand chance.

Chances per annum	48
Years between collisions (based on 1 in 1000 chances	21

This is very simplified view of the one in a thousand chance of a crash applied to the average driver travelling an average mileage annually. When driving we can reduce the risk that we import to the road by complying with the rules of the road

and not being seduced into making those risky manoeuvres. We will still be exposed to the chances being taken by other drivers but we need to be cognisant of their poor driving.



As cyclists we import little risk to the road, a consequence of low mass travelling at low speed and being conscious of our vulnerability. Most of the risk is imported by vehicles, being heavy and fast (relative to cyclists and pedestrians), while their drivers encased in metal and surrounded by an array of safety devices oblivious of other road users.

There is some good news. Surprisingly some insurance companies offer discount to cyclists on the basis that cyclists are more aware of situations on the road and continue to do so when behind the wheel.

I can recommend 'Bike Nation' by Peter Walker; he discusses the place of bicycles in modern society together with the trials and tribulations of being a cyclist.

## Sustrans National Cycle Network Review

by lan Dent

Sustrans have recently completed their review of the 16,500 miles of the existing National Cycle Network and their results make interesting reading:



### https://www.sustrans.org.uk/pathsforeveryone

Of particular interest for local riders is the interactive feedback tool that they have also provided and which collects comments (good and bad) on the existing National Cycle Network. We'd encourage all members to review the map in their local area and add their ideas on improvements, additions to the network, etc. that they would like to see. The amount and quality of the suggestions will help focus Sustrans on the areas of the country where they need to concentrate their efforts.

The feedback tool can be found at:

https://nationalcyclenetwork.commonplace.is/

# Explore Derby's traffic free routes on a social ride with Sustrans volunteers by James Thatcher

Would you like to ride your bike more in 2019? Our friends, the Derby Sustrans volunteers will be running a series of bike rides this year to help you get out and have fun. The rides will be friendly, social rides which would be ideal for cycling novices or anyone wanting to get back into cycling. As long as you know how to ride then these events are for you.

The routes will vary but will be a combination of traffic free paths and quiet streets. There will be a mid-way refreshment stop for anyone who wants to purchase a drink and have a chat. The ride will be at a relaxed and social pace and no one will



be left behind. All the rides will begin and end in Derby city centre. All kinds of bikes are suitable.

#### To join please register at:

https://derby-sustrans.eventbrite.co.uk (note that there is a limit on the number of riders so register early). There is no charge to join this event. Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult.

We will meet at 10am outside Derby City Council House on Corporation Street. The first 3 dates will be:

- 9<sup>th</sup> March
- 6<sup>th</sup> April
- 4<sup>th</sup> May

If you have any questions please email: <u>derbysustrans@gmail.com</u>

### Is Belt Drive the Future of Commuter

### Cycling? by Bill Whitehead

In my view the main issue for regular cycle maintenance is the chain drive. It has to be oiled regularly and leaves oil on your trousers. In addition my derailleur geared bike gets through a set of chain and sprockets every 1000 miles or so, which means replacement every six months for my 40 mile a week commute.

Bearing these issues in mind I started to look into purchasing a new bike under the Cycle to Work scheme with hub gearing and a belt drive. I saw that a belt drive was within the Cycle to Work scheme enhanced price bracket and decided to give it a go as reports of 10000 mile plus service life appeared to be possible. As a bonus there is no need to lubricate and tension adjustment was reported to be a rare necessity. The only downsides I could see were the need to have a split right hand rear triangle, to allow changing the unsplittable belt, and that the belt is slightly less energy efficient transmission system than a brand new clean and well lubricated chain.

After some investigation I decided on the top spec Cube Hyde Race. In addition to



belt drive it also has a light frame, hydraulic disc brakes and a Shimano Alfine 8 speed hub. After delivery at the beginning of June 2018, I fitted some lights and mudguards and rode it happily daily to work and some weekend leisure cycling. It was a great machine to ride with fantastic brakes, reliable 8 speed hub, light weight and stable handling. The first worry I had was when I met another cyclist on an identical machine and he told me his belt and rear cog had lost all their teeth a few weeks after purchase. My bike appeared reliable and clocked up over a thousand miles by December. Unfortunately, on my way home from a bit of Christmas leisure cycling I

heard an odd noise just before I got home. I got off and pushed for the last few metres and had a look at the belt. I was horrified to see that six teeth were missing from the belt and later I realised that the rear cog had also got hooked teeth



and had lost some teeth on the inner side.

The belt is supplied by Gates Belt Drive who are based in Germany. Consequently, all of the warranty discussions are via the dealer to them and photos and measurements had to be sent by email. Apparently, the main concern for the manufacturer is that the front belt wheel and rear cog are in line within the max beltline tolerance of +/- 1.5mm. This is a tiny tolerance measurement over the full reach of the belt and required a Vernier gauge to measure to the required level of accuracy. I think that getting the belt in line to this level of accuracy is a tall order and it looked to me as though the setup as it left the Cube factory was slightly outside the limit. To Gates credit they have honoured the warranty claim but I'll need to ensure the front belt wheel is about a millimetre further over to the right before I refit the belt. It'll be interesting to see how long it lasts once the beltline is within this tiny tolerance. I'm concerned that this level of accuracy is unachievable in the real world over about a 500mm reach from rear to front cog. It seems likely there would be some small amounts of flex when pedalling up hill or leaning into bends.

Up to the point when it failed I was an absolute convert to belt drive. It needed little adjustment—using vibration sound frequency measurements via a smart phone app to ensure the correct tension, there is no lubrication used and there is a very direct feel to the drivetrain. Unfortunately, once I have all the parts replaced under warranty, I'll now be constantly concerned that it may fail again. Are Belt Drives the future of low maintenance commuter cycling? The jury is out.

### The Good Old Days by Les Sims (Age 853/4)

Imagine, if you will, a world lacking in so many of the things that we take for granted today. That was the "Good Old Days".

No Internet, no television, no NHS, no central heating, no double glazing, no supermarkets, no private cars, no foreign holidays and no motorways. Such things as space travel and mobile phones were the stuff of science fiction writers in the comic papers. This was the world of my schooldays during and immediately after The Second World War.

But we did have bikes. True they were heavy, built more for longevity than speed – and all made of good old British steel in nearby Nottingham, Coventry and Birmingham. No cable or disc brakes or LED lights. Solid steel brake linkages worked on wide steel Endrick rims and lights glimmered from heavy twin cell batteries.

My Dad worked shifts and one dark night, was chased by a policeman on a bike who had noticed that Dad didn't have a rear light. The PC was the faster rider and the outcome was a fine of 10 shillings, a tidy sum in those days. At least he wasn't arrested for resisting arrest, but the event did appear in the Derby Evening Telegraph. Imagine that happening today, but then the Police weren't fully occupied with collisions caused by the increasing numbers of idiot drivers who threaten the lives of other road users today.

However, in those days, if you needed mobility for work or leisure then a bike was essential.

There were no white lines painted on roads and they were not gritted in the Winter. Any ice just stayed there until it melted naturally. I recall cycling to work on one Winter's morning, joining the 10 wide hoard of cyclists heading along the Derby ring road towards Rolls-Royce. The road at the Normanton Barracks junction was icy and one guy skidded on the ice, bringing down everyone else.

The big cycling craze of the 1950's was cycle speedway, and we had about a dozen race tracks on waste land in the Derby area. This new sport for teenagers (we were known as "skidkids)



had started on the derelict bomb sites left after the London blitz and rapidly spread throughout the country. The bikes were pretty basic with brakes and other unnecessary parts removed, having a single low gear for rapid acceleration. As in motorcycle speedway (which was a popular national spectator sport in those days) four riders, two from each team, raced over four laps of the track which had a loose cinder surface.

The cornering technique was known as "broad siding".

For local league matches we rode to the tracks on our race bikes, but had some challenge matches against teams in Burton, Manchester, and Birmingham. For these trips we hired a small lorry which carried the bikes (and most of us) in the open back. No such thing as seat belts or even basic Health and Safety in those days. On one occasion we passed beneath a very low railway bridge and those standing could so easily have been decapitated had we not ducked just in time.

Another popular cycling craze was to build up a second bike known as a "clag". The essential features were as follows:-

Rather low single speed fixed gear. Narrow straight handlebars.

No rear brake – front brake only.

No mudguards.



The wheelbase was reduced to "improve" the handling by straightening the front forks. This was done by removing the forks, placing them forward side down on a concrete path with a wooden plank on top and then jumping on them until they adopted the desired shape. This often put the wheels out of line, making it impossible to ride hands off (another desirable attribute).

With such a low gear and a fixed wheel, the riding style was head down with fixed straight ahead stare and maximum revolutions of the pedals giving a speed of less than 10 mph, but it seemed a lot faster and it impressed any girls who were watching. At least that is what we thought, although it is not substantiated so far as I know.

So, the bicycle has survived through all these changes in our lifestyle and remains a wonderful option for pollution free healthy travel for the future. It has an enormous potential to attract non-cyclists but the problem is one of possible conflict with motorised traffic and more needs to be done to provide traffic free routes in our towns and cities, just as the National Cycle Network has done for cyclists in the countryside.

# Articles Needed for the DCG Newsletter

Articles & suggestions are welcomed from members for future newsletters on any cycle related subject. Ideally article length of 250—500 words but any length would be gratefully received and considered. Please submit articles by email to:

articles@derbycyclinggroup.org.uk