

TRIBUTE TO MARK BROWN EX-DCG CHAIRMAN

By *IAN ALEXANDER*

I knew Mark Brown over some years through attending DCG meetings, as he lived near to me in Alvaston. Originating from Portsmouth, he was a keen utility cyclist, who didn't own a car, and had lots of ideas and experience of cycling in Derby. Our paths often crossed, I'd see him riding back from Asda, with shopping arranged on his bike (he had a wife and four children to shop for). He spent sometime working at Department of Work and Pensions call centre, where his energy and commitment resulted in promotion to supervisor. Although he enjoyed tending to his allotment and playing the trombone, it was his cycling work I knew him best for. He was chief organiser of the CTC/CCN conference in 2007, an event that required a lot of work, and with fewer volunteers to do it than now. It was this effort which led to him being elected DCG chairman in 2008, allowing John Stubbs to step down. He applied a good deal of energy to this role, being very keen that the campaigning work of the group should get plenty of air time at meetings, rather than the "nuts and bolts" which inevitably arise.

Occasional calls to his home telephone always resulted in his wife telling me "I don't know where he is, and he probably won't be back until later tonight". In his typical humorous way, Mark related how he'd always wanted a dog, but as his spouse was against it, he'd taught the cat to chase sticks. There was always that element of him being a free spirit, even a bit of a rebel at times. Alas personal problems then forced him to give up his

DCG role to his great regret, and his health started to deteriorate. His love of company meant he'd be outside Holbrook Road Co-op in Alvaston until quite late at night. I was shocked when I next saw him in a wheelchair after he'd had both legs removed, as his diabetes worsened, but he was always cheerful, giving me some personal details about one or two DCG committee members which I didn't know, despite the fact I'd known the same people for longer. He was looking forward to getting some new artificial legs. Another shock for me when I learned he had passed away at a relatively young age. Although I didn't know him well, there's always that slight twinge of guilt; was there something I could have done, as I kept seeing him at various points in his demise? He never blamed anyone else for his predicaments, was cheerful, social, optimistic and put lots of energy into his work and various hobbies, despite his health issues, and was never short of an opinion, or something to say. He told it like it was, with the addition of lots of humour. Although it's now a while since many have seen him, I hope this article records the important part he played in Derby Cycling Group.

MEMBER PROFILE: JOHN PALMER

By *TONY ROELICH*

John Palmer was a founder member of Derby Cycling Group in 1979, part of the railway works contingent who, along with fellow cyclists from other companies in the city decided it was time "to get things done" (as John put it) for cyclists. John was active from the start and organised many of the

city-wide cycle counts which took place annually until the 1990s. John is not a table banger, he is of the quiet dependable type, which is amply illustrated by his 21 year tenure as DCG's treasurer until his well deserved retirement at this year's AGM; a marvellous contribution anchoring the Group for all that time. In 2004/5 the Group faced dissolution as several key committee members left their posts, but he and John Stubbs together decided that they would not let that happen and strove to hold the fort through that difficult time. Eventually new, active members came through and enabled the Group to become more active again, so we are grateful to them both for believing in the cause. John's voice at our meetings has been that of reason and wisdom, keeping us on message, diverting us from pitfalls ... "we've tried that before" ... he is modest and unassuming and we hope to benefit from his wise and measured contributions well into the future. At the 2012 AGM, we presented John with a certificate for his services to cycling in Derby, an award which he richly deserved, and I'm sure all of you would like to say thank you for his decades of dedication to cyclists and cycling across the city.

CYCLING IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

By *IAN ALEXANDER*

The two most frequent comments I hear from cyclists I meet from other parts of the country, when they learn I'm from Derby are "The home of Mercian" or "On the doorstep of the Peak District". Closer examination of the Derby CTC rides list shows we don't actually visit the Peak District that often. Since their designation in 1951 the fifteen National Parks have certainly become marketable areas of the countryside, the main towns and features becoming very familiar to many. This has also brought a downside, which is the volume of visitors, and despite the best efforts of surrounding local authorities most visit by car. The town of Bakewell has changed a great deal in the last 20

years, with many new shops springing up, so along with Peak Park village at Rowsley, the Peak has become a destination for many shoppers from the urban conurbations that surround it, as well as those pursuing outdoor interests.

The A6 from Derby is a useful access to the Peak, as it follows the Derwent Valley, and despite the slight gradient, it avoids major climbs and is wide enough for traffic to pass unhindered. Even so the group still chooses Duffield Bank to Milford, crossing the Derwent to Chevinside in order to proceed to Ambergate; these lanes although containing several gradients are quiet with some great views to boot. North of Ambergate the A6 becomes busier as traffic from the A610 to Nottingham and the Amber Valley joins, but it is north of Matlock where main roads become a problem as the A6 is very busy between here and Rowsley. The lack of alternative routes is a problem with circuitous diversions and long hard climbs, with the favoured minor road alternatives along the top of the hills, such as that to the East of Matlock seeming busier, which assists motorists to use these routes. Other roads, many of which are narrow can cause problems for group riding. Heading south on a ride two years ago using the B6001 Calver to Bakewell road, we had to pause outside Hassop Hall such was the queue of traffic behind (in excess of 20 vehicles). Some traditional touring destinations such as Three Shires head, or Lud's Church have also declined in popularity, as group rides have become shorter. The Vale of Belvoir (to the south of Nottingham), and many parts of Leicestershire, and Staffordshire can provide picturesque villages, with country pubs, and quaint scenes, but are not very popular.

Some of the problems I've described are due to riding in groups, and are not necessarily a problem for solo riders. If you are fit enough for the hills, and can visit outside of busy times, or one of its less popular districts, it still makes for a good ride. There are vast stretches of the park which are remote and sparsely populated, so you can still very easily "get away from it all". While there are some negatives, I hope this article hasn't put you off cycling through the beautiful and unique countryside that forms Britain's Peak District.

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

By *TONY ROELICH*

- **Railway Station:** There was a problem with the temporary cycle stands being placed at the back of the North Car Park, where up to three bikes a day



Example of two tier cycle racks

- were being stolen. However, East Midland Trains have re-located these bike racks to near the taxi rank and they are now much more visible so we are hoping that the level of theft will reduce again. We have had no news of this one way or the other since the racks were moved.
- **Velodrome:** so far as we know progress is still being made on the Multi Sports Arena with Velodrome; we are awaiting news of the ceremonial ground cutting.
 - Derby has won nearly £5million of funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which will see improvements in the Riverside Path near Alvaston Park/Raynesway and other routes in the south east of the city. There is also investment in cycle promotion by local businesses in the south east segment; we're waiting to hear of the precised details.
 - Derby has bid for £1.2 million from a Safer Cycling fund, which DCG has strongly supported. This will create better cycle routes along the ring road between Spider Island and Victory Road, along Merrill Way and Wilmore Road. This should tie in with the new T12 link from Wilmore Road to the A50, crossing Sinfin Moor Lane and linking to the Canal Path, as part of the new Global Technology

Cluster industrial park which is to be built in that area.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

IAN ALEXANDER - DCG COMMITTEE

MEMBER

- **How long have you been with DCG?**
I've been on the committee of DCG for approximately 10 years, and been a member since the early nineties. It was the first cycling organisation I joined, in the days of door to door membership collection, when I lived with my parents in Aston on Trent. I eagerly read the DCG newsletter as soon as it arrived. I was unaware of Sustrans and CTC, but the existence of DCG no doubt helped me develop my interest in cycling. Now I'm a member of all three.
- **What is your role?**
I've represented CTC upto May this year, when I was honoured to be appointed as chairman. It's hard work, but good to take an active role in the meetings. I try to strike a balance between moving the meeting along, but also keeping it relaxed and humourous, as it's people's leisure time. I don't do much campaigning work myself, but try and support those that do.
- **Where are your favourite bike rides?**
Difficult one! Derby is surrounded by some great countryside, and Peak District apart, the Vale of Belvoir takes some beating. Less traffic than the peak.
- **Which are the bikes you own?**
An old hub geared 80's Peugeot with flat bars for utility riding, and can be left anywhere, particularly outside the Brunswick, Railway and Bus Stations! My tourer is a secondhand red Edison (Clowne based bike builder). It's

been rebuilt after a couple of accidents, and it rides very nicely. I've got another Edison, a flat barred tourer on order.

- **What do you do outside Derby Cycling Group?**

I ring bells at my local church, St Michaels in Alvaston, which I enjoy when I get it right! I also enjoy some walking, and cooking.

AN APPEAL TO THE DCG MEMBERS

By *ANNA SEMLYEN*

WANTED 20mph Volunteer Campaign Branch Leader/Committee members for 20's Plenty for Derby I am writing to interest you in running, or contributing time to, a campaign on 20mph speed limits without road humps. The 20's Plenty for Us campaign is the UK leader and we are free to join. We have 146 Campaign groups across the country and support anyone who wants 20mph limits for their community.

Over 8 million people's authorities have agreed this life saving and quality of life raising policy. 20mph limits are recognised as Department for Transport and EU best practice for residential roads or where there are likely to be vulnerable road users. NICE also says 20mph is best practice for child protection. Portsmouth had 22% fewer casualties two years after its community wide 20mph limit implementation. Slower speeds provide the basis for active travel, lowering obesity, heart disease and stress. They save 12% of fuel, reducing pollution and climate change emissions. Limits smooth traffic and cut congestion. Noise is 40% less and road maintenance and signage lighting costs fall. Improved accessibility, helping the vulnerable and community cohesion are further quality of life gains.

We offer anyone interested in campaigning for wide area 20mph limits without humps a range of professionally branded campaign services. These are at <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/campaigning.htm>

Services include a free local email forwarding of a memorable address eg derby@20splentyforus.org.uk, free local template website with on line petition, mailing the local press our briefings (optionally with your details for comment which raises local profile), petitions, leaflets, stickers, posters, loan of speed guns and more including a free pack of our briefings and some stickers to start up.

We are not party political as all colours have supported 20mph limits in the past, though many of our campaign branches are run by Councillors or politically active citizens.

Do ring or email me with any questions. If you feel unable to take this voluntary role on yourself, please would you forward it to people who might be interested and forward this request to any of your supporters or social media channels.

Thank you.

Anna Semlyen,

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UK WIDE CYCLE NETWORK MAP

A new map has been produced by Richard Mann showing a map of Britain in the style of the Oxford Cycle Map, based on OpenStreetMap data. It shows the treatment of main roads in red, and quiet routes in blue, which helps get a feel for how much the main roads have been adapted to make cycling easy and comfortable. <http://www.transportparadise.co.uk/DualCycleNetworkMap/> People are encouraged to contribute to Open Street Map in order to correct any errors or to fill in areas within insufficient information.