

Velo Vision Sample Article



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peter@velovision.com

I hope you enjoy the read.

Peter Eland

Peter Eland
Editor and Publisher,
Velo Vision

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Velo Vision is published quarterly by Velo Vision Ltd. Subscription details, news and updates can be found on www.velovision.com

ISSN 1475-4312

Velo Vision Magazine
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WEB PROGRAMMER: Simon Ward
PRINTER: Stephens & George Magazines Ltd

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE:
Issue 34: June 2009
Issue 35: September 2009
Issue 36: December 2009
Issue 37: March 2010

Velo Vision is a member of INK, trade association of the alternative press in the UK. www.ink.uk.com

VELO VISION AND VELO-VISION
We weren't first with the name. Velo-Vision is a bike shop in Körten, near Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany. *Velo Vision* magazine exists in friendly harmony with Velo-Vision in Germany.

Velo Vision is printed on paper produced from sustainable forests to Nordic Swan standards.



COVER: Riding in suspended comfort on the Pirol Street Vario trike.

OPPOSITE: Daffodils mark an early spring ride for the Pino.
Both photos: Peter Eland

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SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Bounce galore this issue – and not just thanks to the Pirol trike, with its double-wishboned air suspension. I'm also feeling bouncy at seeing the first signs of spring, and a return to riding for pleasure alongside just cycling for transport – as I seem to have been doing through much of this winter. And there's a full schedule of events to look forward to this year as well – see page 9 for the listing.

There seems to be a spring in the step of

the cycle industry too, despite the current economic woes. As this issue shows, the flow of new models and innovations hasn't dried up at all, and in the UK at least, climate concerns and a new spirit of frugality are keeping cycling in a more positive media spotlight than for many years. I'm hoping it's a good time to launch a book, as you'll see on page 7!

I hope you all enjoy this issue, and here's to tailwinds in 2009!

Peter Eland

PEDALLING VEGETABLES



PHOTO: NICK RATCLIFFE



PHOTO: SUSANNAH SALTER AT DERBY CVS

Nick Ratcliffe of Vegetable Pedallers describes how pedal-powered wholefood deliveries have brought real benefits to mobility impaired people in Derby, and to their business.

LEFT: SoundBites delivery cyclist Tim Almy outside the shop in Derby, ready to set off with a fully-laden 8 Freight. Electric assist eases the pedalling workload.

IN years gone by the sight of a delivery lad puffing his way up the street on a fully laden work bike stacked with groceries was commonplace. At SoundBites wholefood shop in Derby we've brought it back into circulation, putting a modern slant on this age-old method of delivery by using an up-to-date bike and some fresh ideas.

SoundBites Wholefoods (a workers cooperative) has been established in Derby city centre for over three years, but during the early stages of setting up, whilst seeking premises, we realised there was also a lack of quality food outlets outside the city centre. But having made the decision to locate in the centre we decided that, when able, we would set up a scheme to take food to the wider community.

One of the company's policies is not to rely on a vehicle which depends on fossil fuels, so the natural solution was to source a bicycle for the job. With the help of a donation from Unicorn Grocery in Manchester we purchased one of Burrows Engineering's fine 8 Freight load bikes and so the first seeds of a home delivery scheme were sown.

By using a bike, however, we were limiting the amount of deliveries we could physically make across the city – there is only so much weight and bulk that can be carried realistically. So we decided to focus on delivering to people who have mobility difficulties, rather than letting the service be booked up by people who were able to get to the shop under their own steam.

We then secured funding from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation to help run the scheme and recently from Cycle Derby (the council's cycle department), as Derby is a national cycle demonstration town.

DOORSTEP DELIVERIES

The idea is to offer fresh vegetables and fruit to people who have mobility difficulties, to elderly and disabled people and to those with long term illnesses. To order, customers simply phone in, or tell us what they want for the following week when we deliver.



PHOTO: NICK RATCLIFFE

The fruit and veg orders are picked daily from our cold store, placed in hard-wearing jute bags, packed into plastic storage tubs, then strapped to the bike. We've bolted a large veg crate to the back rack which will happily fit a large tub full of more veg bags inside.

Then we sally forth and deliver the produce to people's

doorsteps or to various community groups who act as a delivery hub. We've split the city into separate areas for the delivery rounds on designated days. We have many satisfied customers who have used us over the full two years which the scheme has been running. They really appreciate having their five-a-day delivered to the doorstep, and in a carbon-neutral manner. There is also the added benefit of social contact for some customers who live alone.

Where possible we source the organic produce from local growers including the nearby Agricultural College and horticultural project for the homeless, and we use the bike to collect surplus goods from a local Green Gym allotment scheme. We also pick and pack groceries like bread, tea, tinned goods and other essentials from the shop when required.

The funding that we received included the cost of supplying and retro-fitting an electric assist system to the bike. Although slightly dubious at first, I have come to value this addition for its weight in gold! The hills, distance of the delivery rounds, weight of the loads and riders' physical endurance have made the electric assist a must, and I always thought the Midlands were flat!

We opted for the Heinzmann Estelle Classic with a twist-grip pedalling sensor, as recommended by the Pedal Express cycle couriers in Nottingham who use the same 8 Freight/Heinzmann set up. The motor cuts out at a relatively low speed but gives great assistance pulling away from traffic lights and going up hills. It's powered by a NiMH 36 volt battery which, when fully charged, is sufficient for the full distance of the delivery rounds.

The bike is often fully laden, but handles beautifully, something that anyone who's ridden an 8 Freight will bear testament to, and it will fit through any gap that the handle bars can squeeze through! One component we wouldn't be without (apart from the electric assist) is a Magura brake lever with locking switch. This works well with the rear hub brake and acts as a hand brake, essential when manoeuvring and parking a heavy load on only two wheels and a kick stand.

"Nice bike!", "Gissagonyerbike, mate!", "Did ya see that?" are some common exclamations that greet the delivery cyclists whilst out on the rounds; exclamations many riders of more unusual bikes are all too familiar with. The reactions are something that we're proud of, though (the printable comments that is!), as it heightens the profile of cycle use, of our service and makes deliveries by bike seem 'more normal'.

PIONEERING PEDALLERS

As far as we're aware Vegetable Pedallers is the only cycle-powered vegetable box scheme in the country which delivers to customers who find it hard to get out of their homes. However, Leicester City Council recently followed our lead and set up a similar service called 'Green Wheel'. They use a pair of 8 Freights and deliver produce purchased from Leicester Market to the doorstep of elderly and disabled customers using a weekly voucher system.

So, there's plenty of scope for more of these types of scheme across the country, and in the current climate, the future for cycle delivery schemes looks very bright indeed.

Nick Ratcliffe
Delivery coordinator, Vegetable Pedallers



PHOTO: NICK RATCLIFFE



PHOTO: NICK RATCLIFFE



PHOTO: SUSANNAH SALTER AT DERBY CVS

ABOVE: Doing the rounds. Visits from the SoundBites riders can offer welcome social contact for isolated customers, as well as convenient food delivery.

See www.soundbitesderby.org.uk or phone them on 01332 291369 for more details

Photos: Susannah Salter at Derby CVS and Nick Ratcliffe. In the photos are delivery cyclists Tim Almy, Ruth Kelly and Nick Ratcliffe