

Velo Vision Sample Article

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If you have any problems or suggestions about the magazine in general, or this PDF article in particular, please email me at

peter@velovision.co.uk

I hope you enjoy the read.

Peter Eland
 Editor and Publisher, Velo Vision

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VELO VISION AND VELO-VISION We weren't first with the name. Velo-Vision (note the hyphen) is a progressive HPV-friendly bike shop in Kärnten, near Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany, who also make their own recumbents. Velo Vision magazine is working in friendly harmony with Velo-Vision in Germany.

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



COVER PHOTOGRAPH: Riders enjoy the York Cycle Show mass parade.

OPPOSITE: Cycling photographer Jason Patient catches the evening light on the VeloVisionaries ride. Both photos by Peter Eland.

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DELIGHTFUL DIVERSITY

It's a thoroughly mixed bag this issue, as we take a rollercoaster ride by human power on land, water and even in the air. But why should a cycling magazine include these more unusual forms of pedal power? After all, few readers will find pedal boating or airship travel useful in their everyday cycling lives.

First, because I find human power in all its forms fascinating, and I hope you do too. It's also pure inspiration: after hearing that someone's pedalled to Hawaii, or crossed the Channel by human-power airship, it's hard to whinge about a bit of rain preventing you from cycling to work.

So if seeing watercraft and aircraft in our pages irks the purists, so be it. There is plenty of more conventional (for us at least) fare in this issue too, including a wonderfully diverse collection of reader reviews, a look back at an enjoyable summer of cycling, and tests of some impressive new bikes. Thanks again to all who contributed, and enjoy the read!

Peter Eland

HOOKED ON HUBS

Reader Chris Collinson explains his hub-gear passion, and compares the 7-speed SRAM with Shimano's 8-speed Nexus Premium



will have to concede that the performance comparison is perfectly scientific.

To hub fetishists like me, the Nexus certainly looks the part, with its ribs, curves and modish lustreless finish. Functionally, I particularly like the rotational gear changing mechanism, located between the lock nut and sprocket. This is much less vulnerable than the SRAM clickbox, even when the latter is protected by its metal guard. Nexus gear changing is almost always superior – you do not have to ease off your pedalling between gears. This works even under considerable uphill load. The only problem is the occasional missed gear change that results in

efficient designs never have more than one set of epicyclic gears under load to produce any one speed. This arrangement usually produces hubs with odd numbers of speeds, like the SRAM's seven. I reckon that the Nexus gains its one extra speed by driving through two or more sets of epicyclic gears but pays for this with extra friction and hence lost efficiency.

Perhaps this is the cause of my only real frustration with the Nexus. In the direct drive of fifth speed, the hub runs along as if bathed in fine machine oil. Down a speed, it becomes a jar of chunky peanut butter. Fourth plainly has a lower ratio than fifth but its inefficiency means that it gives me little actual pedalling advantage. Despicable exaggeration that the peanut butter analogy is, it nevertheless illustrates why my Nexus is effectively a seven rather than eight speed hub. Of course, my Dad, still underneath his Land-Rover, would tell me that all machinery needs to be properly run-in.

More miles with the Nexus may indeed change my mind, but for the time being I'm still sold on the SRAM as being the better hub. Epicyclically speaking, it's efficient (although not entirely peanut-free in the two lowest ratios) and despite its agricultural gear change and vulnerable clickbox, it gives me better vibes about longevity. Unfortunately, until now the SRAM has always been the most expensive hub of its ilk in the UK. I wonder if the UK Shimano importers will ever allow Britons to find out whether this is still the case.

Incidentally, I've loaded both bikes up and ridden them on cycle-camping trips. The range of the hubs (each at about 305%) was ample, even over hilly terrain. When not escaping the peloton on L'Alpe d'Huez, I find pedalling downhill gives a dubious return for my effort. And although 27 derailleur speeds will get me to the campsite quicker, seven (or even eight) epicyclic speeds remind me that touring is much more about taking my time to enjoy what's going on around me.

So, maybe I'll see you at the next meeting – Epicyclists Anonymous, that is.

Chris Collinson
Photos: Sue Collinson



Chris (above) compares the Shimano 8-speed Premium hub on his Birdy (top right) with the SRAM 7-speed (right) on a Moulton.

slight slippage, a clonk and a wince. I have not been able to adjust this glitch away and I'm in two minds as to whether it is diminishing with time.

Running on sophisticated bearings, the premium Nexus should be tolerably efficient. Indeed it is. Nevertheless, my legs, delicate instruments that they are, judge that it is less efficient than the SRAM. From what I know and can guess about the basic design of the two hubs, this result is partly to be expected. Hub gears of more than three speeds are made up of two or more sets of epicyclic gears. The most

My name is Chris, and I am an epicyclist. The hub gear addiction started on Christmas day 1977 when a Raleigh Chopper appeared in the dining room. Its three speed Sturmey Archer hub was the only component that always gleamed as new after the bicycle's annual scrub. Best of all, the hub's tiny oil cap gave me a sense of shared manhood with my father as he lay on the driveway, knuckles gashed, refilling the leakiest of Land-Rover gearboxes.

You might be interested in my latest fix. It's the premium version of the new Shimano Nexus eight speed hub. Addicts are notorious for their low morals, and I am certainly not proud of how I cannibalised the hub from an innocent but otherwise tedious city bike. I fitted it to a much more interesting Birdy, and off we flew, only occasionally looking back over the following 500 miles.

For comparison, I'm lucky enough to have a faux Moulton fitted with a SRAM Spectro seven speed hub. Both bikes are coloured red, so you

THE BZZZK BIKE

A superbly-finished lever-propelled bike made in the Czech Republic by Rudolf Pazourek is described by Ladia Blaha

I first saw this bike when its designer, Rudolf Pazourek, came along to a meeting of the local recumbent club in the city of Brno in the Czech Republic.

He told me that this is the third version he has made of this type of recumbent. The two previous ones used rigid tubes to connect the pedal levers to the crankset, but with this latest model he has moved to a flexible drive system. First he tried Kevlar cord, but that proved not to be strong or rigid enough, so now it runs on stainless steel wires as pictured.

The bike was all designed by Rudolf, and the frame was built by the Czech manufacturer Bauer, whose name Rudolf included when he hand-painted the frame.

The unique handlebars, which hold a bottle or vacuum flask, were designed

first in paper, folded and glued together, and then welded from steel plate and hand-finished. The main frame is cro-mo steel.

The bike names has 21 speeds. First the wires drive a three-speed Shimano hub below the cable drums via a short chain, and the final drive is to a seven-speed Shimano hub gear in the rear wheel.

The bike has a suspended seat. The seat unit was also made by Rudolf and employs rubber block suspension – he says suspending just the seat allowed him to simplify the bike considerably.

He says it rides well, and the only significant drawback is that you can't push the bike backwards. Also, when people first try the bike, they have to be very careful to keep the wires tensioned against each other – otherwise the wires can come off the guides and it all



ABOVE: Making an impression: Rudolf Pazourek uses the Bzzzk Bike for transport, and has pedalled it across the Czech Republic to attend recumbent meetings

goes wrong. But it's no problem when you're used to it.

This isn't just a 'designer' concept bike. Rudolf has ridden it many miles. Once he rode it from Brno to a recumbent club meeting in Opava, 200km away. He uses it for regular transport, too.

Ladia Blaha
AZUB Bike (www.azub.cz)



Seat suspension (below left) allows a simple frame design. The graphics and styling are impressive, with carbon mudguards (below centre) and a custom paint job.

LEFT: While wires connect the 'pedal' levers, chains make up the final drive via three and seven speed hub gears

BELOW: The amazing sculpted stem is crafted from sheet steel.

