

Birdy buffs brought together

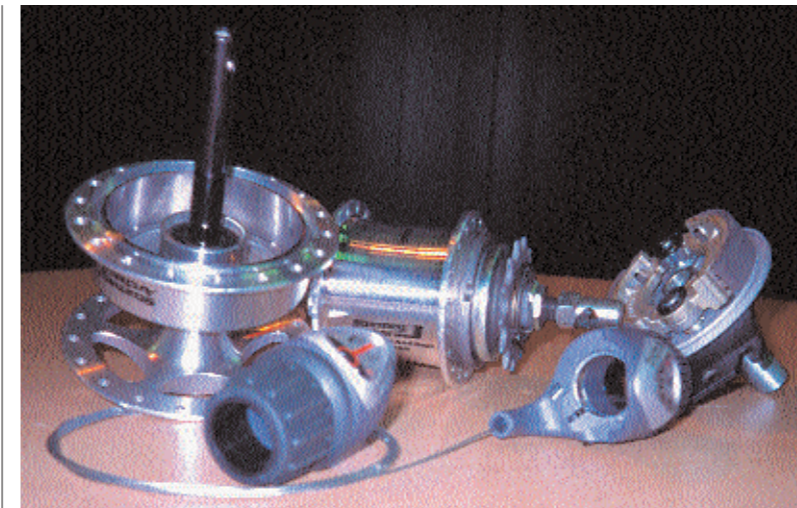


ALL PHOTOS GUNNAR FEHLAU

Folding bikes often seem to develop a fanatical following, and the aluminium Birdy (the 'Red' model was reviewed in Velo Vision Issue 1) is no exception. So the first ever international Birdy meeting at the end of May in Darmstadt, Germany, home town of the Birdy's manufacturer riese und müller, attracted over 70 enthusiastic participants. Organised by the Birdy fan club www.birdy-freunde.de, the event drew visitors from Germany, Belgium, Holland, the UK and Italy. Five Birdy enthusiasts

travelled all the way from Japan and the US importer also made the long trip over to attend. A special ride on a steam train, led rides and a folding bike race were among the highlights. Prizes were given to the youngest participant (Roman Gabriel, 22), the oldest (Werner Hoffmann, 81), the longest journey (Maki Watanabe, Japan), the finest custom Birdy (Hiroki Ono, Japan) and the lightest Birdy (Kay Tkatzik, 8.15kg). Thanks to Gunnar Fehlau of riese und müller for this report and pictures. More can be found at www.r-m.de.

The first international Birdy gathering brought together owners from many countries to race, ride and swap notes with the manufacturer



Arise, Sturme-Archer!

When Sturme-Archer went bust back in 2001, the cycling world lost one of its longest-running and most famous manufacturers. Luckily, not for long! Just a few months later, in December 2001, it was announced that Sunrace of Taiwan would buy the company, and rename itself Sunrace Sturme-Archer. And the cycling world waited to see what would come of it...

Now we know! The picture shows some of the new Sunrace Sturme-Archer products: the familiar three-speed hub now has an alloy body rather than steel, but its internals should be just as long-lasting as the original. It also uses a slightly improved mechanism to eliminate the 'in-between' gear. The five-speed hub is also in full production. Neat twist-grip shifters as shown above are also available.

Velo Vision spoke to long-time Sturme-Archer man Alan Clarke, who said that he was bowled over by the speed of developments going on. A team of engineers at Sunrace is apparently actively developing new and improved products at a rate unheard of at the old Sturme-Archer.

He also demonstrated a drum brake with the axle on one side only, ideal for recumbent trikes, wheelchairs, and the like - with a quick-release! Press a

button on the axle end and the wheel pulls straight off. This also is available now.

But it's the eight-speed hub gear which sounds particularly interesting. Apparently to have a modular 'four-speed times two' design, it will both weigh and cost around the same as a Shimano Nexus 7, he thinks. It will shift under load using a rotary shifter (i.e. no toggle-chain) and a twistgrip control. Overall ratio range is not yet confirmed, but the ratios will be arranged so as to have an extra-low gear, then six closely-spaced ratios, then an extra-high 'tailwind' gear. Alan also mentioned that it uses an especially large-diameter axle, which should eliminate any problems with axle failures.

The first few hundred pre-production 'beta' hubs will be available towards the end of this year, and will be distributed to 'heavy users' for some serious testing and abuse. Lessons learnt will then be incorporated into the production hub, which should come into circulation sometime next year.

Sunrace Sturme-Archer products should be available through cycle dealers everywhere. In case of difficulty, details of distributors can be found at www.sturme-archer.com

EVENTS

2002

- 12-15th September:** IFMA, Köln, Germany. Fax +49 221 821 2826 www.koelnmesse.de. Open to the public on the 15th.
- 20th-23rd September:** EICMA Bici, Milan, Italy. www.eicma.it
- 25th-29th September:** Cycle 2002, Business Design Centre, London. www.cycleshow.co.uk New show, Open to the public on the 26-29th.
- 5th-9th October:** Interbike, Sands Exposition Center, Las Vegas www.interbike.com Trade only.
- 25th-27th October:** Bike Right 8, Wooler, Northumberland, UK. Sociable cycling weekend held at Wooler Youth Hostel: more details from Tom Johnstone: Tel 01668 282 209 or email tom.johnston@lineone.net

2003

- 24-26th February:** 14th International Cycle History Conference. Theme: 'An Australian perspective'. More info at: <http://HistoricCyclesDownunder.info>
- 26-27th April:** 8th SPEZI Special Bike Show, Germersheim, nr Karlsruhe, Germany. The definitive European show for the specialised cycling market: all sorts from recumbents to load-bikes to special-needs machines. See past reports in Velo Vision issues 2 and 6. www.spezialradmesse.de
- 14-22nd June:** UK National Bike Week. Thousands of events of all sorts across the UK. www.bikeweek.org.uk
- Late August (to be confirmed):** Fifth European Velomobile Seminar, Friedrichshafen, Germany. 'Towards commercial velomobiles'. Takes place during the HPV World Champs. www.velomobile.de/news or contact Joachim Fuchs: jo-fuchs@gmx.de
- 23-26 September:** VeloCity 2003, Paris, France. Cycle campaign conference; last time had over 600 participants from 40 countries. Website not yet up.



Trikes take a ride one evening at the York Rally, June 2002

Burrows' new 8 Freight

"A backwards Long John" is how Mike Burrows describes his new freight bike, the '8 Freight'. With a strong main tube of 2" diameter, 1/8" wall 6063 aluminium, it's designed to carry any load you can safely lift onto it. Single-sided wheel support simplifies puncture repair, and drum brakes front and rear should give reliable stopping. Mike is also particularly proud of the 'Powermatic deluxe servo propstand' which uses an air-spring to give instant and stable parking – ideal for loading up.



Basic versions start at around £850, and Mike can custom-build the rear frame to the customer's specification, for example to fit existing plastic boxes. Component changes are also no problem. Burrows Engineering: Tel/Fax 01603 721 700



NAUTICRAFT CHANNEL CROSSING

In May this year 59-year old Paul Tucker rode a Escapade watercycle across the English Channel from Folkestone to Calais (a distance of 30 miles) and then back again in fourteen hours, to raise money for the Royal British Legion charity.

CYCLING SERVICES

A team of cycle paramedics has recently been set up to cut through the traffic jams of London. Three paramedics and three ambulance technicians will be used initially. Meanwhile, York now has four cycling policemen operating in the city centre, alongside its cycle paramedic, whose work we described in Velo Vision 3.

AERO SHOW AT IFMA

The IFMA trade show in Cologne, Germany, in mid-September will feature a 500 square metre display area all about the aerodynamics of cycles. Organised by the Liegerad-Datei (who publish a recumbent directory), the German HPV club and the 'Speedbike' charity (who arrange events around the speedbike theme), the area will have a display of significant designs, and will also bring together the trade stands of relevant specialist manufacturers. IFMA is open to the public on the 15 September.

GREENSPEED WEBSITE DEFACED

Australian recumbent manufacturer Greenspeed had their website www.Greenspeed.com.au defaced by hackers in July. Bicycle websites are not usually targets for this sort of activity. The site was quickly restored.

SOAPBOX SUCCESS

Big automotive bucks went out at the Goodwood Festival of Speed Soapbox Derby. The team from AVD (manufacturer of Windcheetah recumbent trikes), who won the event last year, eventually came fourth, after teams from BMW, Lotus and the Bugatti Owners Club. A budget of £1000 had been set for the construction of the vehicles.

CHAINLESS BICYCLE IN ACTION

If you have a fast connection you can now see video footage of the 'electronic bike' in action. This remarkable machine uses no mechanical transmission: instead, the pedals turn an electrical generator, and the power is transmitted via clever electronics to a motor in one of the wheels. It has potential for low-maintenance machines, and especially perhaps for multi-rider vehicles. More at: www.hta-be.bfh.ch/~fuchs/Transmission/ (just scroll down for the English version).

Schlumpf announces new High Speed Drive



Many of the sort of cycles which Velo Vision covers have unusual gearing requirements – perhaps because of a small drive wheel, or maybe because the rider needs exceptionally low ratios because of heavy loads, or limited power through disability.

Many manufacturers and individuals solve their gearing problems using one of the units made by Florian Schlumpf Engineering in Switzerland. These devices replace a conventional bottom bracket and give you a two-speed gearbox in its place. You change gear with a tap on the axle end with your heel.

The new model complements the existing Speed Drive (which gears up by 1:1.6) and Mountain Drive (which gears down by 2.5:1). The High Speed Drive gears up by 2.5:1 – so when it's engaged, for each turn of the cranks, the chainring turns 2.5 times. The other ratio is direct drive, with cranks and chainring rotating together.

The High Speed Drive can be used with either hub gears or derailleurs: With a SRAM Spectro 5-speed hub you get an overall range of 560% – more than a Rohloff! With a Shimano Nexus 7-speed hub you get 611%. With the SRAM 7-speed Spectro hub you get

to 761%. Small-wheel bikes can also use it with rear derailleurs to get an impressive range of gears.

The High Speed Drive is fitted with a 26-tooth chainring – and this has an integral chain guard. To fine-tune the gear ratios with various different hub gears and wheel sizes, Schlumpf provides 24- to 32-tooth replacement rear cogs (for 3/32" chains) to fit hub gears from SRAM and Shimano. Alongside the 'standard cogs' already available from the hub manufacturers, this gives, says Schlumpf, a most useful range of gears for wheel sizes from 16" to 29".

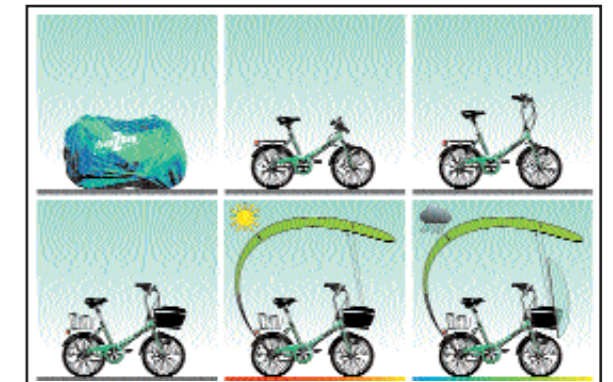
Another welcome innovation is the use of needle bearings for internal gearing, which should minimise friction. Current models use plain bushings for the planetary gears – which works fine, but needle bearings should be even better.

Schlumpf drives are made in Switzerland, but are available worldwide through specialist dealers, or direct. The drives aren't cheap – in the £250 region – but have a good reputation for reliability.

We'll get a first look at the High Speed Drive in the flesh at the IFMA show in Cologne, in mid-September. Details should also be appearing soon on Schlumpf's website: www.speed-drive.com

Riding rain or shine

Weather protection on a bicycle is a recurring subject for fertile minds. So it is that Wilfried Maret of Zug, Switzerland, has come up with the 'Allwettervelo', incorporating both rain and sun protection. Combining a canopy and front fairing with an electric-assist bicycle, he offers a solution for comfortable mobility, rain or shine... Contact Wilfried Maret, Bleichmattweg 5, CH-6300 Zug, Switzerland. Tel/Fax +41 41 711 7015



Shimano launch new groupset for small-wheeled bikes

Bikes with small wheels often struggle to get high enough gears using standard components. Some use large chainrings, others a Schlumpf Speed-drive, or hub gears - and Moulton owners can even order a specially-made cassette with a nine-tooth smallest sprocket (the smallest you can usually get is 11).

Component giant Shimano have now taken a leaf out of Dr. Moulton's book with the 'Capreo' groupset, which features a nine-tooth smallest sprocket to compensate for smaller wheel sizes. The groupset was developed originally for small-wheeled folding (upright) bikes - but it will surely find applications on many small-wheeled recumbents and children's bikes as well. According to Shimano, the name

'Capreo' comes from 'capreolus', the Latin word for a fawn. They picture a small wheel bike cavorting fawn-like nimbly through the streets.

Other components include a chainring with double chain guards, 'tap-fire' shifters and a short-cage rear derailleur to work with the new smaller sprockets.

The components should be available worldwide towards the end of this year, and are already being evaluated by various specialist manufacturers. A potential concern may be the durability of the nine-tooth sprocket....



Family first

The 'Family Bike', now being imported into the UK from Italy, puts the child right where you can see them - a bit like the 'Centric' child seat reviews in *Velo Vision 5*. But with this machine, the whole bike is designed for the task: the child fits between the splayed handlebars, and can face either forwards or backwards. A further seat can be fitted at the back of the bike, and various luggage options are also possible. Sunshades and raincovers for the child passengers are also available. All of the accessories are designed to be quickly interchangeable, so it should be a versatile family vehicle.

The bike shown costs £399 (around 600, \$600) and accessories are all available separately, too. In the UK the distributor is PCL Distribution: 08454 585 222, or see the website www.family-bike.com for more details.

Dahon sponsors speed skaters

The Dahon Speed Pro, which we reviewed last issue, has been selected as the official training bike of the Saab/Salomon German National Speed Skating team. According to a press release from Dahon, who provided the bike in a sponsorship deal: "The team will use the bike as a training tool to help build base endurance as well as for guided video training rides outdoors". The portability of the machine is handy, apparently, for travelling between competitions and various training venues.



SP Rohloff Brompton

Steve Parry, whose modified Brompton was featured last issue (page 11), decided that he had to 'keep up with the Birdys' and fit a Rohloff hub. He was demonstrating the result at Cyclefest: the conversion involved considerable modification of the rear triangle. Tel 01934 516 158 or email spbicycles@btopenworld.com for more details.



Spokesfest forge NHS partnership and offer cycle promotion seminar

Leicester's Spokesfest team recently announced a partnership with their local NHS authority - and now offer a seminar to pass on the secrets of successful cycle promotion. With over ten thousand staff the health authority is one of the city's largest employers, and they are, say Spokesfest, keen to encourage some of the eight thousand who drive to work daily out of

their cars. The Spokesfest team will visit and advise on all aspects of cycle commuting, including which bike to choose, safe routes, equipment and clothing. They will hold regular 'Bike Surgeries' to service bikes on site while the staff are working. Similar projects with Leicester University and Leicestershire County Council are currently being finalised.

Spokesfest will also be hosting a seminar on cycle promotion on Saturday October 5th. Topics include:

- Riding with people of different abilities
- Targeting new and returning cyclists
- Working with local authorities
- Gaining effective media coverage
- Attracting sponsorship.

The seminar will cost £35, including refreshments, and proceeds go towards the Spokesfest special needs project. E-mail roger@spokesfest.freeserve.co.uk or send an S.A.E. to Spokesfest, 23 Michael Ramsey Court, Glen Parva, Leicester. LE2 9QS.



Up-down recumbent builder seeks feedback

Uprights are great for round town, but for longer trips maybe a recumbent would be better... so perhaps the perfect bike converts from one to the other? So thinks Neil Wyn Jones, the inventor of the 'Velolution', which converts, as you ride, between upright and recumbent.

Read all about it at his new website at www.velolution.co.uk He'd appreciate any feedback, technical or otherwise, on the design, and you can leave comments on the website.