

# cycle Freewheeling

A SHORT TOUR AROUND THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CYCLING



Paul (right) enabled the club to buy bikes and train ride leaders

## You ride

### Paul Devlin Former footballer

**B**orn and raised in Erdington, Birmingham, ex-professional footballer Paul Devlin describes himself as being “a typical inner-city kid”. After 15 years playing for a variety of clubs including Sheffield United, Notts County, Birmingham City, and the Scotland national team, Paul now runs a community interest group (CIC) and has donated £5,000 to the Road to Recovery Cycling Club based in Solihull.

The cycling group helps people recovering from addiction and mental health problems, an issue close to Paul’s heart. “I’ve come across lots of people over the years that have had drinking and addiction problems,” Paul says. “I’m a big believer in healthy body, healthy mind. If I go two or three days without doing anything, I find myself feeling irritable, sluggish, you get that sort of brain fog. I’m not going to say keeping fit is going to solve all your mental health problems but from a personal point of view I do think the two go hand in hand.”

The money Paul’s CIC has donated to the group has enabled them to buy a fleet of bikes and train up another seven ride leaders. Paul’s even joining the group on some of their rides. “I’m a newbie,” says Paul, “but I’m really getting into it. I really enjoy it. I wish I’d taken it up years ago.”

#### ROAD TO RECOVERY

Find out more about the Road to Recovery Cycling Club at [cyclinguk.org/article/road-to-recovery](https://cyclinguk.org/article/road-to-recovery)



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#### Bike tech

#### Fair Bicycle Drop Best

It’s a replacement clamp for a RockShox Reverb dropper seatpost with 27mm of offset. Set it forward for the steeper (up to +2°) effective seat angle MTBers seem to like these days – or back if your bike’s reach feels cramped. £86.64, [fairbicycle.com](https://fairbicycle.com)



#### Really? POC Consort MTB Dungaree

£450 to look like Geoffrey from Rainbow while you ride your mountain bike? Evidently so. Yes, they’re waterproof. Yes, there are advantages to the bib-and-brace versus waist fastening. But you could buy an excellent secondhand bike for the price of these mustard yellow bib overalls. [pocsports.com](https://pocsports.com)

#### Classic tech

#### Madison Flux

“Just get a Charge Spoon.” That was long a standard cycling forum answer to the “what saddle?” question. The Spoon’s grooved shape gave good sit-bone support, and it was inexpensive and fairly light. Then it was discontinued. Madison’s Flux (142mm wide, 283g) is a saddle in literally the same mould. £39.99, [freewheel.co.uk](https://freewheel.co.uk)



#### Event DEVON DIRT

Devon Dirt, the annual off-road ride on the edge of Dartmoor, returns on 3 April. Described by organiser Graham Brodie of South Devon CTC as “a fun day out on muddy tracks linked by country lanes” it starts in Ashburton. It’s not a technical challenge and could be ridden on a cyclocross bike. Adult entry is £20, junior £15. Cycling UK members get £5 off. [devondirt.co.uk](https://devondirt.co.uk)





## Try This

### TRI-VETS RIDES

Some Cycling UK groups are once again putting on rides of 100km or 100 miles this summer, aimed at participants aged 50 or over. Taking place every three years since 1928, the rides mostly follow a simple format of an accessible route with a stop for

refreshments. Some will have ride leaders guiding small groups, while others will navigate the route solo or in pairs with a route sheet. Everyone who finishes within a certain time limit can claim a 2022 date bar to add to their Tri-Vets badge. [cyclinguk.org/article/tri-vets-2022](http://cyclinguk.org/article/tri-vets-2022)



## Picture this

If your resolution for the year is to get out on your bike more, here's an incentive. Follow @wearecyclinguk on Instagram and share photos of your cycling overnights using #12NightsOutIn1Year. We're giving away bikepacking goodies to each winner, including an Alpkit jacket (worth £92.99), annual subscription to OS Maps, and more. T&Cs: [cyclinguk.org/12-nights-out-1-year](http://cyclinguk.org/12-nights-out-1-year)

Photo: Robert Spanning

## Bike hacks

### FROZEN FREEHUB PAWLS

Winter cold can cause the pawls to freeze in position in your bike's freehub so there's no drive. You just pedal air. If it happens on a ride, hot water on the freehub may free them. Even the warm water from your own bladder can do the trick... Too icky? Didn't work? Fasten the back of the cassette to the spokes with cable ties and pedal home very gently on your now fixed-wheel bike, using the lowest gear available. Send your bike hacks to [editor@cyclinguk.org](mailto:editor@cyclinguk.org).



## On my bike

### Rob Penn

Author, journalist & TV presenter

#### Why do you cycle?

Multiple reasons but, right now, to stay sane is at the top of the list.

#### How far do you ride each week?

In winter, 10s of kms – at home, on an MTB and commuting. In summer, 100s of kms on a road bike around the UK and Europe.

#### Which of your bikes is your favourite?

A handmade steel Brian Rourke, the subject of my book *It's All About the Bike*. It's not just my favourite bike, it's my favourite possession.



#### What do you always take with you?

Multi tool, tyre lever, pump, phone, £20 note and (hopefully) a sense of adventure.

#### Who mends your punctures?

Me. I actually enjoy it.

#### It's raining: bike, public transport, or car?

Bike. I live in rural Wales. It's usually the only option.

#### Lycra or normal clothes?

Both

#### If you had £100 to spend on cycling, what would you get?

Probably books and maps. I love maps.



#### What's your favourite cycle journey?

It's a long list, but for brevity: at home, a tour of the Black Mountains; globally, from Kashgar in China to Gilgit in Pakistan, along the Karakoram Highway and over the Khunjerab Pass.

#### What single thing would most improve matters for UK cyclists?

Where to start?! Making cycle awareness part of learning to drive and the driving test would be a good thing.

Visit Rob's website: [robenn.net](http://robenn.net)

