



Glos Bike Project, a BBR-affiliated recycling centre
Below: SCRS launch



is that you have only the description and a few photos to go on. You can't inspect the bike before buying. If you later discover that a component or two needs replacing, the extra cost could blow a hole in your budget.

Nevertheless, I was hopeful I'd find something on eBay. I've used it often for bike parts. I 'watched' lots of bikes that were within 50 miles of me and put speculative bids on some of them – notably an Orbit Gold Medal singlespeed (which was in Driffield) and a Ridgeback Velocity hybrid (in York). I didn't win.

Bike recycling centres. The less you're

going to spend on a secondhand bike, the bigger the advantage there is in using a bike recycling centre. The bikes are sold as ready to ride so you shouldn't need to replace, say, brake cables or the chain. There may also be a warranty. The nearest bike recycling centres to me are in York and Hull: Recycle York (recycle.york.co.uk) and R-evolution (r-evolution.org.uk) respectively.

BUYING THE BIKE

Recycle York didn't have anything suitable in my price range when I was looking to buy. I'd seen some promising options on their website the weeks before but presumably they'd been selling through quickly. R-evolution didn't have an online stock list so I phoned them. Yes, they had bikes costing under £100 in stock, suitable for 'riding around town' for 'an average height man'. "The stock changes all the time," I was told. "The best thing to do is just come in."

Figuring that there wouldn't be a run on R-evolution's bike's first thing on a Tuesday morning, I booked return tickets to Hull (£18.10), gambling that I'd find

something. Unlike TransPennine, which serves York, Northern doesn't require bike reservations. That meant I could take any train home rather than having to rush or wait for a specific service.

From Hull Station, R-evolution's base in Trinity Market is a short walk. It was as quiet as I'd hoped: one staff member was selling a bike to the only other customer; another was fixing a bike on a workstand. The collection of bikes for sale was smaller than I'd anticipated but I lucked out. In among the children's bikes and the mountain bikes that were out of my budget, there were a couple of practical bikes: one with a step-through frame and derailleur gears; and an imposing roadster with a five-speed hub gear, rack and mudguards. It was £99.

It looked like a bike that had aged but seen little actual use. The tyres had some superficial cracking in the sidewall rubber but the tread and even the sprues from the mould were unworn. Rust had been largely removed. Cables looked to have been replaced. The hub gear worked. I bought it, only then finding out that it came with a three-month warranty,