



NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN *Newsletter*

No.73
Summer 2009

Rolling ever onward, the life of our city, through its ups and downs, it's an ancient place but things never stand still. And so it is with your Norwich Cycling Campaign, constantly adapting to the latest challenges and opportunities of the time.

What hasn't changed along the way is our basic philosophy – namely the more cycling for trips of all kinds, the more civilised the city.

Everyone knows that riding a bike regularly is good for us as individuals in all sorts of ways, physical, mental and even spiritual. So is the organisation just there to represent all us individuals? Well, no, or we'd have called ourselves Norwich Cyclist Campaign.



A warm welcome to the new Lord Mayor

A fine city like Norwich needs a Lord Mayor, and it's good to see we have one who has shown appreciation of cycling from an early age.

We are there to promote more cycling, for the good of the whole city. Health, environment, economy...civilisation.

The point of being a member is to sign up to this outlook, to give us a credible voice. There is a job to do to help overcome some of the outdated and misguided civic notions about having to provide unfettered car access to everything (even in a medieval city), or about the grave dangers of leaving 'vulnerable users' in the traffic environment. Believe me, these strange personal whims regularly rear their head, muddled thinking coming not just from members of the public or bombastic

"Consider a man riding a bicycle. Whoever he is, we can say three things about him. We know he got on the bicycle and started to move. We know that at some point he will stop and get off. Most important of all, we know that if at any point between the beginning and the end of his journey he stops moving and does not get off the bicycle he will fall off it. That is a metaphor for the journey through life of any living thing, and I think of any society of living things."

William Golding

In this edition

- Getting ready for Bike Week 13-21 June
 - Kett's Rebellion Ride 21 June
 - Battling on scheme consultations
 - CATI lives in Beccles!
 - There's a hole in my road
 - Phyll's Philosophies
 - Mike Burrows' Rackheath Ramble
 - Contacts and Who's Who
- ... 6 pages of total local cycling delectation!

elected councillors, but even from professionally qualified officers - who can do real long-term damage with traffic schemes pushed through without proper scrutiny or challenge.

Whether a mere sub payer or also an active member, we need you. More to the point, we could do with still more like you, to maintain the strength and credibility of the organisation. Which is why we are shortly launching a bit of a recruitment drive. Would you be able to make the existence of Norwich Cycling Campaign known to your friends cycling or otherwise, and encourage them to join? Consider it an investment in the future of our fine city, in which we all have a stake.

Matthew Williams



It's the time to get out into the countryside for a ride (don't forget the spare wheel)

GETTING READY FOR BIKE WEEK



Yes, it's that time of year again. This year's Bike Week is going to be a bit different from the last few years. This is the first year since goodness-knows-when that we are *not* organising a Sunday peddling picnic. The committee felt that with dwindling numbers participating and fewer people available to help organise the ride we should take a year's break. If however we hear of a demand for a resumption of the event, we will try to organise it next year. However, that beside, we are organising a number of events this year and joining with other groups and organisations to promote cycling in Norwich. I will not go into all the events here as they are covered in the schedule on the back of this newsletter. I did however want to draw your attention to two particular events.

On **Tuesday evening on the 16th June**, Martin Badham will be organising his ever popular Tuesday Pub Ride. This year it will be going to the Cock Inn at Barford, where the food I am told is very good. My tip is give it a try.

Thanks to Rachel Mold for her original suggestion of historical bike ride as part of our local celebration of National Bike Week. This will take place on **Sunday 21st June**, starting at 9.30am, led by myself and Margaret, with help from those members who have volunteered to act as ride leaders, and thanks to them for that. We will be touring the sites of **Ketts Rebellion of 1459**.

More on KETT'S REBELLION RIDE



We begin outside the prison on Britannia Road, the site occupied by the 15,000 men who gathered to fight for rights of commoners in the time of the Tudors. The modern day prison was built on the site of an old army barracks whose only reason for being was to stop any group in rebellion from ever again occupying the high ground above Norwich. As cyclists we will just have to take the moral high ground instead!

We will move down from Mousehold Heath, passing Bishop's Bridge and St Martin's Plain, the scenes of battles where Kett's men defeated the royal armies sent to crush the rebellion, past Tombland where Augustine Steward, ex mayor and opponent of Kett lived, who with the Earl of Warwick plotted Kett's downfall, on to the steps of City Hall where we will stop to point out other key sites in the rebellion.

Then it's off to Cringleford Bridge and Eaton Wood where we stop to consider its importance to the rebellion. It was here that Robert Kett and his men were refused access to the city and instead had to march round to Mousehold.

We then will head into the countryside via Intwood and East Carleton to Stanfield Hall, home of John Flowerdew, Kett's long standing personal enemy, encloser of common land and one of the main beneficiaries of the grab following the dissolution of the monasteries. Thence to Wymondham via small roads and lanes, to the Abbey, site of the execution of Kett's brother William and whose dissolution and subsequent destruction was perhaps why Robert, a wealthy landowner and repentant encloser, agreed to lead the rebellion.

Following lunch either at the pub or a picnic in the abbey grounds, we will cycle back to Norwich via Bawburgh, Chapel Break and Earlham, ending the tour at St Andrew's Hall. Sadly we won't be going past Kett's Oak as the traffic on this road probably is too heavy to make the journey enjoyable.



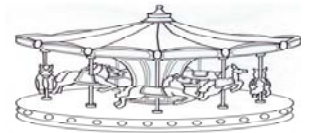
I do hope you can join us on the day. We will be trying to make the day as interesting as possible as well as being an enjoyable leisure ride. At 26 miles over several hours, the ride should be suitable for most riders. It would be good to know the numbers of participants before we go so we can prepare enough information sheets to go round. If you are going to come please let me know by email or phone - but don't worry if you decide at the last minute, get there before 9.30 am and you'll be most welcome!

Michael Dale Chair, Norwich Cycling Campaign



Richard's merry-go-round

Just four of the recent activities by Consultations Officer Richard Bearman on your behalf

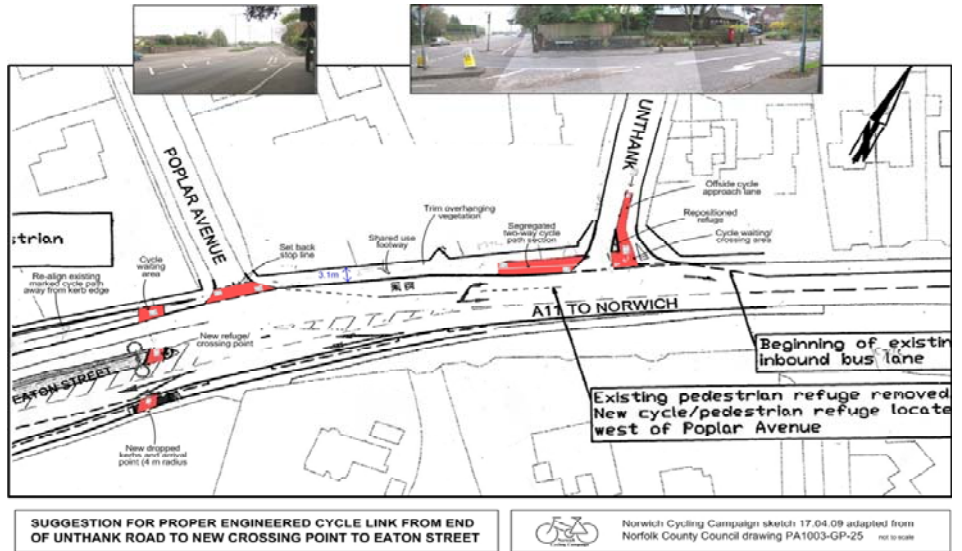


1. Newmarket Road / Unthank Road

The County Council are intending to extend the bus/cycle lane back so that it starts on the Cringleford Bypass. This is mostly a good idea because it will also involve making the full length of Newmarket Road in the city 30 mph. Even better, the bus/cycle lane would hopefully become 24 hour operation, which is something we have argued for for years (on the basis that there is no advantage to anyone in it being part time). The only snag is that it will be necessary to move the crossing point (central refuge) near the outer end of Unthank Road. This already involves riding for cyclists coming out of the city via Unthank Road trying to reach Eaton Street, and would be made worse. Following a site meeting, we have suggested a positive link (not pretty, but pragmatic) to improve things for bike users. The sketch below is just to give you an idea of the degree of thought we have put in to try and find a solution which will be of real and lasting benefit.

2. All Saints Green

A small thing, but we were successful in getting the approach lane to the advanced stop line at the junction with Queens Road reinstated back to its original length, past a kerb kink that stopped bikes accessing it in queuing traffic conditions (picture below).



3. Unthank Road / Colman Road

Back towards the city on the same important bike route as in 1. above, users of Unthank Road will already be only too aware of the dog's dinner trying to get across the Outer Ring Road at Colman Road, especially outbound (see photograph). Norwich Cycling Campaign has previously requested an advanced stop line (ASL) on several occasions.

So you can imagine how chuffed we were (not) to see a plan by the City Council to shoe-horn in two narrow running lanes (including a dedicated right turn lane) for motor traffic, with absolutely no prospect of an ASL because of lack of space for the approach lane. Their stated reason? To help the No.25 bus make a right turn. And of course hundreds of private cars, at the expense of what could be hundreds of cyclists if only they could reach the Leopold Road area, Eaton Road, Eaton village and beyond. This one is being fought!



4. ACT/Travelwise Masterclass

A national conference was held in Norwich on 21st May entitled 'Overcoming the barriers to cycling', attended by professional transport engineers and officers from across the country. The speakers were on behalf of local authorities, employers, marketing people and others. Richard, Jeff and Matthew managed to get themselves free places and were able to hear the latest messages being given to our representatives and leaders. It was all mostly inspiring and encouraging in terms of the real recognition and acceptance that there must be much more cycling for real journeys. The only lingering question is how long before we will see any difference at street level...

For info: Sue's Snippets from...



The spirit of CATI lives on in Beccles!

(that's 'Come And Try It' rides)

The pace of all Beccles CATI rides will be determined by the slowest rider. The rides are designed to be sociable and light offering the opportunity to people coming back to cycling after a break or aiming to gain confidence.

All riders need to meet at Pinetrees B&B, Park Drive, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 7DQ – see www.pinetrees.net for map if necessary. Tel: 01502 470796 for more details. We always meet at 10.30am, and there will always be a pub lunch stop and refreshments in the afternoon. Over the summer we will be riding all the routes as illustrated in a free map which should be available shortly.

- 2009 programme:**
- Sat 30th May
 - Sat 20th June
 - Sat 25th July
 - Sat 22nd August
 - Lowestoft – 9 miles each way
 - Southwold – 13 miles each way
 - Halesworth - 13 miles each way
 - Bungay direction on route 1 (distance to be determined on the day)

There's a hole in my road, what am I going to do?

Michael Dale, Chair Norwich Cycling Campaign

Since the last newsletter we have come out of the long hard winter to discover that many of the road surfaces, struck by the first deep frost in years, are crumbling apart in a rather worrying and accelerated way. Years of digging up to lay telecom, electricity & TV cables, water and gas pipes each done on its own, and (in the case of Elm Grove Lane) several times by the same company. With ever increasing car use and heavier lorries the roads are in a dangerous state. As we know, cyclists are most at risk: what may at worst damage a car can throw a cyclist off his/her machine with devastating results. When speaking to people about what stops them from cycling, the poor state of roads and fear of accidents is a recurring theme.



A number of questions arise from this sorry situation. What is the council going to do about filling the holes to alleviate the present danger? Why did the roads get into this state? And what needs to be done to rectify the situation?

The answer to the first question is that the council will and has been filling in holes as they are reported to them. The first thing given to me when I joined Norwich Cycling Campaign was the "Road condition report card", and now we have www.fillthathole.org.uk. Whilst this can solve the immediate problem, what is urgently needed is a more comprehensive plan, including an understanding of how we arrived at this state, to tackle the problem, and backed by the finances to carry it out.

How did we get here? The utility companies blame the damage on the increase in lorry size whilst the haulage industry blame the utility companies for digging up the roads. Some highways officers quietly admit both are to blame.



Up to the mid 1980s a utility company digging up a road was required to put it back in the state they found it. An inspector from the local council highways department would often supervise the repair work to make sure it was done to a high standard as the law required utility companies to do.

By the mid 1980s this requirement had gone. With the thinking prevalent in the Thatcher/Major governments it was decided that "make good" repair rules were a restraint on the business and so changed the rules so that all that had to be done was to return the road to a useable standard. In reality (and with the full knowledge of the government) the now-privatised utility companies did the cheapest job they could get away with, leaving you and me (the taxpayers) to pick up the bill for the future.

Add the problem of shoddy repairs and cheap resurfacing, more and more cars, heavier lorries relentlessly pounding the surface, and it's not surprising that the roads are in the state they are.

About 10 years ago, I was briefed as the spokesperson for transport for my group on Peterborough City Council on what the then officer in charge of roads called the "time-bomb". This was a date not long in the future when many of the roads in Peterborough (many of which were built in the 1960s and 1970s) would need serious repairs. This had originally been put at about 50 years after building but was then revised to 30 years to account for the rise in traffic impact and constant digging up by utility companies.

The cost of doing these repairs without assistance from central government would be enough to raise the council tax well above inflation over many years. The longer the problem was ignored the greater the problem would become. Still, he joked it wasn't as bad as the bridges, they could collapse at any minute. The same officer I remember trying to explain to the anti-cyclist leader of the council that a large HGV did more damage to a road in 1 hour than small car did in a year and a cycle did in 1000 years. He was "early retired" shortly afterwards.



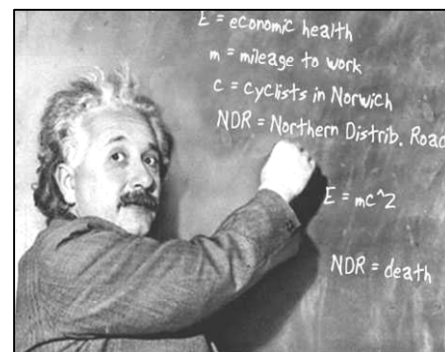
It strikes me that the "time-bomb" is finally exploding in Norwich and elsewhere. Even the sedate car drivers I work with are starting to talk about poor surfaces and they have suspension. It strikes me that cyclists and car drivers and all council tax payers have a common interest.

I would say firstly, none of us should have to subsidise shareholders in the utility companies by allowing them to get away with cheap remedial work on roads. Secondly we could all benefit from better roads and when they are dug up for a sewer or cable that other utilities that need to work on the same stretch of the road in the near future do so at the same time. HGVs are not suited to local roads,

because of the damage and danger they cause so they should be banned from residential areas. A time when the country is slipping into economic recession with people looking for work is also a good time to work on the country's infrastructure. The national cost of bringing local roads back to a good standard is estimated at £4 billion. Not very much when you consider the few miles of the Northern Bypass would cost £135m (2002 estimate) and knock a maximum of 8 minutes of a car journey using the outer ring road without benefiting Norwich residents or cyclists at all.

Bringing local roads up to a good standard, resurfacing and making roads/junctions cycle friendly on the other hand will benefit both the driver and cyclist whilst also helping local business now and helping rebuild the economy for the future. Our present roads were built and metalled for use by cars. In the future as oil becomes scarce and driving expensive, they will be used more and more for cycling so we do need to make sure they are brought up to standard.

In 1930s Norwich, deep in recession, men and women of vision decided on a building programme that led to many of our roads, housing estates and parks that we still use today. At the same time it gave men and women work and a better life. Surely in 2009 a little bit of that vision could be used in the current recession.



Phyll's Philosophies



Over the years I've read a number of reports and documents on how to increase cycling among the general population, some of which have been written about in these columns. I've also attended conferences with much the same theme, while one has only to look across the North Sea to see how it's been put into practice there.

Sadly, in Norwich and Norfolk, although we've spent hours talking about it, we've seen little action to bring it about - whatever happened to 'England's Cycling Country', an inspirational idea quietly put to sleep again?

A recent document to cross my desk was the NICE public health guidance 17, '**Promoting Physical Activity for Children and Young People**'. NICE is concerned about growing levels of obesity and sedentary behaviour among children and young people and puts forward a number of recommendations including who should take action and the action they should take. It targets many government departments to bring about a long term national campaign to promote physical activity. Those targeted to take action include local authorities and executives, governors and heads of schools and colleges, transport planners, employers, teachers, parents, youth leaders, in short anyone who could in any way make a difference. This excellent document can be seen on www.nice.org.uk/PH17. Can we hope to see any action taken here in Norfolk within the next five years?

A BBC2 programme, '**A Farm for the Future**', part of the Natural World series, gave an important message for our national government. It seems we are already past our peak oil production and are now using more oil than is being extracted. Not only is oil used in road transport, it is used in so many ways to produce our food - in fact, all the processes including fertilisers. Supermarkets will become a thing of the past within 50 years as they are so oil dependent, not only in growing crops but in the packaging and transport, much of it from long distances. We will need to grow much more of our own food, both on farms and in our own gardens. Gardening should be a mandatory part of schools' national curriculum.

For the forthcoming Bike Week the 'team' plan to do another commuter challenge to publicise the efficiency of using a bike during the rush hour in an inner city setting. This time the challenge will be the homeward journey from a workplace. There is one aspect of doing it in this direction which I hope will be obvious and publicised. This is the mental and physical uplift one gets at the end of a hard working day.

I first noticed this effect when I did some supply teaching at Loddon First School. Husband Bob would run me and my bike into school in the mornings - yes, we had a car then so it must have been more than 12 years ago - but then I would cycle home at the end of the day. Teaching infants is pretty demanding, both physically and mentally, so when I set off on my ride home I was pretty well knackered. Not an auspicious start one would think for a 12-mile ride. However, that ride through quiet country lanes perked me up no end. By the time I reached home I felt I could have gone on for a further 12 miles. The effect, I believe, has something to do with release of endorphins. Maybe not too many people realise this but it's certainly worth promoting in a commuter challenge at the end of the working day.

One of the aims of the commuter challenge is to show the viability of the bike in comparison with the car for short urban journeys. Most people don't consider that travelling by bike could possibly be quicker, cheaper and more convenient than using their habitual method of driving the car. Another advantage of using a bike of course is that it gives off no noxious or dangerous gases likely to cause global warming.

How concerned should we be about global warming? According to climate scientists we should be very concerned and taking action now to reduce emissions. I have just finished reading '**Field Notes from a Catastrophe: a frontline report on climate change**' by Elizabeth Kolbert (Bloomsbury, 2007). The author writes of her interviews with various researchers and environmentalists and learns about the threats if we fail to do anything to reduce the rate of global warming now. It is an excellent book for the layman but I think fails to convince the sceptical that the cause is due to man's activities since the mid-19th century.

A much more robust explanation is given in '**A Blueprint for a Safer Planet**' by Sir Nicholas Stern (Bodley Head, 2009). The reader probably needs an 'A' level to understand it properly but it is very informative and convincing. From the jacket - '.....Lord Stern, author of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and former chief economist at the World Bank, is the world's leading authority on what we can do in the face of unprecedented threat. Action on climate change will require the greatest possible international collaboration, but if successful will ensure not just our own future, but our future prosperity.....'. National and local government officials, and anyone who could make a difference, please read and take note!

Enjoy your summer cycling.

Phyll Hardie

RACKHEATH RAMBLE



The weather would be nice, we were promised, but this being Norfolk and with the wind from the North East, it was at first a bit Siberian, but it did get better rather than worse which is always nice.

This was the second of the eastern inter-webby rides to start at Burrowscorp's global headquarters, with some two dozen or so riders on the usual variety of machine, from titanium Easy Rider to home built tandem, and with the sticky bikes just outnumbering the laid back. It was a gathering that would have had most cycling organisations scratching their heads! I famously don't 'do computers' (or play the piano) but I can see the benefit of both devices and this does seem to be a very good way to bring like minded people together.

We set off at the usual less than sporting ppace, Fraser leading and Andrew riding shotgun at the rear, and with me occasionally rushing to the front in order to confuse the traffic at the odd dodgy junction. Chris on the Trice, who is of necessity a bit stately at times, set off with friend Derek on a more direct route to the lunch stop, while the rest of us headed for tea and buns at Aylsham Garden Centre (what did we do without them?) along lanes that I either did not recognise or remember for the most part despite having lived in Norfolk almost as long as Fraser has lived anywhere, guess I am not cut out to be an explorer!

We then set off well refreshed and with the 'spring' now more Scandinavian along even more strange back roads ending up at a pub that I guess the guide books would call 'traditional'.

Hmm, anyway we set out on the last leg and spring is now central European and generally lovely. Also as we are heading for home it is a tailwind so much happiness all round. More strange lanes plus a few I know well and we are back at Burrows Towers. Everybody seems happy and in one piece as we met no irate motorists despite taking quite a lot of road.

Can't wait for the next one and if the weather fairy is reading this, Mediterranean would be nice!

Mike Burrows



Your friendly guide to Bike Week



the focus of city pedal power



the focus of city pedal power

Saturday 13th	Bicycle Fair	<p>Including Dr Bike and the Police bike checks.</p> <p>10 am - 4 pm.</p> <p>Hosted by Energy Saving Trust East of England. Contact matt.wicks@est-eofe.org.uk for further details.</p>	Chapelfield Plain, Norwich
Tuesday 16th	Dr Bike	<p>Norwich Cycling Campaign Dr Bike</p> <p>11 am - 2 pm.</p>	UEA or Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, Norwich
Tuesday 16th	Wheeling to Barford	<p>Meet at Forum at 6:15 pm. or alternatively at UEA Porters Lodge at 6:30 pm.</p> <p>Arriving at The Cock in Barford 7-7:30 pm for meal and drinks.</p> <p>Please contact Martin on 01603 897738 to book as numbers needed for table booking.</p>	The Cock, Barford
Wednesday 17th	Bike to Work Breakfast	<p>From 7:30 am onwards.</p> <p>100 free breakfasts to give away, Dr Bike surgery via Norwich Cycling Campaign 10 am - 2 pm and Police bike checks etc.</p> <p>Hosted by Energy Saving Trust East of England. Contact matt.wicks@est-eofe.org.uk for further details.</p>	The Forum, Norwich
Thursday 18th	Dr Bike	<p>Norwich Cycling Campaign Dr Bike</p> <p>11 am - 2 pm.</p>	UEA or Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, Norwich
Sunday 21st	Ketts Rebellion Bike Ride	<p>Start at 9.30 am Car Park (free) opposite Norwich Prison, Britannia Road.</p> <p>Cycle through Norwich City Centre and out to Wymondham via small country roads and return. 26 miles in total with stops on route at significant locations in the Ketts Rebellion.</p> <p>Please contact Michael/Margaret on 01603 411954 as numbers of people intending to take part would be useful.</p>	<p>Wymondham</p> <p>Lunch at local pub or bring a picnic</p>
<p>For more details, ring 07812 904652</p> <p>or visit our website www.norwichcyclingcampaign.org</p>			



Contacts and Who's Who

Website: www.norwichcyclingcampaign.org

Email: info@norwichcyclingcampaign.org

Discussion group: norwichcycling@yahoogroups.com

Chairman:

Michael Dale (01603 411954, michaelg.dale@btinternet.com)

Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Rachael Mold (01953 851068)

Consultations Officer:

Richard Bearman (01603 504495, richard.bearman@cooptel.net)

Webpage Editor:

Oliver Stretton-Downes (assisted by Joe Dillon)

Newsletter Compiler:

Matthew Williams (mattwill75@hotmail.com)

CTC Liaison Officer:

Fraser Tomsett (01603 471827)

Other committee members:

Jeff Jordan, Phyll Hardie

Hon. Treasurer

David Davies

Norwich City Council (part time cycling officer): Tim Mellors (timmellors@norwich.gov.uk)

Norwich Cycling Campaign members' meetings normally take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month in The Copeman Room, United Reformed Church, Princes Street. Next meetings 19 March and 16 April.

Reporting potholes and other road defects: Use www.fillthathole.org.uk



Ah.. do you remember those long-lost days of parking bikes at Guildhall..?