



NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN *Newsletter*

No.76
Spring 2010

How easy it would be to sit here writing about how you will no doubt be out enjoying the splendid Spring weather by the time you read this! But I'm looking out on another bout of snowfall and the forecast has just said this raw winter weather is set to continue for a few more weeks yet. Oh jolly good.

Are we complaining wimps? My bike may be out there shivering and feeling sorry for itself, but no, after a quick dust-off of its snowy



mantle and a slosh of kettle water to get its dynamo working, we'll be off again, with face fixed in a frozen grin against the biting wind, slithering and

sliding through the ice and debris, to show that it takes more than a few feet of snow to stop us bikies getting to our destination! Oh, may I sit on the radiator for a bit please, and you don't mind my socks steaming, do you?

I'm always amazed having battled manfully through the drifts and moraines to distant cut-off parts of the city, to find that other cyclists have got there first, indeed have evidently pedalled routinely through some time before as if it was business as usual, leaving multiple tyre tracks as if kicking so much sand in my face on a summer beach.

The return to 'normal' winter weather in 2009-2010 has once again shown that whatever havoc is caused to the Great British transport system, the effects on bicycling are at worst only partial. Even if the surface makes riding a complete no-no, you can still dismount and

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wheel your beast of burden through the ice-field until you have reached another welcome patch of bare tarmac and you're soon on your way while drivers are left gnashing their teeth and renting their garments.

We may not always be snug, but it is possible to remain just a tiny bit smug.

Matthew Williams
Newsletter Editor



Spanish eyes Michael's observations about the state of cycling in Spain

As a frequent visitor to Spain, although not as a cyclist, I was surprised on my last visit in October to see the changes now taking place in some cities and towns in cycle provision and the effect this is having on the numbers of people using bicycles in places such as Sevilla and Mérida.



When I first went to Sevilla nearly a decade ago it was, like many other cities and towns in Spain, nearly a cycle free zone. The streets were busy and filled with cars and motorbikes, sometimes with two or more people on each. There were hardly any cycle racks in sight and very few cyclists other than the occasional tourist and I can't remember seeing many cycle shops. There were cycle lanes but most, like those in Norwich, seemed to go nowhere and stopped and started in odd places. I remember thinking that I wouldn't care to cycle in Sevilla.

Since then a real transformation has taken place, cycle racks have been put in nearly all the streets in the city centre, cycle and pedestrian lanes are nearly everywhere you go, cycle shops have appeared, most of the main old cobbled streets have now been resurfaced to make cycling easier. The number of cyclists on the streets is huge compared with what I saw a decade ago.

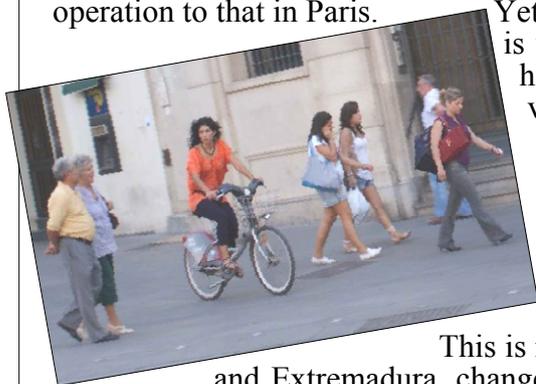
Sevilla like other places in Spain now also has a cycle hire system - similar in both the type of bikes and operation to that in Paris.

Yet, like Paris, there does seem to be some doubt as to whether this model is workable - given that the hire costs are quite high and the use of the hire bikes is still quite low. There also seemed to be a problem with vandalism that has made the local council start to have second thoughts about its future. I'm afraid my Spanish is not good enough to understand the notices being put up on the cycle hire stands informing the users of the changes proposed.

However putting aside the problems with the cycle hire scheme there does seem to have been a significant investment in money and political will to make some Spanish towns and cities cycle friendly.

This is not just in Sevilla - for as we travelled round other places in Andalusia and Extremadura, changes in the transport infrastructure were either already well advanced or in the process of being built. Another Spanish "cycling city" is Vitoria in the Basque Region. Sadly, in Madrid it was business as usual as far as cycling was concerned. I saw only a handful of cyclists in the three days I spent there, as the changes I saw elsewhere are being led by local government.

Interestingly the cities of Sevilla and Mérida are able to make these changes to their transport priorities as they are 'unitary' authorities. Perhaps when and if Norwich becomes a unitary, the new council could look at the lessons learned in these places when it considers its own future transport policy.



The strangest thing I saw in Spain though had to be the number of Brompton cycles on show. Nearly every cycle shop was selling them. Although I am quite used to seeing them as I travel on trains during my work in the UK, I have never seen so many used in any town or city in Britain outside London. No wonder you might struggle to buy them here because of short supply.

I have to confess that before my last trip I was always wary of cycling in Spain. However, I am now already planning next year's cycle holiday there.

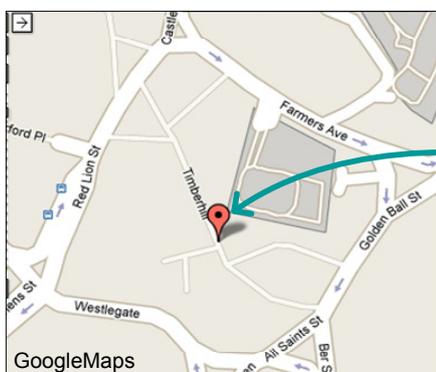
Michael Dale

NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN ON SHOW

Visit our exhibition at the Gallery in 'Ethika' shop at 25 Timberhill.

Starts Tuesday 16th March 2010 12 noon Ends Saturday 20th March 2010 5 pm

Exhibition of our successful and ongoing campaign activities over the years.
Various free maps and other items to give away.



www.ethika.co.uk

New members signing up between 16th March 2010 and 30th March 2010 will qualify for entry to a prize draw to win one of six bamboo T shirts kindly donated by **Born to It**, producers of naturally superior bamboo clothing.

Born to It clothing is made from naturally sustainable, organic bamboo. Not only does it feel unbelievably soft and comfortable but has properties that we all cry out for in our performance clothing. It's produced without the use of chemicals and pesticides too!

Just when we thought things were going smoothly ...

Update from the City Council's Tim Mellors on secure cycle parking at St Andrew's Multistorey Car Park (see Newsletter 75 page 5)

The Council has new procedures to consider the impact of proposals for disabled people (following the introduction of statutory responsibilities for Local Authorities under the Disability Discrimination Act.). In order to use the disabled spaces for the cycle park as we were planning we would have to carry out a Diversity Screening Assessment. The Norwich Access Group and the Norfolk Coalition for Disabled People would have to be consulted and their views included within the assessment, which would then go before the Council's Diversity Board. We were advised that there was a strong chance these groups would object to the proposals, which would have meant that the scheme might be delayed. This would put the County Council funding at risk.

To avoid the prospect of losing the funding we have relocated the proposed cage away from the disabled parking bays to a position next to the Attendant's kiosk (see photo). Ironically (as Matthew may remember) this is a location originally put forward but not progressed because we were told that the space may be needed for a retail outlet of some kind. However in the meantime it seems that a retail study has concluded that this space is not feasible for this use.

The revised proposal is shown on this photograph. The floor area is not quite as large as previously and as a consequence the number of stands is reduced from 17 to 13, but on the other hand being closer to the kiosk should make it safer and easier to use.



Tim Mellors

Phyll's Philosophies



At the Cyclenation - CTC autumn '09 conference held in Nottingham, the highlight of the day for me was the keynote speaker, John Whitelegg, professor of Sustainable Transport at Liverpool

John Moores University. The subject of his powerpoint presentation was '2020 or how to get 20 per cent of all daily trips made by bicycle'.

John started by showing us stats and graphs of various continental cities. He compared travel mode choice in Basel and Nottingham. It was interesting to see that walking featured strongly - 28 per cent of trips in Basel, 21.5 per cent in Nottingham. In Basel cycling as a travel mode was 21 per cent of trips, in Nottingham a mere 1.6 per cent, and this in a city which I thought had made an effort to encourage cycling. Public transport use in Basel is 27 per cent but only 16.8 per cent in Nottingham. All this is against 17 per cent of car driving in Basel and 47.8 per cent in Nottingham.

Turning to Denmark, 'lots of women cycle in Denmark'. Facilities include convenient air pumps standing in the streets for cyclists to use and digital displays showing 'Cyklisten I dag' - number of cyclists passing this point today. For employees company bikes are provided by Danish firms for business trips during the day. The photo showed a line up of around 100 of these, all identical. It must have been a big company.

In the Netherlands, 'the Dutch do not wear helmets yet have the safest cycling in the world'. In Germany the town of Freiburg came in for much praise. Its multi-storey bike park, which Christine and I saw being built when we were there 11 years ago, is now full to capacity with several hundred commuter bikes. We saw a before and after photo of a bridge in Freiburg, one jammed up with motor traffic, the other car-free with cyclists only. (This reminds me of a similar bridge in Windsor which we cycled over on our London - Cornwall ride. So much more pleasant now.) Many of Freiburg's residential streets have been made into Home Zones, with the cars now parked out of sight, while in Freiburg's car-free centre there is the (supposedly) peaceful co-existence of trams, cyclists and pedestrians.

From what he had seen in other European towns and cities John suggested the following hierarchy of provision for encouraging more cycling and walking in this country:

- Consider first
- Reduction of traffic volume and speed
 - Reallocation of road space
 - Junction and hazard site treatment and traffic management
 - Provision of direct at-grade crossings and improved routes on existing desire lines
 - Cycle tracks away from roads
 - Conversion of footways and paths to adjacent or shared use routes
- Consider last

He also suggested:

- Abolish one-way systems (while here in Norwich one is being created!)
- A general 20 mph on all residential roads, properly enforced
- Segregated and safe cycle routes to all secondary schools, hospitals and health centres
- Rat running streets closed to all through traffic.

Sadly, John's presentation was given in the space of only half an hour. He could well have been allowed twice this time. He has written eight books, of which I have read two - I must try and get hold of some of the others. He also has experience in other fields, including his own company, Eco-Logica Ltd, a Lancaster-based consultancy specialising in sustainable transport, environmental audit and review. I think I would have preferred his vision of getting 20 per cent of trips by bike in place rather sooner than 2020, but that wouldn't have made such an eye-catching title to his talk.

The other speakers were also good, as was the buffet lunch provided. I stayed overnight with a member of Pedals, the Nottingham Cycling Campaign. I was very glad I did for we had much to talk about and discuss and it was good to have such a competent city guide, which many of the other delegates missed out on by taking hotel or guesthouse accommodation. On the Sunday we were taken on a cycle ride along the riverside towpath, very conveniently passing close to the railway station.

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We will all have heard about the Google Earth van going around the streets photographing everyone's dwelling, causing quite a bit of disquiet by people afraid of their privacy being invaded. Now it seems there is a Googletrike, a large tricycle with an extra piece at the back on which the camera is mounted. This



is used on off-road paths and places inaccessible with a van. It is evidently quite a hefty vehicle as it apparently needs a very fit person to ride it. If that's the case, why hasn't the vehicle been provided with an electric motor?

*

Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, founder of the National Cycle Network and other schemes to get more people on bikes, has discovered that 79 per cent of British women never cycle, just the opposite to that found in Denmark noted above. They have presented a 'Motion for Women' petition to Transport Minister Sadiq Khan, signed by 9000 women and supported by several women's groups, calling for the Government to improve the cycle infrastructure in the UK. Although the Editor of this newsletter considers that the best city cycle routes are the roads, Sustrans major finding was that women were primarily deterred from cycling by perceived road dangers. I know of men who are likewise deterred. That is why we need the sort of cycling infrastructure as found in Europe. It's a pity that our European masters haven't required this to be provided. However, it is encouraging to hear that the Institute of Advanced Motorists is putting together a national network of cycling instructors to encourage motorists to cycle more. They would like to hear from interested instructors, current and past, and ask them to contact Duncan Pickering on 020 8996 9600, or e-mail duncan.pickering@iam.org.uk ; website www.iam.org.uk

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Tory leader and prospective prime minister David Cameron is reportedly a regular cycle commuter. It's good to know that, if the Tories win the forthcoming election, there are plans to provide a number of folding bikes (Bromptons?) for general use by MPs travelling to meetings.

Initially there will be about half a dozen bikes kept at the Commons (is that all?) which MPs will be able to sign for and use. The idea is to cut the cost of taxi use and carbon emissions. With the right media attention what an excellent example to set the ordinary citizen and office worker - but will it work?



*

I'm sure we're all looking forward to some decent spring weather to get out on our bikes again and put in a few miles.

Phyll Hardie

2 wheels good.....3 wheels better



Campaign members Nicola and Ian Maunders proving that cycling in winter conditions can be fun and safe – if you have the right sort of machine. This picture was taken between Wymondham and Morley shortly before Christmas. "We had a few problems losing traction but after last winter we fitted tough Schwalbe Marathon tyres which gave us better grip during the time of year when light rolling resistance is not an important issue. For our summer tour we are considering fitting lighter weight tyres (Schwalbe Kojak) to the front wheels for a faster ride."

The Brox



This is the load carrier used by Norwich Cycling Campaign member Clive Parsons. The model shown is a Brox Compact conceived by the late Rob Brock who approached Mike Burrows to design and build a prototype for him.

It has been used to carry a 4-drawer filing cabinet, a compost bin, a fireside chair, a tumble drier, a Moulton (a small wheeled bicycle) and an Islabike (a children's bike seen in the picture) but not all at the same time! It regularly carries redundant goods to the recycling centre such as paper, tins, card, glass etc. Clive has an old water tank, which can be strapped on the back to carry sacks of rubble, chicken feed, garden rubbish and food shopping. He likes to make each trip pay so will take recycling one way and shopping the other. This is the 'juggernaut' philosophy i.e. don't spend lots of time riding the Brox around empty as it too heavy.

Clive bought the Brox second-hand from a guy in London. He then rode it home, about 100 miles in 2 days. Since then he has adapted it by designing and welding a mild steel square section tubing to create a frame to attach things to including 2 seats, used to carry granny to the shops or take 2 people and their luggage to the station. The idea was to make something that was adaptable and versatile for carrying people without losing the load-carrying capacity.

Last year's family holiday was in Framlingham, a distance of 35 miles, carrying a Brompton, a unicycle, a minicycle (a circus bike with 4" wheels) and luggage for a family of 4.

The advantages:

- More manoeuvrable than a trailer when carrying a big load
- Safer as brakes on all 4 wheels
- Wider wheelbase makes it more stable

The disadvantages:

- Can be slow and heavy, not very nippy in traffic
- Uncomfortable seat
- Storage can be a problem

If you were thinking of rushing out to buy one, the Brox is no longer made but can occasionally be found for sale second-hand.

Easy pickings

Much as we understand and support the recent police purge to stop illegal cycling along London Street (hopefully pending introduction of a more enlightened policy for allowing cycling outside core hours), their campaign would perhaps have commanded more public support had they found somewhere better to park their van than obstructing the self-same pedestrian area!

The photo was taken on the morning of Saturday 13 February 2010.



NOTICE BOARD

Don't forget to visit our **exhibition** at the Gallery in 'Ethika' shop at 25 Timberhill (see page 3)
Starts Tuesday 16th March 2010 12 noon Ends Saturday 20th March 2010 5 pm

Dates for your diary

(information from Tony Clarke 07811747890)

Sunday 30th May 2010:

Dennis Smith Memorial 50, organised by Norfolk CTC

The event will have two start points - Eaton Church Hall Norwich and Roydon Village Hall near Diss. The start points will also double as check and refreshment points. There will be a 5 hour group starting at 8am, 4 hour group at 9am; 3 1/2 hour group at 9.30 and the Sportive group at 10.30. All groups to finish by 1pm. More details to follow - but now is the time to start planning your training miles!

Tuesdays:

It has become a local tradition for cyclists to head for Reepham Railway Station on Tuesdays for an informal meet, refreshments and a chat. People start to arrive about 11.30 am - all welcome!

Thinking ahead to National Bike Week 2010 (19 - 27 June)

This year it is called Team Green Britain Bike Week - an annual opportunity to promote cycling and show how cycling can easily be part of everyday life. Demonstrating the social, health and environmental benefits of cycling, the week aims to get people to give cycling a go all over the UK. This year the aim is to make 'everyday cycling for everyone'. See www.teamgreenbritain.org and www.bikeweek.org.uk. Team Green Britain, founded by EDF Energy, aims to help Britons reduce their carbon footprint by 2012 and includes advice on how to make everyday journeys as sustainable as possible.

Some more all-too-familiar consequences of a hard winter



Unthank Road special



Possible alternative to using www.fillthathole.org.uk



Road debris all along Newmarket Road



Norwich - city of cryptic signs at Pottergate, for example



Contacts and Who's Who

Website: www.norwichcyclingcampaign.org

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Discussion group: norwichcycling@yahoo.com

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Treasurer & Membership Secretary

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Webpage Editor:

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Matthew Williams (mattwill75@hotmail.com)

Phyll Hardie, Fraser Tomsett

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, Prince's Street (go down the ramp).

Forthcoming meetings: 18 March, 15 April, 20 May 2010



Don't forget the calling cards (email us for supplies)