

Norwich Cycling Campaign

Newsletter 16
March/April 1995

*the focus of city
pedal power*

price 30p
(free to members)

NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN was formed in 1990 to promote cycling in Norwich and lobby for better cycle facilities. It is affiliated to the National Cycle Campaign Network.



Editor's Column

The reception that Newsletter 15 received was so encouraging that this edition has increased to twelve pages!. But credit where credit is due – I couldn't have done it without you, the

Campaign members who responded so enthusiastically with contributions, letters and suggestions.

I really feel that we are going to achieve a huge amount this year. There is a much faster growing awareness of traffic and pollution problems generally, and a new sense of urgency among the public who say that "something must be done" about these

environmental problems. With our new Campaign office and the kind of determination you have shown recently, WE will be the ones influential in personal transport matters, and much else besides.

Thank you very much for what you have done – please keep doing it!

John King



Lord Mayor opens Campaign office ! (page 8)

Councillor Julian Swainson (left) with Lord Mayor Councillor Brenda Ferris (centre) and Campaign Co-ordinator Les Hopkins (right). Andy Mitchell is at the front on his Kingcycle recumbent.

Meetings



NEXT MEETINGS

15th March
19th April
17th May

All members are welcome at these monthly meetings which are held in our Campaign Office at the Development and Environment Centre, 38 - 40 Exchange Street (entrance at rear, start 7:30pm).

Please come along and say what YOU think about cycling issues in Norwich!

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National News



Cambridge cycle ban

Cambridge City Council is considering taking legal action to reverse moves by Cambridgeshire County Council to impose a further cycling ban in the city centre.

The original restrictions, introduced in 1993 in a bid to improve conditions for pedestrians, cover the central market square area. These were made permanent at the end of 1993.

Despite opposition from the city council and the local MP, Anne Campbell, the county council recently overrode the advice of its transport officers by extending the ban to two other streets.

The head of the city council's legal services department, Margaret Walker, has said that she is taking legal advice on the possibility of a judicial review, 'to see if we have an arguable case'. She is being supported by the local Friends of the Earth group which has raised a petition of 1,800 signatures against the cycle ban. According to spokesman Roger Lilley, 'The county council is sending out all the wrong signals on urban transport policy by such a blatant snub to cyclists.'

Cycling to jail

A teenage cyclist recently learnt that off-road cycling is not all that it's cracked up to be.

18-year-old Alan Croft, from Braintree, Essex, was jailed for seven days for riding his mountain bike on the pavement, along with his friend Darren Slade. They did this to avoid a policeman who was giving safety lessons to a group of children.

Croft said "We could see they were being taught so we got out of the way. Then the copper arrested us. I couldn't believe it".

Unable to pay the £130 fine imposed, Croft, a student was asked to pay £5 per week, but had difficulty in finding this amount fortnightly. When he failed to make the first payment he was arrested and taken to Chelmsford jail, where he spent a miserable week.

Contribution deadline

Adverts, letters, articles, etc, for publication in the next Newsletter MUST be in the office by Friday 28th April.

Hide to Ride for Life?

World Champion Herbie Hide may switch from boxing to cycling in May. The WBO heavyweight titleholder has agreed to link his name with the 'RIDE FOR LIFE' cycling event to raise cash for Quidenham children's hospice. The organisers hope that he will be able to turn up on the day and go for a spin himself.

"It all depends on how his plans work out after his title fight with Riddick Bowe in America on March 11th", said Les King, a friend of the Norwich-based boxer.

Hide was approached by King to support the ride which is to take place on May 21st. and he is urging as many people as possible to get sponsors and then ride their bikes to raise money for the hospice.

The event is being organised by the Breckland Cycling Club. A 33-mile course around Breckland and South Norfolk will be available along with a less-demanding 7-mile alternative.

Last year the event raised almost £16,000 when proceeds were shared with the Little Haven Hospice Appeal at Southend. This year, all the profits will go to Quidenham.

For full details, call Quidenham Hospice on (01953) 888603.

Derby cycling plan

Derbyshire County Council is preparing a 'cycling blueprint' for promoting cycling in the county. The document, detailing training, publicity and engineering measures, is to be launched during National Bike Week in June.

Green grants for Sustrans routes

The Department of the Environment has awarded more than £70,000 in Environmental Action Fund grants to cycle charity Sustrans for development of the planned Inverness to Dover cycle route, and other projects. Grants have also been made to the National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection, and the Pedestrians Association.

Pennine national trail

Plans by the Countryside Commission to create a 330km Pennine bridleway for riders, cyclists and walkers have been accepted by the Department of the Environment. However, 150km has been cut from the northern end of the planned national trail. The Countryside Commission is planning to bid for National Lottery support for the £2,000,000 scheme.

'Just take the M6'!

Cycle shops, you might think, would not want to join the out-of-town exodus, but Wheelbase seems to, judging by their advertising. Along with details of their impressive product range is a picture of the shop - a huge grey shed, squatting among Cumbria's mountains. Directions to 'Lake District's premier cycle store' begin: "...take Junction 36 off the M6...".

The company reassured LOCAL TRANSPORT TODAY that while it was several miles from the nearest town, yes, there was plenty of parking!

The advert also states that the warehouse (whose appearance could charitably be described as 'functional') is in some of the finest on- and off-road cycling terrain. "So don't forget your bike," it advises, helpfully.



LOCAL NEWS



Bawburgh

Bawburgh cyclists can hold their breath. Norwich Cycling Campaign has voiced its opposition to the re-opening of New Road.

South Norfolk Green Party speaker and Norwich Cycling Campaign member Ingo Wagenknecht pledged our support as:

- it is a major cycle corridor into Norwich from the south
- expensive (£47,000) safety measures are not justified
- a 'ratrun' would be created into Bowthorpe, increasing traffic, pollution and accidents
- PPG 12/13 states a rethink on all urban transport.

On Mr Wagenknecht's advice to 'respect local democracy', a planned decision by the full County Council on February 27th was postponed, until the results of a ballot are known.

The ballot organised by South Norfolk D.C. on March 9th will be final and, we hope, without intimidation. Don't forget to vote!

Theatre Street

Read the article 'Take a fence' (right), and you might ask "So what?" Why all the fuss about one minor aspect of the safety scheme being put in at Theatre Street? But the matter has a far greater significance, on three main counts:

1 Theatre Street lies at the city end of the main cycle routes in from the south-western suburbs (crossing the inner Ring Road via the Chapelfield subway). So anything done here affects commuting and shopping journeys for a large number of people coming from a wide area of the city.

2 The design method for the accident prevention scheme has thrown up serious questions concerning the collection of accident data, especially the under-reporting of cycle accidents and the consequent lack of recognition of the hazards affecting cyclists.

3 The neglect of cyclists needs in the



The personnel in the photo above have been dutifully seeking cyclists to make sure they do not 'inconvenience road users'. They are trying to find the whereabouts of a 'Critical Mass Ride'

hereabouts around roundabouts (or thereabouts) and have got lost. If you should find them, please return them to Bethel Street Police Station where a friendly sergeant will help them with their problem.

Take a fence

Shoppers and commuters on their bikes are used to nipping through the car park between Bethel Street and Theatre Street to get to the Chapelfield cycle route. But the city council is now planning a continuous fence along the edge of the car park facing the Assembly House as part of the pedestrian safety scheme.

A Norwich Cycling Campaign spokesman said: "Last Wednesday we had the Lord Mayor open our new campaign office and we heard all the usual talk of the city council encouraging more cycling. "Now we have the same council implementing plans which have precisely the opposite effect."

Campaign Consultant Matthew Williams said: "We are trying to help the city get more people on their bikes, and

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you don't do that by closing an established cycle route.

"The alternative, Little Bethel Street, is pretty terrifying for a lot of people on bikes."

A city council spokesperson said the fence was part of a package of road safety measures for Theatre Street, which had been designated a 'red accident cluster site' following eight accidents, one of them fatal, in the last three years.

"The fence will be there to discourage people from crossing Theatre Street opposite the car park, and to encourage use of the pedestrian crossing," she said.

"The scheme was approved by the city and councils in consultation with the cycling forum. The forum's alternative plans were turned down."

original design could perhaps be forgiven, but for the complete inability/unwillingness on the City Council's part to make any modifications to the proposals in response to all the representations is rather worrying - especially in the light of the official Cycling Strategy, which is unambiguously to encourage cycling by checking all schemes for 'cycle friendliness'.

Even before the Theatre Street scheme was proposed, we had written to the City Planning Officer over the

difficulties experienced by cyclists turning right from Chapelfield East into Theatre Street (mainly due to the sudden emergence of vehicles from Little Bethel Street). The new scheme does nothing to address that problem.

Our other criticism of the scheme is the proposal to sever the unofficial but well used cycle route across Bethel Street Car Park, with no practical alternative being offered. This proposal is quite unacceptable. I predict a lot of public opposition should this fence be put up. MW

