

# Norwich Cycling Campaign

Newsletter 28  
March 1998

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

## IS IT A BUS ? IS IT A TAXI ? IS IT A BIKE ? NO, IT'S A LORRY!

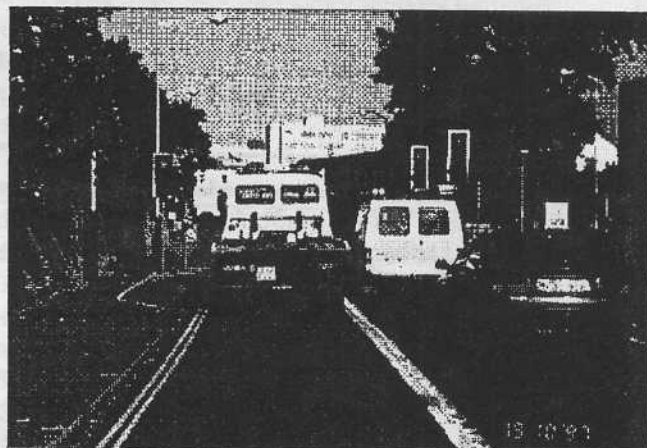
Hands up those cyclists who appreciate riding in bus lanes. Well, perhaps "appreciate" is a relative word, but there are many of us who enjoy it enough to have felt it worth defending the space from further incursions by mini-cabs and motorbikes. Indeed, we have heard some glowing appreciation from members following the opening of the Dereham Road bus lane and the benefits to cyclists battling into the city from that direction every morning.

So, why is it that bus lanes in Norwich are only part time? Typically 7am to 7pm and not at all on Sundays. You might (if you were a car-head) reply that you only need a bus lane when you have buses. On the other hand, you could turn that around and ask why other traffic needs to use the bus lane as a second traffic lane out-of hours, when the flow is so much lower.

Furthermore, the argument overlooks the fact that they are (we thought) bus **AND BIKE** lanes and cyclists, most definitely, would like the extra protection of a traffic-free lane after 7pm, especially when it gets dark and the cars speed up. Also on Sundays when young families are often out on bikes.

Because of limited road space, bus lanes like that on Newmarket Road were squeezed into space not really meant for two traffic lanes, and this is only too apparent when the neck and neck 'dual carriageway effect' happens out-of-hours. Woe betide the cyclist who gets caught up in the race. Through the Cycling Forum, we have requested that all new bus lanes are made 24 hour, 7 days a week, and that the existing ones be converted. They've managed to do this in Ipswich ..... although we couldn't possibly use that as an argument - just common sense!

*Matthew Williams*



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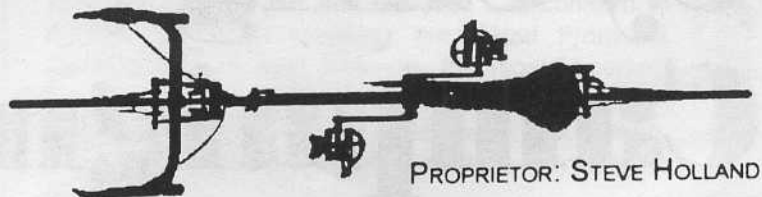


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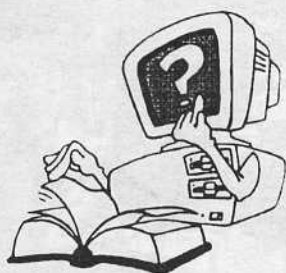
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## Editors' piece



Yes, there are now two of us! On behalf of all our readers, we would like to thank John King for all the excellent newsletters he has produced in the past.

As announced in the last issue, John is no longer able to edit the newsletter due to a much increased workload. He is certainly a difficult act to follow, but we'll do our best to produce something every quarter that is as near as possible to his high standards!

Your contributions and views are vital - this is YOUR newsletter, after all! Please get these to us by Tuesday 4th May, so we can include them in the June issue.

*Mike and Pam*

## Cycling Campaign world first!

Despite being well publicised, the winter 'Biryani Ride' in December was poorly supported. Only five people turned up for the ride and about a dozen for the magnificent feast afterwards. I was getting into a tizz over all the food left over ... something to do with my Second World War childhood ... when Nigel, our worthy Treasurer, had the brilliant idea of auctioning it!

After 15 minutes of brisk bidding, all the food was sold and the event realised a small overall profit. As there is no entry in the Guinness Book of Records for curry auctions, I think we can assume that this was a world first. But, if you know different, I'd love to know.

There will, of course, be another Biryani Ride in June during National Bike Week, so don't miss it! It will be our fifth and the food is legendary.....

*Mike*

# CAMPAIGN UPDATE

by Campaign Co-ordinator Richard Bearman

I would like to make this column a regular feature of the newsletter, so I can bring you up to date with some of the news and happenings at the Campaign office and elsewhere.

Since our AGM in December, we have some new committee members and some existing members have taken on new roles, including me!

We would like to record our thanks to the retiring members, John King (Newsletter Editor) and Hans Hoffbauer (Membership Secretary) and welcome our new editors.

Andy Mitchell's 'Bikeworks', on Saturdays at The Greenhouse, has been very successful and has enabled the Campaign to pay the rent for our office space there. Please use the service and tell your cycling friends about it. Thanks to Andy for those long, cold hours spent outside.

Our newsletter costs and telephone expenses are also under tight control, but we need to raise funds for other activities. A sponsored cycle ride has been suggested, but we are keen for other ideas and for volunteers to organise and support any events. National Bike Week will be from 6-14th June and we especially need ideas for this to go in the June newsletter.

Our monthly meetings are open to all members and are held on Wednesday evenings, 7.30pm, at the Campaign office in Bethel Street. This is where we decide what the Campaign is doing, so do come along and take part. Every third month, we have a guest to educate us on a cycling topic! See page 8 for details and dates of the meetings and other forthcoming events.

Our new Membership Secretary, Christian Riches, aims to double our membership numbers - he is not going to be able to do this single-handed, so if you can recruit at least one other cyclist to the Campaign, his task will be considerably easier! We are currently redesigning our membership leaflet and you can get copies from the Campaign office. I'm usually chained to the desk on Fridays from 10 to 4, so please call in or give me a call on 664364.

*Richard*

**DON'T FORGET**

**NATIONAL  
BIKE WEEK**

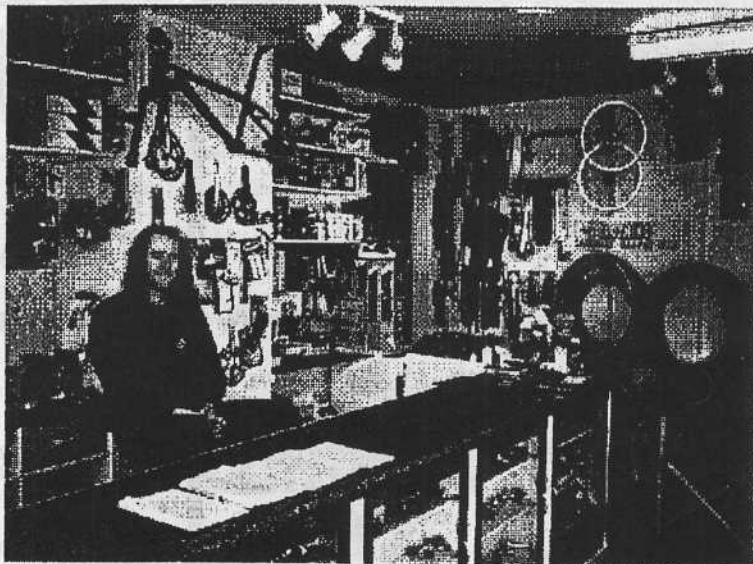
**6 - 14 JUNE**

*Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by the Editors or Norwich Cycling Campaign. News items are reported in good faith and we cannot be held liable for their accuracy. E&OE*

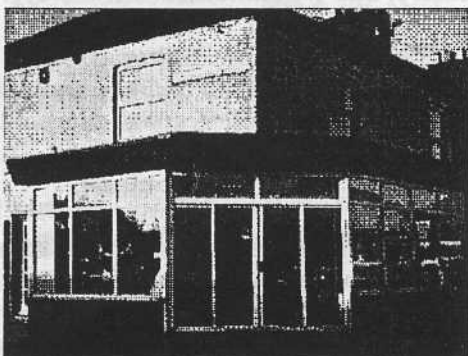
# Congratulations !

Twenty years ago, John Borwell opened a small cycle shop in Knowsley Road and very soon built up an excellent reputation among serious cyclists. At that time there was only one other lightweight specialist in Norwich and the trade was just beginning to crawl out of a long period of recession.

By 1985, the business was well established, when it was acquired by Jason Palmer. Jason's brother, Ian, took over the management in 1986 and in 1990 moved to much needed larger premises in Spencer Street. Trade increased and Ian and his



*Ian Palmer in the new shop*



mechanic, Gary Stevens, soon ran desperately short of space. Now they have moved again, this time to excellent spacious premises on the corner of Spencer Street and Churchill Road.

Norwich Cycling Campaign congratulates them on their move and wishes them continuing success in the future.

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## FIRST LINK WITH LOCAL SCHOOL

*by Phyll Hardie*

Richard Bearman and I recently met a group of Acle High School students and their tutor outside Bonds to discuss the store's cycle parking facilities. This was part of a technology project, instigated by Bonds management, who are fed up with having people locking their cycles to railings outside the store.

First, we looked at the existing cycle parking facilities, some wheel-pinch type racks located inside the entrance to Bonds' multi-storey car park. We discussed the disadvantages of these, the difficulty of access in the face of streams of cars sweeping into the complex and the lack of signage. Then, we discussed with the store manager the reasons why they did not like their railings being used - blocking the view of the window displays, difficulty of keeping the store

frontage clean - and ideas for alternative provision.

Two weeks later, we visited the school to talk to the students. We discussed the progress they had made in their design projects, then showed them plans/diagrams of two proposed cycling facilities in Norwich. Finally, we introduced them to the National Cycle Network and, in particular, to Route 1, the Harwich-Hull section. None of the students had even heard of it and certainly had no idea that it passed through Norwich and so close to their homes.

This proved to be a valuable opportunity to publicise cycling and the progress now being made in providing leisure and commuter cycling facilities. Norwich Cycling Campaign welcomes this first link with a local school and hopes it will lead to others. If you are involved with local high schools, or have any friends who are, please contact the Campaign office.



# Your Chair speaks . .

....well, rambles on a bit

I've noticed some blind spots out there lately (you know, in that big, bad world thingy). The first sort is in the recognition centres of some drivers' brains and is cyclist-shaped, so they nearly take you out at roundabouts - I already knew about them. The second is partly cycle-shaped, and is possessed by those who think that the only way people can possibly travel more than a few hundred yards is by car.

For example, Mrs W Smith (EEN 5.2.98), who seems to think that she has a divine right to drive her kids to school (regardless of consequences) and that there is no other viable option.

Now, when I went to school (not that long ago), anyone who was driven to school was a wimp, wet, utter weed, softie, girlie and a lot more less savoury names besides. It was walk, cycle, or school bus.

OK, I know that parents want to make sure that their kids get to school safely, but that doesn't mean that they have to be stuffed in a car and cut off from the fresh (?) air, weather and a spot of exercise. Are we raising a nation of wimps?

Another example is the traders who think that noone will go to their shops if they can't park right outside and then panic when measures to reduce traffic are proposed for the street outside. People can, and do, get around by other means than just by car and from further than just around the corner. If they want to get there, they will.

This is the sort of thinking (or lack of) that everyone involved in promoting cycling as the serious mode of transport it is, is up against.

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## Bye bye bye-law

Two very useful shortcuts in the Newmarket Road area - Donkey Lane (which runs from Wentworth Green to Greenways) and the lane from Unthank Road (near Judges Walk) to Buckingham Road - are open to cyclists.

Both of these have 'No cycling' signs, which (we are assured) are no longer valid. They were based on some old bye-law, which has been repealed. Pedestrians who protest can be politely corrected!

Recent outbursts of it in the press have come about because the Clty Council are planning to reduce the amount of motor traffic (by restricting it's movement) in the Nelson Street and Park Lane/Avenues areas of the city. Both are residential and contain schools. Cyclists will, of course, be unaffected by most of these measures. This is definitely a positive step forward in line with the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (see page 6), the National Cycling Strategy and the Road Traffic Reduction Bill. Given a bit of luck, a 20mph speed limit will also be applied - a useful bit of legislation from central government (for a change).

## Road safety

Last year, a survey showed that road safety was top of peoples' concerns for police priorities. So, what do we get? Another high profile clampdown on cyclists riding without lights and on pavements. Whilst the former is lunatic at best, road conditions are such that a pragmatic approach is required for the latter. Sometimes you get abuse just for being on road. At the same time, there is no obvious action to clamp down on aggressive or careless driving, or speeding. The latter being nothing short of endemic, causing far more carnage (sic) than cyclists ever could.



## Bishop Bridge and all that

By the time you read this, the work on Bishop Bridge and the crossing near it should be finished. How cycle-usable will the new facilities be?

Work has also started on the St. Augustines/Botolph Street junction. When finished, cyclists, and only cyclists, will be able to turn into Botolph Street. Surrealists will be able to turn into a pink emu.

Another bit I'm looking forward to is the planned implementation of advanced stop lines at Bowthorpe Road/Ring Road. Should be good.

On the other hand, the mini-roundabout at Yarmouth Road/Ring Road, which was proposed, then shelved, has now suddenly appeared .....such things are not noted for safety by cyclists.

*Andy Mitchell*

# NATS goes modal

**Matthew Williams asks.....**

....have you heard about the latest review of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy?

We're talking about the strategy agreed by the County Council, City Council and Districts for transport in our area. This was considered recently in the Cycling Forum, because it's the background against which decisions are being, and will be, made concerning all things cycling in Norwich. In particular, the City Council's Cycling Strategy (which is currently being updated again) is now considered to be subordinate to NATS.

The good news is that there is a clear commitment to "improving facilities for walking, cycling and public transport" (Policy S1).

Not only that, we now at last have, in black and white, a 'mode hierarchy', stating the relative priority of different transport modes (Policy S2):

1. Walking
2. CYCLING
3. Public transport
4. Taxis
5. Essential motor vehicles and powered two-wheelers
6. Non-essential motor vehicles)



With regard to the specific policies for cycling, there's all the usual stuff about creating a cycle network, proper integration with public transport and cycle parking, only this time it's almost as if the writers of the strategy mean it!

As we have always said, the real test of sincerity comes when we see what changes the strategy will mean to the travel habits of the very individuals and organisations who have produced it. Unless we see a real greening of the transport plan for Norfolk County Council employees, for example, then there can be no expectation of public support for NATS. Some prominently located cycle parking outside the door of County Hall would be a start!

## Car free living - a dream ?

Last November's Carfree Life conference in London brought together nearly 90 people, most of whom live without cars by conscious choice. One conference may not seem much, but it marks a new direction in transport politics.

The car is surely a symbol of the second half of the twentieth century, the spirit of the age. It represents freedom, individualism, machismo and female emancipation. But, it is also a symbol of loss - among other things, loss of freedom for non-car owners and children, loss of countryside, loss of tranquillity, loss of clean air and a major contributor to global climatic change.

But, a new spirit seems to be emerging - a mature attitude towards the car - as a useful tool in moderation, but which can create a destructive dependency if used to excess. The number of people who choose to live without a car is growing. At the same time, both in campaigning groups and in transport planning, the debate is tentatively moving on from traffic reduction to tackling car ownership.

Car-free does not mean immobile. Cycling and public transport were well-aired, although little was said about walking. Cycle carriage on trains produced the greatest controversy, with folding bike enthusiasts battling against those who think we are playing into the hands of train operating companies who do not want to provide space for conventional bikes, let alone tandems, three-wheelers or even ones with fixed front baskets. Try stowing one of those vertically on one of Anglia's new refurbished trains!

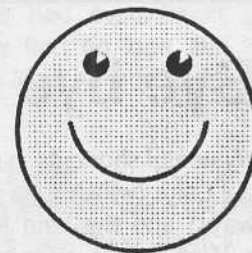
Neither does car-free mean car-less (despite the conference title!). There are exciting developments in Leeds and Edinburgh, for example, where continental-style car clubs allow people to hire cars from a local pool, rather than own one

The conference concluded with two letters being concocted, one to Tony Blair and John Prescott, and the other to all British Train Operating Companies, which should succeed in flushing out the issues to be resolved, rather than influencing opinions.

And the process continues. Most conference participants chose to be on a mailing list and follow-up regional conferences are to be held. The first is on Saturday 16th May at A to B Magazine's "1998 Folder Forum show" in Ventnor, Isle of Wight.

If you'd like more information, send an SAE to: A to B, 19 West Park, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7DB, which is also the address for Carfree Life itself.

How do you feel about a Norwich Carfree Life conference?



*Chris Wood is a researcher, consultant and writer on transport and environmental planning. He is director of Norwich-based research network TransPlan and a researcher at the Centre for Independent Transport Research in London.*



# Slippery subjects

Matthew Williams comments on current obstacles to stress-free city cycling

## A slip of the mind

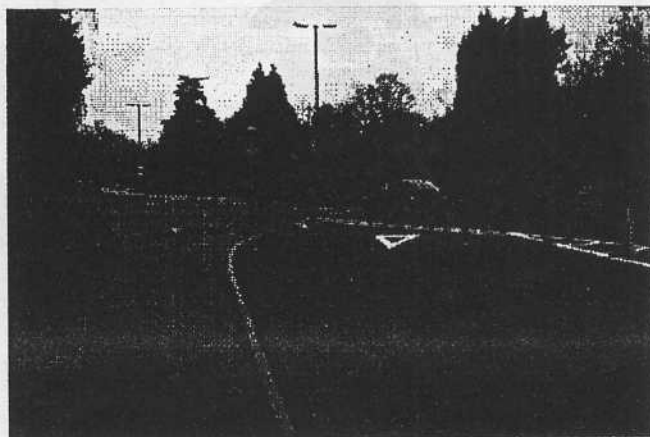
Lurking near the bottom left corner of my mental cycle network of Norwich is an important little link which enables you to get quickly back from Cringleford into the city via Unthank Road, often a preferable option to using Newmarket Road. Residents of Eaton use it every day.

It's nothing particularly special, just the slip road up from Bluebell Road to the end of the Cringleford bypass. A short stretch of busy traffic, then turn into the relative calm of Unthank Road.

But, horror of horrors, along came City Works one day with no warning and create a massive kerb build-out at the top of the slip road, forcing traffic to meet the main road via a 'proper' junction, rather than just merging in.

Lots of protests in the local press from motorists complaining about stiff necks. But, more to the point, grave concerns by all those law-abiding Eaton cyclists who are now being thrust right into the heart of the traffic conflict. The original peripheral line (along the original kerb) has now become a dramatic expanse of featureless asphalt! And, needless to say, distinct unease from the Cycling Campaign when we discovered that there had been no consultation on the scheme - not even any input from the two cycling officers!

Why, oh why, could this safety scheme not have included a most obvious measure for cyclists - a special slip lane along the original kerb line? The answer is something to do with the number of years ago this scheme was designed. To put one in now would only involve a dropped kerb and some paint (and no doubt mega-hassle for the officers concerned).



A sad tale. But, within a matter of months (they say!) we could have a happy ending. When this topic was raised at the Cycling Forum in January, the City Council did not attempt to defend what had been done, but instead agreed to take the necessary steps to put in a cyclists' slip lane later in the year.

*So, be patient (we always are!) and watch this space.*

## For sale

**27 x 1 1/4 rear touring wheel:** sturdy alloy rim, stainless spokes, Elite ST alloy hub brake: with Continental Top Touring tyre, tube and Shimano 14-32 block. £35. Tel. Jon 01603 621265

**Good used cycle parts and accessories** eg. rear ATB wheel, gear cogs, tyre and tube £15; used lamps from £2.50; saddles from £2; Available from Campaign desk in Greenhouse - all profits to Cycle Campaign. Phone Nigel on 502188 if you can't see what you want.....he's almost certainly got one at home! (via Cycle Recycle).

**Reconditioned bikes** - see regularly updated list posted on Campaign desk. 3 month guarantee over £40. If you can't see what you're looking for and can wait a while, Nigel can probably make up a bike to your own personal requirements. Phone your needs through on 502188 or leave a note in Nigel's pigeonhole in Campaign office. All profits to Norwich Cycle Campaign. Saturday trial rides or hire possible (from office), without obligation to buy. Hire fee refunded on purchase.

## Twiglets and leaf mould

Those long-suffering cyclists on Newmarket Road - as if a disappearing bus lane isn't enough! Now they're expected to give their undying appreciation for their off-road cycle path. Well, it has to be said that it is indeed appreciated by many cyclists, particularly for its reasonably smooth construction, notably the flush kerbs. And the summer rainfall failed to produce the muddying of the gravel surface that the cynics had predicted.

But, come the autumn, down fluttered a heavy leaf fall onto the path, followed closely by abundant twig debris, courtesy of those high winds. Not surprising really, given the path is tucked under a grand avenue of mature trees. And, as the

winter wore on, that splendid Bredon gravel surface disappeared beneath a squelchy dark brown layer of humus, to the delight of the cynics. A design defect? Not really, just a lack of clearance at the appropriate time.

Whose job then? We're reliably informed it's a matter (no joke intended!) for the City Council's Environmental Health, just like litter or broken glass.

So, don't just moan about it next year or wait for someone else - give them a ring on (01603) 212313/4 and they'll come and deal with it. A natural surface doesn't have to mean horticultural!

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**Matthew Williams** ..... 503824

**National Bike Week**  
**special**  
**in the next issue**

# TECHNO CORNER

## **Good news for flashers !**

But, first, the bad news.....those flashing red LED rear lights much beloved by cyclists (and grudgingly approved of by some motorists) do not, conform to BS3648, so strictly speaking, are **illegal**. From the cyclist's point of view, however, the most important thing is that they are conspicuous. And the police are most unlikely to take action as their big preoccupation, especially recently, is with those nutcases with no lights at all!

The same can't be said of the green LEDs which a few cyclists use as headlamps. These can be downright dangerous. To the motorist, green means 'go' and the last thing they expect is for the light to be immediately followed by an oncoming cyclist. If you are belting down Kett's Hill at 30 m.p.h. at night and there are cars coming up the hill at a similar speed, you certainly need something conspicuous, like a good halogen headlight. Likewise, if you are cycling on an unlit road, you will need a light that will illuminate the road in front of you.

The good news is that LED rearlights are now available which DO conform to BS3648. But, why an LED? They have two big advantages. They use very little current, so your batteries will last for yonks. They are also extremely reliable - virtually everlasting. The LEDs in my bedside radio alarm are 20 years old and still going strong! Used as a dynamo rearlight, the very low power consumption leaves more power for the headlamp.

If you want the 'Full Monty' on the latest lighting systems, then beg, borrow, or even buy the current edition of the CTC magazine "Cycle", where you'll find four pages of comprehensive information.

*Mike Savage*

## **Dates for your diary**

### **Norwich Cycling Campaign meetings:**

(Held on Wednesdays, 7.30pm, at The Greenhouse, 42-46 Bethel Street)

**March 18** - Guest speaker Walter Nash of the CTC Cyclists' Rights Group

**April 15**

**May 13**

**June 10** (National Bike Week) - Guest speaker, Tim Mellors, Norwich City Council's Cycling Officer (Design)

### **Other important dates:**

**Saturday 25 April**, 2.30pm - 'Come and try it' (CATI) Group - Easy rides for novice cyclists. 1st ride of 1998 season. Phone Phyll on 01603 435547.

**Sunday 31 May** - Norwich 100 Ride