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# NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

## SEPTEMBER 1998

50p where sold - FREE to members

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.

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### EDITOR'S COLUMN

According to National Reports, *Bikeweek* was an all time success. As far as Norwich was concerned it was very much a mixed bag. *Bike to work* was well supported thanks to a big entry from County Hall, mustered by Rob Marshall, council cycling officer.

The biryani evening was also well supported with several late comers having to be turned away.

The VIP ride was very well attended, this of course was by invitation. Sadly, the Ashwellthorpe ride was abysmally badly supported, as was the treasure hunt.

For this issue there have been no letters and only one press cutting from members, so please let's have more entries for the Christmas issue.

Mike Savage

## INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CHAIRMAN

Hello! I'm Phyll and I've taken over the chairmanship of Norwich Cycling Campaign following the departure of Andy to the (possibly) wetter climes of western Ireland. Let me introduce myself. I am an 'older' woman (yes, in spite of my name which seems to cause considerable confusion, I am female) a housewife and mother of two grown up sons. I am also a supply teacher/EFL teacher/maths tutor/exam marker/garden designer/ CATI rides co-ordinator/cycle routes deviser, as and when called upon to do so. I have been cycling ever since my dad taught me to ride a bike by running along holding onto the back of the saddle, at the age of seven or so (no stabilizers in those days!). Thereafter I always cycled to school, a distance of two miles through all the 'back doubles'. During my grammar school days I used my mum's bike, even teaching a school friend to ride it by the same method as my dad had used. When she went out and bought a new bike, joined a club and started cycling what I then considered to be a prodigious distance, I felt really humbled. Within a year of leaving school and getting my first job I'd bought my own new bike, a Raleigh Lenton Sports, which I still have and ride occasionally. I also joined the YHA, having been inspired by a fellow pupil's hostelling activities while at school. I'd always been interested in exploring the countryside, possibly due to my father's being a motor-cyclist who did shift work. His days off allowed us as a family to go out frequently, taking picnics into the nearby Chiltern and Surrey Hills, while going further afield, to the west country, for our holidays. My mother rode pillion while my brother and I rode in the swallow sidecar. Being the older child I was required to navigate, which made me a competent OS map reader from the age of ten or so (why do so few children today get the opportunity to develop this useful skill?) So, with my new bike and my YHA membership card, I was off and away for weekends and, eventually, for longer trips to Devon and to Essex and Suffolk. Marriage to a non-cyclist and the arrival of a family caused me to limit my cycling to occasional trips out alone, but I'd married a walker and that became our principal activity. Every Sunday we did long walks, pushing a pushchair along all the local footpaths and exploring the local streams and rivers. One of these, the Yeading Brook/River Crane, we explored from its source to its confluence

the Thames; I see this is now a designated long distance footpath. I had also introduced Bob to the YHA and our sons went hostelling from an early age, Alastair as soon as he was five, Gordon from the age of three. The YHA was not geared up to family hostelling at that time and I was active in promoting it - but that is a story that deviates from my cycling activity. As you can see, exploring the countryside by one means or another has always been one of my passions. We moved to Norfolk twenty four years ago and right from the start thought it an ideal county for cycling. Joining the Norwich local group of the YHA has added to my cycling activity in Norfolk and beyond, but it always puzzles me as to why more people don't cycle in the Norfolk countryside. Is it that they just haven't discovered its potential? With this in mind, five years ago I started the CATI group (come and try it, Norfolk Countryside Cycling Group). This continues on fortnightly rides between April and October and we have a small but regular group of enthusiasts. But trying to get more people to come and try it seems an impossibility just now. I suppose my city cycle campaigning started around ten years ago when I had a letter printed in the Evening News suggesting that, since so few pavements were being used for their intended purpose as so many pedestrians were now driving around in cars, why couldn't they become shared use with cyclists. This elicited a stupid response in which a picture was painted of little old ladies and toddler being knocked about like ninpins by killer cyclists. It was a relief to find that other cyclists had ideas similar to mine when the Norwich Cycling Campaign was started. In those early days the principal campaigning issues which would make for safer and more convenient city cycling and also, through Critical Mass rides, to demonstrate to motorists that cycling is a serious means of transport which should be catered for. Now, with so many cycling facilities in place - albeit in a very piecemeal fashion, but hopefully one day they'll join up into a comprehensive network, and greatly helped by having the National Cycling Network passing through the city - I thin the tenor of our campaigning activities needs to take a slightly different direction. This is to bring about a change of attitude, to get people to give up using their cars for every little journey and to walk or cycle when it is more sensible to do so.

A recent trip to Freiburg and Basel (reported on in the last newsletter) showed a far more rational approach to the use of transport modes, while the people I spoke to regarded our car culture with some amusement. Getting schoolchildren on their bikes, both as transport and for enjoyment and stamina building, is another issue we need to campaign for. Eventually, my formerly non-cycling husband took up cycling upon his retirement and he is now as keen on it as I am. We both ride Nigel Dean tourers and, a recent aquisition, a Brompton folder. We are CTC members and Sustrans supporters. Two years ago we joined Sustrans trailblazing ride, which took four weeks to cover the 1000 miles from Belfast to Lands End. We joined the Bristol to Plymouth leg, riding each day with up to 200 other cyclists. The friendships we made on that trip are still having repercussions. We have also cycled in France (twice), Cornwall and on various sections of Route 1 (Hull to Norwich) of the NCN. Bob very much regrets having waited so long before starting cycling, especially missing the tours with the YHA group. But he does demonstrate that it's never too late to start cycling - an excuse we've heard many times for people not to cycle. Within the last two years I have become an arthritis sufferer, which has caused cessation of my walking activities. I can still cycle though, and obviously now find cycling much easier than walking. This is something I can now advise on, from my own and other sufferer's experience. This should be promoted as it has implications for allowing cycling I pedestrianised areas by disabled people. I could go on and on, but let me end by saying that Richard, as co-ordinator and I as chairman, together with the other committee members, have a wealth of experience which can be drawn upon by our own membership as well as outside enquirers. We must go forward with optimism that things really are happening out there. When the Cycling Campaign folds it will be because it is no longer needed. Will such a time ever come?

*Phyll Hardie*

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10.30 to 2pm Norwich City College, student's  
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Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> 9.30 to 4.30, UEA freshers fair  
(LCR/square). Information only – no bikes for sale

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September and  
Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 9.30 to 4.30 Leopold Road  
(corner of Waldeck Road) weather permitting.

Phone

502188 or 621834 to check.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept Norwich Art  
School, 10.30 to 2pm. Elm Hill car park entrance,  
weather permitting.

Thursday 24, Tuesday 29 Sept, Thursday 1 and  
Tuesday 6 Oct 10.30 to 2pm at UEA square or  
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