

Norwich Cycling Campaign

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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.

THE GREAT TRAFFIC DEBATE

A telephone call from Sarah Holmes of the Evening News informed me of the forthcoming Great Traffic Debate to be featured in the paper over the next few weeks. She asked if I would write 400 words on the cyclist's point of view, to which I hastily assented - cyclists being noticed at last? Wonderful!

My article, 'What's your excuse for not cycling?', appeared on 9th February. Others, with titles like, 'We just cannot go on like this', 'Stop our fine city from choking', 'A need to boost the alternatives' and 'Welcoming city? That's a laugh', appeared then or since and articles are still appearing. The idea is to generate a big response in the form of letters from the public.

To date I've seen only a few: one from Ingo Wagenknecht promoting the reintroduction of trams in the city (as in Croydon and Sheffield), one suggesting a money-per-mile road toll (to counter the claim, I've paid my road tax and insurance; I'm going to make sure I get my money's worth'), one from Eamonn Burgess answering criticism of the new cycle lane in Westwick Street, one from John



Peacock complaining about pavement cyclists. So where are all the letters promoting cycling?

Norwich Cycling Campaign has around a hundred members. Letter writing is a very effective means of campaigning and promoting our cause, and one which more members could usefully participate in. Please don't miss this ideal opportunity handed to us. To join in The Great Traffic Debate, write to the Letters Editor, Evening News, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE or fax them on Norwich 612930.

Meanwhile, if you'd like to contribute to a 'Letters' page for this newsletter, it would help us to know your concerns, would be a means of communicating with other members and would let us on the committee know that there really is someone out there.....

Phyll Hardie

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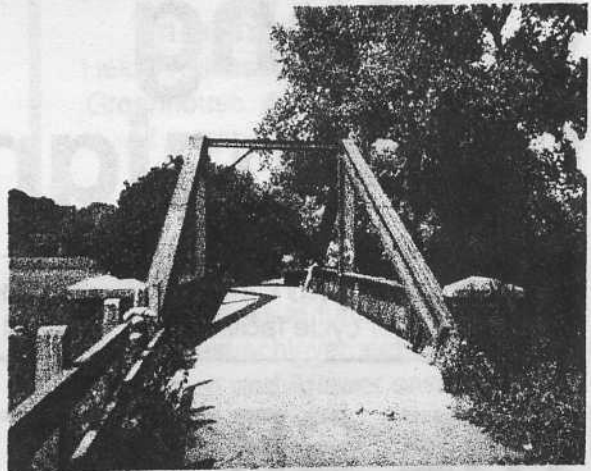
THIRD TIME LUCKY !

The new bridge, soon to replace the wooden footbridge over the Wensum near Barn Rd. roundabout, is in fact the third bridge to span the river at this point.

The original iron railway bridge (similar to the ones at Hellesdon and Drayton), would have been ideal. Unfortunately, it was not part of City Council's plans at that time to heed advice from Friends of the Earth to convert the old railway into a cycle path.

The iron bridge was demolished and replaced by the existing bridge. One of the reasons given at the time was that it was a "danger to children". The similar iron bridges at Hellesdon and Drayton were retained and have been in use ever since! Obviously there are no children at these places.

To quote our man of the millenium, "All's well that ends well" and I am sure the new bridge will be functionally and visually splendid. The fact that it will rest on the original abutments is certainly a credit to the railway engineers of long ago.



The railway bridge on Marriott's Way at Hellesdon

* Star letter *

Dear Mr Savage,

On Saturday 30th January, I, along with about 40 other cyclists, took to the streets of Norwich to assert our right to cycle around the historic city centre, without being intimidated by motor vehicles. If you have felt vulnerable as a lone cyclist, then I can heartily recommend joining a Critical Mass ride to experience the security of being with a large number of other cyclists.

While there is an anti-car element, I do not subscribe to that view being at times a cyclist, a pedestrian, a car driver and a bus user, depending on the type of journey.

After all, what sensible person would choose to take a car into the city on a Saturday afternoon, anyway?

These rides will take place on the last Saturday of each month, starting outside St. Peter Mancroft at 2pm. The next one is on March 27th and I'll be there again!

Yours sincerely,

Rhoda Long

Write to us !

Please let us know what you think of this newsletter. It does take a lot of time and effort to compile, but that's wasted if it's not what you want!

We also need your letters and articles for the June newsletter. Also, press cuttings (originals, please) or photos. In fact, anything you think will be of interest to Norwich cyclists.

Please keep your articles concise and, if you can, put the file on disk (in ASCII or TXT format if possible). If you haven't got access to a PC, a clearly typed or handwritten sheet will be great!

Or, if you have interesting snippets of information, give me a call on 01603 612880. Closing date for items for the June newsletter is Monday 10th May 1999.

Mike Savage
Editor



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

E&OE

Matthew Williams puts his spoke in

Marriott's Way update

Now, before we start, let's get one thing straight. Hands up those who've heard of a marriott? You're presumably one of the people who refer to it as THE Marriott's Way. It's actually called plain Marriott's Way, after a bloke called Marriott who built the original railway line (plenty of historical background available if you're into that sort of thing ...).

The good news - (a) The wonderful replacement structure for the crumbling (?) timber footbridge towards the city end of the route is this very moment being fabricated (elsewhere) and will soon be installed! You'll like it.

(b) Our days of hanging around trying to get across the busy Fakenham Road where the path crosses it at Drayton will soon be over.... Very soon we're getting a sparkling new Pegasus! A what? Well, you've heard of a pelican, a zebra, a puffin and a toucan? This is a pegasus, a signal controlled crossing designed for shared use by horses. (It's to do with where the buttons are, think about it).

The not so good news (but it may still turn out OK) - the crucial section of the path between Costessey and Drayton was always going to be resurfaced as a matter of urgency by the County Council out of their transportation budget, so that lots of people in Thorpe Marriott, Taverham, Drayton and Costessey can regularly bike right into the city centre on a traffic-free path. Unfortunately, less than generous Government funding for this year's Norwich Package bid has meant that the scheme has once again been put on the reserve list by officers - a worrying lack of commitment on the County's part for their share in a flagship scheme which others have been investing in so heavily. Thankfully, Sustrans (as well as Norwich Cycling Campaign) have been campaigning hard to get the project back up the priorities list. Have we succeeded? Watch this space!

Back to the grammatical lecturing. Hands up those who've heard of a norwich? You're presumably one of the people who refer to us as THE Norwich Cycling Campaign ... (sorry, Richard).

Cyclists are invisible!

That isn't just the excuse of reckless motorists, but it's also a general principle to be borne in mind when trying to persuade councillors or officers of the need for some facility. Often such people are simply not



aware of the number of people on bikes who may already be using a route and such notables will certainly have great difficulty in appreciating how modest investment in a sensibly designed scheme will further increase the usage. Their faulty perception may have arisen because the street scene is so often dominated by slow-moving motor cars, a mode which statistically is contributing a lot less to the transportation equation (in terms of numbers of people passing a given point) than might at first be thought. Another reason why cyclists are invisible on main roads is that they've actually found some other quieter route to avoid the cars!

One of the nice things about a fresh fall of snow (apart from its paralysing effect on car commuters) is that you can see the tracks of all the cyclists who have used off-road paths and links. When I can, I will photograph such tracks on frosty mornings and keep these pictures for later as a reminder of the surprising number of users who actually take advantage of some of these facilities - often a lot more than you might think and a great encouragement to those of us who may have fought long and hard to get a particular track or link.

As expected, there is already some griping from certain quarters about the new contra-flow cycle lane on Westwick Street, providing a most useful route between Coslany Street and the St Benedicts/Dereham Road area. Have you tried it yet? At the time of writing, all it needs is the red surfacing treatment. And, there will be further improvements once the St. Benedicts area scheme is implemented in the near future. The complaints, needless to say by non-cyclists, are on the basis that the new facility is a waste of money and will not be used. You know and I know that this is not the case, but it would be nice to have a gentle fall of snow there in the near future to be able to prove it!

Where's our parking gorn?

Perish the thought that we're saying the same thing that motorists in the area are asking... Not that the original bike racks to the side of C&A were our favourite place to lock our bikes, but it would be rather nice to have something back to replace all the racks which disappeared at the time of the repaving last year. Those original wheel-grabbers were, by the way, generously funded by Friends of the Earth many years ago. Well, the City Council has told us that new Sheffield stands will be installed 'in due course' (an ominous phrase). One would hope that means before the new library is finished, or we'll just go and use all that lovely cycle parking outside the Millennium building, out of spite!

