

CAMPAIGN

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This newsletter is published by NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN, which 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.

Get into the festive spirit !



The run up to Christmas will, this year, see gridlock the likes of which Norwich has never seen before - so beware cyclists! As you breeze along the inside lane passing hundreds of frustrated motorists, you are quite likely to become a victim of road rage!

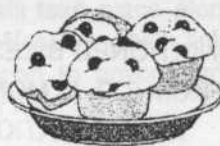
Don't put a foot or wheel wrong and always be ready to fend off any irate out of control motorist with your pump!

Don't be tempted to ride on the footpath - remember a lot of the pedestrians will have spent hours queuing for a parking space for their cars and will be in no mood to put up with errant cyclists.

On a brighter note, our AGM this year will be at St. Andrews Tavern on Wednesday 15th December. Please arrive by 7.30pm, so we can start the official business at 7.45pm sharp. This will include the election of committee members for the forthcoming year. Our speaker, Roger Hopkinson, will then address the subject of cycle parking. As previous years, there will be a 'bring-and-share' buffet, so if you can bring some food to share, please let me know beforehand.

See you all there !

Mike Savage
Editor



Marriott's Way Closure

The city end of Marriott's Way from the Dolphin Bridge to Barn Road roundabout is closed until February 2000.

The wooden foot bridge crossing the Wensum has already been removed and is to be replaced with a steel bridge designed to give a full width flat crossing. I understand the new bridge is also designed to be quite an architectural feature and is due to be craned into position fairly soon.

Unfortunately, during the closure the alternative route via the Dolphin, Heigham Street and Barker Street is very busy with fast moving traffic and parked vehicles all over the place - so take care.

'Bike Best'

'Bike Best' has opened a small workshop in Mountergate manufacturing a completely new form of cycle best described as a tandem hybrid. Instead of the customary 'stoker' or passenger on the rear of the tandem the machine has a low slung cradle which can carry either goods in a container or a child in a secure backward facing seat. Check it out for yourself - for details or a test ride, ring 'Bike Best' on 01603 405918.

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CYCLE RECYCLE

CHRISTMAS BIKE SALE



At the corner of Waldeck Road / Leopold Road

Saturday 11th December

9.30 - 3.00

10% off all normal prices

RECONDITIONED BIKES FOR ALL THE FAMILY
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Chairman's chat



Three articles which all appeared in the Daily Telegraph during one weekend seem to answer each other's questions.

'Why is everybody losing their cool?' was the question posed by one, which gave examples of road and air rage, fights in hospitals and supermarkets, even on the golf course. The average speed in London, we're told, is 10mph, 2mph slower than in 1945. A 1995 AA study reported that 90% of Britain's drivers claimed to have experienced 'road rage' incidents in the previous year - this has become a blanket term for everything from dangerous driving to bad manners.

David Lewis, a stress management psychologist, identifies components to outbreaks of road rage: (i) how frustrated and angry driver feels before even getting into the car; (ii) driving conditions e.g. traffic congestion; (iii) how the behaviour of other road users is interpreted; feeling safe within their own little cocoons, drivers register disapproval of others' behaviour in ways they would never do elsewhere.

Clinical psychologist, Oliver James, believes we as a nation, though richer than were 50 years ago, are a lot unhappier. We are infected with feelings of unease, insecurity and disenchantment, expressed as depression and aggression. Since 1950, we have moved from a collectivist society to an individualist one in which people are judged not by who they are but by what they achieve - a society of 'winners and losers'. One consequence is that we tend to put ourselves before others, barging them out of the way to put ourselves first.

'The Roads to Nowhere' was a diatribe against John Prescott's transport policy, saying that he advocates 'millions more of us happily pottering about on bikes' while 'the car has transformed one of the basic conditions of life We like the independence it confers, the choice the privacy, preferring traffic jams to the enforced unpleasant intimacy with our fellow citizens in buses'.

'Now go out and buy a sports car' castigated traffic planners: 'Rather than making roads easier to use, planners conspire to make driving as unpleasant and time-consuming as possible, in the hope we'll give up our cars and take the bus instead'. Referring to Flora Robson's 'Lark Rise to Candleford', in which the impact of bicycles on the villagers a century ago is described - 'For the first time it was possible for everyone, not just the rich, to travel and extend their horizons. If bicycles had this effect, how much more liberating are cars? They allow freedom of movement for everyone and, for women, independence - true symbols of democracy'.

The car might give us independence (hardly freedom of movement) but it hasn't increased our happiness and community spirit. Instead we have become a more isolationist and self-centred society, affecting our ability to act as rational social beings. When will the media realise, and advocate, the bicycle as a serious mode of transport, likewise giving freedom and independence but lots more, such as fresh air and exercise, improvement in mood and energy levels..... Meanwhile, we can only hope that, at some time in the future, the government will actually do something rather than just talk about it.

Phyll Hardie

RIDE the NET in 2000

The Hull to Harwich Festival on Sunday 25 June 2000 will be the east of England's contribution to RIDEtheNET, the millennium event of the National Cycle Network. The Festival will take place along Route 1 of the National Cycle Network which links Inverness to Dover and be open to anyone and everyone, whether they cycle or not.

Phyll Hardie and Christine Wilson recently met Graham Elliott, Sustrans' Regional Event Manager, who is extremely keen to set up zones with a 'co-ordinator' for each. Phyll and Christine are busy contacting people between Loddon and Burnham Market, but would like to hear from anyone who

would take on a chunk of this route or of the route either side of it. The publicity for this event, and the events of the week preceding 25 June, will be enormous and co-ordination will be local, regional and national.

Will you help make this east of England event a huge success? Can you help co-ordinate the programme? If so, please get in touch with Christine Wilson (01603 451015, e:mail ccwilson@waitrose.com), Phyll Hardie (01603 435547) or Graham Elliott (01502 714661, e:mail barsham@compuserve.com). Further info will appear in our March newsletter and can also be found on www.ridethenet.co.uk

The guru's den

On a cold wet evening on 4th October, a dozen or so members made their way to a bleak corner of Rackheath Industrial Estate, by invitation of the Norwich's own celebrated international bike designer, Mike Burrows.

Most attendees rode out from the city, and a few of us also had the pleasure of making the return journey in the company of the great man (he lives in Thorpe St Andrew) who was riding one of his carbon fibre creations.

It was indeed a fascinating evening listening to Mike's story and views about bicycle design, all delivered in his usual uncompromising style. He is the definitive expert on bike technology, but also has his views on the importance (or otherwise) of design for the mass market, perhaps summarised by the expression 'horses for courses'.

He allowed us to look over his two storey unit - huge ancient lathes (one a year older than Mike himself), power presses and drills downstairs, and a large collection of original bikes hung up around his drawing board and desk upstairs. A Sinclair Zike nestling against a 'Lotus' bike emblazoned with Harrods livery! Metal swarf everywhere, the sign of an active engineering operation, because although Mike is officially a designer, he is an intensely practical engineer and can only do the job by actually making the things he sketches.



Mike speaks to his audience in the workshop

Mike was born in the 1940s and grew up in Shipdham where his father was a skilled cabinet maker. His flare for machines led him to making packaging machinery and the genes have also been passed onto his son who is now doing advanced engineering at university. Mike has not always been mad on bikes - originally it was motor sport - and he took up cycling fairly late, inevitably soon starting to question the ubiquitous traditional upright 'safety' design of all post-war bikes. In

the 1980s he developed his amazing recumbent trike, the Speedy. Some members may remember early versions being entered for the annual 'Gasp Up Gas Hill' races and the fully fared version has often been seen whizzing around the Norfolk lanes. After the success with the Lotus Superbike with Chris Boardman winning the Olympic Gold in the early 1990s, Mike cut free and left his successful packaging machinery company to his business partner and was headhunted by Giant Cycles of Taiwan, the largest bike manufacturer in the world. He is now paid an annual retainer to design new bicycle technology for them.

Clearly, this new existence has suited him down to the ground, although only a small fraction of his ideas have eventually found their way into production, for commercial and cultural reasons which he says are sometimes hard to fathom. He has to travel to Giant's European base in The Netherlands fairly frequently as well as Taiwan, but he is allowed to carry on his practice in sleepy Norfolk, and has developed numerous innovations. Not just monocoque bikes, but new suspension systems, disc braking (he predicts we'll all have them soon), recumbent bikes and even an aluminium a folder which will shortly be coming into production. Giant's linkup with the ONCE racing team means he gets to mix with some of the Tour de France greats like Abraham Olano, riders who are virtually worshipped in Spain and elsewhere.

Mike fielded probing questions from the more knowledgeable of his audience and rattled through with obvious enthusiasm the principles of a new elegant double suspension system (unusually not one of his!) which he claims is about to cause yet another revolution in bike design.

After two hours had passed in a trice, I proposed the vote of thanks for a most generous offering of an evening by a busy man - but not before Mike gave a plug for his new book on bike design, being published by Open Road (as in Bycle magazine) and hopefully in the shops for Christmas. So if you missed this unique Norwich Cycling Campaign opportunity, you know where to get yourself genned up!

Matthew Williams

Norwich 100km ride

Congratulations to all those who took part in the Norwich 100km sponsored ride in September. The event was designed to raise funds for Norwich Cycling Campaign and The Greenhouse Trust. Special thanks go to George Prior, Rob Conway, all the children who completed the 33km circuit and to everybody involved in the organisation of the event. Thanks also to the landlord of Lakenham Cock PH for use of the car park.

The first person to complete 100km was Andy Mitchell, who had arrived back and was in the pub before 2pm!

