

NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN Newsletter 40

March - May 2001

50p where sold—free to members

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.



Marriott's Way Surface

Soon after the surfacing of Marriott's Way between Hellesdon and Drayton was completed, (see last newsletter), I decided to try out it's suitability for commuters.

Following a period of very high rainfall I experienced no difficulties on a bike with narrow road tyres and managed to keep up a steady speed all the way from Hellesdon to Drayton. I understand something is going to be done about the difficult access ramp at the Drayton end.

The big question is, will the many horses using this section of the path churn up the surface?

Mike Savage



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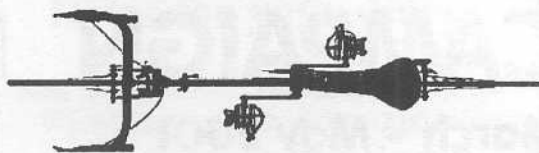
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Editor's Info....

By Mike Savage

COLNEY LANE

It has finally been decided, when the new hospital is built, to close Colney Lane to all but essential vehicles e.g. ambulances and buses, on the section between Cringleford and the hospital. One of the three bus routes already proposed will run between the hospital and the city via Colney Lane and Newmarket Rd. Lifting bollards will control the traffic.

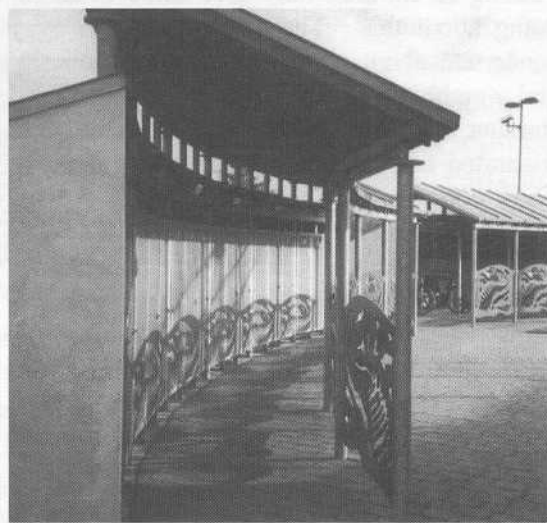
What about cyclists? Fast moving ambulances, buses and bikes are not really compatible on what is at present a narrow, fast stretch of country lane. Let's hope the planners come up with something sensible - preferably a separate cycle track!



WENSUM BRIDGES

Two new foot/cycle bridges are to be built across the Wensum between Foundry Bridge and Carrow Bridge. Work will start soon on the first bridge which crosses the river near Wensum Lodge and will take about a year to complete. The other bridge will cross the river at St. Anne's Wharf but construction is delayed.

These two bridges will eventually provide cyclists with alternative routes to Thorpe Station and the various facilities at Riverside, including the new swimming pool due to be built near Carrow Bridge.



CAMBRIDGE FIRST

No! These are not swimming pool cubicles, they are the smart new cycle lockers at Cambridge's Madingley Rd park-and-ride facility. For £10 a month commuters who live too far out to cycle all the way to work can leave their bikes in their own dedicated locker, park their cars free, and cycle the remaining distance to work.

Could Norwich adopt this system? Only if the charging system were changed, in Norwich you must have a car park ticket to use the bus whereas in Cambridge the parking is free and everybody buys a bus ticket. Also there must be a safe cycle route from the park-and-ride into the city. This is not the case in Norwich.

Chairman's Chat

By Phyll Hardie

Although it may sometimes seem as if we're hitting our heads against a brick wall, there is evidence of a more positive perception of cycling as being a more healthy and congestion-solving option than the private car. The problem is to get this perception into real action

Talking to children may give some ideas for going about this. They themselves are very concerned about reports of increased obesity and weight problems, and loss of fitness and stamina, among school children, but feel frustrated at how little they can do about it. They consider that the adults in their lives should be doing far more.

'We did a survey at our school and this showed that a high percentage of children felt that schools don't do enough to keep us healthy. The same survey found that 66% of children come to school by car but 78% would come by bike if they had the opportunity. Our school provides spaces for 20 bikes to be left - for 500 children! We think cycling could be encouraged by lots of people - our parents, schools, the local council and the government.

Our school used to have a cycling club but it stopped. We'd like to see it back again.' (Pupils at Robert Kett Middle School, Wymondham)

As encouragement for children to cycle, pupils at St Thomas More Middle School, Norwich, suggested: seeing more teachers cycling; parents cycling to school with their children; on-going cycle training starting at a younger age; and the provision of special places for cycle fun - they are impressed with the new skate boarding facility at the bus station and would like to see something similar for cycling - a velodrome perhaps! They reckoned their parents are too ready to give lifts whenever they want to go anywhere, but would welcome their being more willing to buy them decent bikes. The Robert Kett

pupils suggested that removing VAT from the price of new bicycles would encourage this.

So, it looks as if it is the adults we need to target. Surprisingly, it was the fuel protests last September which enhanced the bicycle as a desirable item. Suddenly, if temporarily, people realised how reliant we'd become on an uninterrupted supply of fuel oil for all aspects of life, for getting to work, for business, for food supplies. This reliance on a single commodity is unwise, if not downright dangerous. A far more common sense attitude needs to be taken through diversification, with cycling becoming the normal and accepted method of personal transport for all shorter journeys.

To break our reliance on the private car, the government could promote policies directed towards keeping localised services - Post Offices, banks, shops, schools, bus services, railway stations - and could encourage more cycling through publicity campaigns. This could include media attention being directed towards cycling. Currently we have the wonders of the car paraded before our eyes every time we switch on the TV or open the colour supplement of a national newspaper. How are our prospective councillors and MPs going to encourage more cycling? In the run up to this year's elections it would be an idea to find out. (Let us know their responses!)

We ourselves promote cycling every time we take to the road on our bikes, particularly if we behave in a manner which minimises antagonism from other road users. Acknowledgement of a kindly or courteous action (and there are plenty of these) puts cyclists in a friendly light and helps to promote our preferred mode of transport. Meanwhile, our targeting of schools, parents and teachers, to promote the health aspects of cycling for children, must go on.....

