

NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN Newsletter 42

September - November 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.



When have you seen 7 bikes folded in a matter of seconds? The 2001 Lord Mayors Procession was just such an occasion when Norwich Cycling Campaign members, family and friends donned Norwich Cycling Campaign T-shirts and took to the streets. For those of us on folding bikes, it took us a little while to get the folding of bikes down to a fine art but we soon became tuned into Rob Conway's whistle - 1st blast = stop and fold, 2nd blast = pick up bike and walk, 3rd blast = stop and unfold, 4th blast = cycle away!

The 7 folding bikes were accompanied by Rob Conway (with whistle and a selection of trailers, extensions and seats for the youngest family members, Bill Fisher with his young grandson Sebastian and Matthew Williams doing a class act of being a frustrated cyclist with a wooden frame representing the space a car occupies.

Good fun was had by all as you can see by the pictures.



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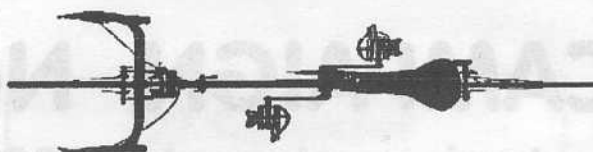
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Editor's Info....

By Mike Savage

TRAFFIC FREE DAY

On September 22nd (Traffic Free Day) Queen St. will be closed to traffic. Why Queen St. - could there be an ulterior motive? The closure will complete a continuous pedestrianised link from the Market to Tombland and the cathedral. Perhaps the city fathers have permanent closure in mind? Would such a scheme exclude cyclists.

Now's the time to start asking questions!

POWER ASSISTED BIKES

These machines are increasing in numbers and have the big advantage of not requiring road tax or insurance. Personally I think it's essential to have third party and theft insurance for any bicycle, power assisted or not! The C.T.C. welcomes owners of these machines and provides third party insurance and legal aid as part of their membership.

For more info ring 01483 417217.



SOUTHERN BYPASS BRIDGE

What a pity it was that when the bypass bridge was built better facilities were not provided for cyclists! Cyclists can of course ride on the bypass but few dare to do so. 50 ton lorries doing 50 m.p.h. + are hardly an encouragement! The existing path from Whitlingham Lane to Thorpe is clearly a footpath. I would not consider riding across the bridge, particularly against the traffic. Better access to Griffin Lane, better facilities at the roundabout, and surface improvements to Whitlingham lane would certainly be a great improvement to what is, after all, the only river crossing between Carrow Bridge and Reedham. The path across the actual bridge is more of a problem to which it's difficult to see a solution.

TECNOTIP

If you haven't used your lights for a while, now's the time to check out the batteries. If you're one of the unlucky ones the old batteries will have leaked and damaged the lights. Prevention is better than cure! Always remove batteries from appliances if they are not going to be used for a while and always buy good quality "leakproof" alkalines. Also bear in mind that batteries do have a sell-by date so it's best to get them from a shop with a high turnover.

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Chairman's Chat

By Phyll Hardie

Christine (Wilson) and I have just returned to 'Car-land' after spending three weeks on the Rhine cycle route from Konstanz to Koln, including some train and boat assistance. We took the opportunity to look round some towns and cities along the way, including Koblenz, one of Norwich's twin towns.

Apart from the excessive heat, more than 30C most days with some spectacular thunder storms, the most impressive feature was the number of cyclists everywhere. The Rhine route is obviously very popular - we'd be pleased to see just half the number using our Route 1 - with cyclists riding all manner of machines, many pulling trailers with children or gear. The surface is mainly good - tarmac, smooth brickweave or fine gravel.

The Swiss and German towns we passed through featured extensive pedestrianised areas with a wide choice of pavement cafes and restaurants shaded by trees and very large umbrellas. They were doing brisk trade, as were the shops with goods displayed outside. There were cycle parking facilities everywhere, catering for the many cycling shoppers who of course are allowed the same right of thoroughfare as the pedestrians. We were impressed with the large number of 'home zones' - cars allowed through at no more than walking pace while stopping for longer than 3 minutes incurs the possibility of an on-the-spot fine. All residential streets have 30kph (20mph) speed limits. On the road cyclists have priority over motorists by means of coloured lanes across junctions and forecourts. Our system in which cyclists are expected to 'give way' at every point (including a field entrance in Thorpe St Andrew!) is seen as laughable by Europeans, as is our obsession with the car.

How has this state of affairs been allowed to develop here? Christine and I discussed this long and hard and decided it is related to our class-ridden society, in which one's status can be interpreted by the type of transport one uses,

while a country with a high proportion of car users is seen as 'developed' and 'affluent'. It also shows the strength of the road lobby in this country, with insidious effects.

The Europeans are far more practical and use the form of transport most suited to their particular need, without any 'image' problem. They also appear far more caring of their environment and of others. Throughout the whole 533km (333mile) ride we saw no sign of vandalism or fear of theft, though there was graffiti in the cities. Where cyclists and pedestrians mingled each respected the others' presence.

As cycle campaigners we attend meetings to try and find solutions to our traffic problems while all the time those solutions can be seen just across the Channel. Britain aspires to be part of Europe but not of its transport solutions. For one thing, it could use its railways and rivers far more efficiently for the transport of freight, as we saw them used in Germany. Boat transport on the lower Rhine was like that on the Broads at the height of the season.

What can we do about it? One idea is to charter a European Bike Bus - out of season when normally laid up - to take a selected group of city and county councillors and others, and their bikes to enable first hand experience, to see and try these solutions for themselves. They'd find that pedestrianised town centres are certainly not 'dead'. Indeed, closing a street to cars is probably the best way to revive its fortunes. So how about closing Magdalen Street, which appears to be in need of revival, along with Tombland which feeds it? European Car-free Day on 22nd September would have been an ideal opportunity to try it, but no, we're far too nervous of upsetting motorists and unconvinced traders.

NEW CYCLING OFFICER

Tim Jarvis has been appointed as Norfolk County Council's new Cycling Officer.

My friend in the East Kent Cycling Campaign informed me of a scheme used by a firm to encourage its employees to commute by bike. Pfizer, the chemical company, at its Sandwich works charges employees £2 a day to park their cars on its premises while paying out the same amount to those who commute by bike. At its Surrey branch, where land values are higher, the fee / payout is £5 a day. What an excellent idea! As long as there are more car commuters than cyclists, the firm makes a profit, hopefully a diminishing one as the message gets through. This idea could be used here, starting with the County and City Councils acting as flagships.

*

It was interesting to see cycling featured in one of this summer's GCSE English papers (Northern Examinations & Assessment Board). Two items were included for candidates to compare - purpose, language used, uses of facts and opinions, etc - then write something using argument, persuasion, instruction. The items were the CTC's Bike for Your Life leaflet and an article from The Times, 'Bike-friendly? It's all uphill'. The latter concerned me. Speaking of Lycra loonies, car doors flung open contemptuously, bike lanes spiked with broken glass and blocked with parked vehicles, foul fumes, fines for pavement cyclists, and so on, it was not an encouragement to cycle. Couldn't the exam board find something more realistic and positive to use? My teacher friend who gave me the paper told me that young people do not cycle as it is not considered 'cool'. This article certainly won't alter that perception.

*

The Cycling Campaign Network (CCN), to which we are affiliated, has launched the Campaign for High Standards. This calls upon groups such as ours not to endorse low standards of provision. It advocates the following minimum criteria:

at least 2m of unencroached space for cyclists;
maximum surveillance angle of 90 degrees (cyclists should not be required to have eyes in the backs of their heads);
minimum radius of 6m on curves;
centre-lines on 2-way paths (an arrow at the start of such paths would be useful, showing that in Britain we ride on the left);

good surfaces, with all joints flush;
designs compatible with the Highway Code.

In view of this a letter was sent to Councillor Harry Watson, on behalf of the Cycling Campaign, complaining about the lack of available - vacant - cycle parking in the city centre. Shopping by bike must be becoming more popular but will not be encouraged if shoppers find it increasingly difficult to park their bikes securely.

Of course the letter landed straightaway on the desk of our hard-working friend, cycling officer Tim Mellors, to provide a response. We could have written directly to Tim, who is always mindful of our concerns. But involving councillors, who have the power to vote on where any available money is spent, does put ideas into their heads. As cycle campaigners we should not be slow in informing our elected councillors and MPs what is needed to make cycling a more attractive option.

*

'The trouble is.....' How many times have you heard excuses starting with this when you suggested to non-cyclists that they could get the bike out now and again? One excuse they come up with is that cycling takes longer and they haven't got the time. This perception is not always accurate, particularly in a congested city centre. Our cycling paramedic, Iain Colquhoun, has proved this. In his year on the job he has saved at least 12 lives with his speedy responses and assisted at many more emergencies in a fraction of the time that a motor ambulance would have taken. Press reports on this, as well as our Commuter Challenge, the trial run of which was reported on in our last Newsletter and which we hope will go ahead in September, help to impart the knowledge that cycling can indeed be a speedier option.

Stay safe this autumn.

Phyll Hardie

In the Netherlands the equivalent of £1.60 per person is spent on traffic calming on residential streets each year.

In Britain we spend less than 10p per person per year.

Transport 2000

More mutterings

From Matthew Williams

THEATRE STREET CROSSING

Another first for Norwich. The city has had some dubious national publicity of late with the shortest yellow lines in civilisation (to say nothing of dangerous conker trees and window boxes), but here is our chance to re-establish Norwich's reputation for pioneering innovation in transport infrastructure. It should be jolly good, but what do we call it? You'll find it crossing the road at Theatre Street, right in line with our hard-won cycle link from Bethel Street (I.e. the link across the front of the forum). It had to be invented

because you can't officially cycle across a zebra crossing. What we've got the engineers to devise is a zebra that you cycle next to, in order to access and egress the cycle route.

So ... as a pelican is to a toucan, a zebra is to a _____ (fill in on the dotted line).

At the time of writing it isn't quite ready to use, and we'll have to wait and see just how well it works. But in the meantime, I think I'm going to call it an aardvark (because it was aardvark getting it). Whatever, some motorists will doubtless regard it as a bit of a pig

STOP PRESS

The aardvark crossing is appearing, but it seems the City Council are inviting ridicule because the new belisha beacon has been mounted plumb in the centre of what is meant to be the cycle path next to the zebra bit. We're alerting them to this defect (it's not like that on the design drawings) and will see what happens before going public...



Aardvark under construction.

PARK LANE CELL TRAFFIC CALMING

The reaction from bicycle users to the recent appearance of a veritable undulation of traffic calming measures throughout the cell is so far fairly favourable. We will wait to see whether there is an increase in the sales of suspension bikes, as well as the desired decrease in accidents.

Cyclists in anoraks will no doubt have already noticed that hardly any two sets of ramps are the same, and some even have special cycle bypasses! Unfortunately, as we rather predicted in the previous newsletter, the cycle bypass around the ramp half-way down Mill Hill Road seems to be

permanently blocked by parked cars. It may be that this particular ramp isn't finished yet, and perhaps the access will be kept clear by some special item of street furniture such as a parking meter wearing a mortar-board.

It's a shame that more wasn't done during the works in the Park Lane Cell to improve the poor state of the road surface in places. Cyclists who have become used to negotiating the violently uneven carriageway at the junction of Whitehall Road and Portersfield Road must be left wondering why the City Council bothered installing a very modest ramp just a few yards further on. Maybe just for comfort.

MORE RESPONSES TO CUNNING PLANS

Still the strategies and plans keep coming. And still we naively cobble our responses and send them back. The last couple of months have seen the South-West Sector Study and the Deposit Version of the Draft Norwich Local Plan. Rivetting stuff.

The County Council's South-West Sector Study could be subtitled 'Oh dear, we've gone and allowed massive development at Colney and there's nothing we can do to avoid transport chaos'. Alternatively, the front cover could simply reproduce the famous painting by Edward Munch 'The Scream'.

In short, the study is a pretty feeble attempt to mitigate some of the severe effects of traffic growth in that part of the city as the direct result of allowing out-of-town developments on cheap inaccessible land that will inevitably be almost entirely car-dependent, no matter what measures were to be taken to encourage alternatives. That's more-or-less what our response is, anyway, because sustainable the proposals aren't. And sorry to be so negative, but it would seem the chances of the administration at Norfolk County Council doing anything to seriously encourage utility cycling just now are marginally less than those of Norwich City winning the Premiership.

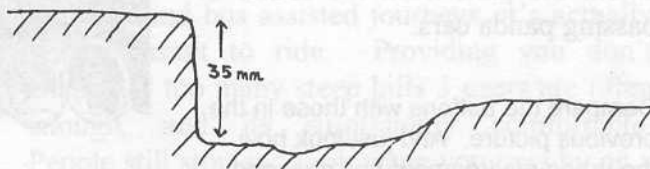
Congestion on Earlham Road? You ain't seen nothing yet!

WYMER STREET OUT IN FRONT

Forget about short double yellow lines - what about non-flush dropped kerbs? On cycle paths that is. Norwich Cycling Campaign has a vast collection of bumpy dropped kerbs, almost all of them a testament to the designers of cycle paths not being familiar with what most riders of bicycles actually need - a smooth surface (among other things). This is not only a matter of comfort but in many cases a question of safety, especially in wet conditions when turning.

The newest to be added to the collection is the extremely hazardous start of the new section path off Sandy Lane near Homebase. We've urgently requested the dropped kerb (complete with 20mm upstand) should be re-laid before there is an accident.

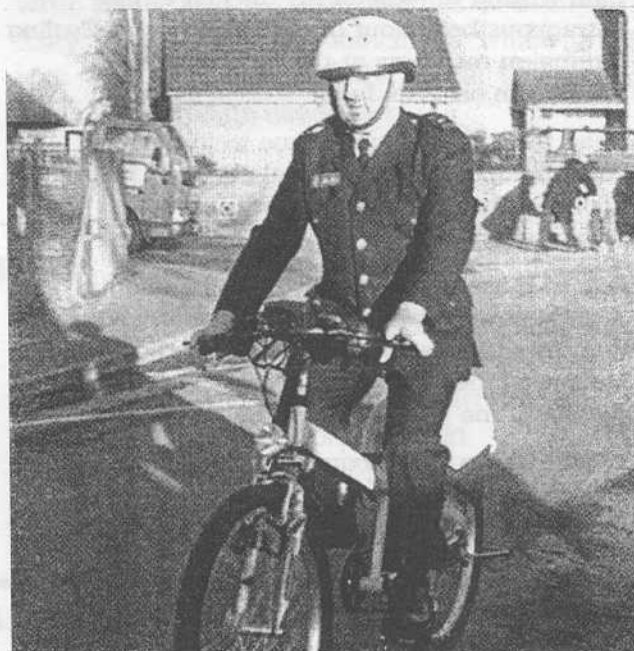
But this doesn't come close to challenging out long-standing front runner for the 'cracked eggs in pannier' prize - it's the access to Duoro Place at the east end of Wymer Street (near Dereham Road). Take a look at the scale profile below and wince!



Scale profile of dropped kerb at Wymer Street, complete with 35mm upstand.

HELLO, HELLO, WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?

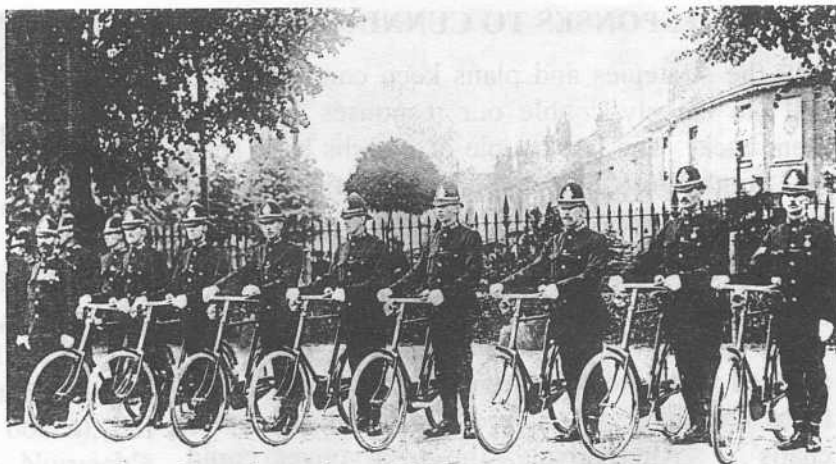
Thanks to those readers who expressed their appreciation of the old photographs of Norwich in the last issue. There are hundreds more here those came from (we'll aim to feature some more in future editions), but we thought you might like to get bang up-to-date and have a sneak preview of the new form of transport under development for police operations in the city in the twenty-first century. Fantastic for getting around the streets of our community. Quick, efficient, a deterrent to criminals stuck in traffic in their Ford Sierras. It's called ... a BIKE, and our picture of the secret weapon was taken at an unspecified location.



Not a panda in sight. Not sure what's happened to the policeman's helmet, though.

Our other picture (showing eight unidentified vehicular contraptions, presumed obsolete) was taken in 1914 Chapelfield Gardens looking towards Vauxhall Street. This was before the days of the big grassy mound which evidently had to be built in the mid twentieth century to shield the park from the sound of passing panda cars.

Compare the buttons with those in the previous picture. And just look how the urban environment has changed since 1914.



Bike coming home?

Matthew on holiday in Yorkshire

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Letters Editor,

I am writing to register my disgust at the outrageous behaviour of certain Norwich Cycling Campaign members at the Lord Mayors Procession on 14th July.

I had the extreme misfortune to find myself stuck behind the noisy pedal-powered mob all sporting obscene tee-shirts bearing your organisation's logo.

One of these people persisted in blowing a whistle at intervals, upon which nearly all of the wretches proceeded to dismount and collapse their machines into a ridiculously small size. For the life of me I cannot see why.

What has the world come to when a law-abiding citizen like myself cannot motor peacefully through the city on the road he has paid for,

without being held up by anarchists on bicycles? I believe the deliberate obstruction of my new Mini (a fine machine) is indicative of a total disregard for human rights and freedom. These people are scum, and I would like to see them transported forthwith.

Yours,
A Ghost



NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please make a note of Norwich Cycling Campaign's new number

07812 904652



MEMBERS AND THEIR MACHINES

Richard Bearman

Ever since Matthew wrote about his 'Diplomat' in Newsletter 37, I thought that's a good idea, I should write about my bike(s). So here goes.

My reliable 'rusty but trusty' town bike is a red Puch 5 speed - but I pronounce it "puke" just to annoy Nigel - which I bought new when I was 21, quite a number of years ago, but who's counting! Over the years I've replaced both tyres more than once, both wheels, several chains and a couple of blocks as well. I've also sold it once, but the friend who bought it didn't like it so I bought it back again!

It's main assets for city riding are that its fairly quick - ahead of the traffic light queue, fairly narrow - for those small between traffic gaps, and quite likely to be still locked to the cycle rack when I get back from the shops! I admit that maintenance is not my priority, if "it ain't broke don't fix it" is my motto. I very much prefer cycling my bicycle to tinkering with it, although I can mend punctures if pressed. The bike has had various child seats and a trailer attached over the years but is now unencumbered by these. Essential though is a bell, and light fittings. Recently I replaced the mudguards, with a perfectly good pair from Cycle Recycle, as the old ones were getting full of rust holes, so now I don't get so wet in the rain.

If I want to take panniers of shopping, or a trailer with various gardening tools, I use my other bike a Falcon Stealth 15 speed, rather more sturdy

machine and harder to ride. But then most of my journeys only involve a short trip in and around Norwich. I also own a Brompton 3 speed, which the more I ride the more I like. Apart from all the obvious convenience of folding up for train and bus assisted journeys, it's actually very pleasant to ride. Providing you don't encounter too many steep hills 3 gears are often enough, and its surprisingly comfortable. People still stop and look when you pass by on a Brompton - is it that combination of small wheels and a tall rider? or is it just that even now they are still a rare sight in Norwich? Or is it my attire they are looking at? Whatever the reason the Brompton is clearly a head turner, and capable of transporting one a very respectable distance, as I discovered on my visit to the Isle of Wight as reported in the last newsletter.

I should think that at least three bikes are the minimum for a daily cyclist, that way you always have a choice of transport whatever the length or needs of your journey. I guess I should also admit to owning a car!! but that usually stays in the garage, mainly because its easier and quicker to get out the bike and cycle. Hopefully other members will feel inspired to write about their favourite bicycles, or even their daily route to work/school/shops which is an idea used very successfully in the Cambridge Cycling Campaign newsletter.

Richard Bearman

INTERESTING THINGS FOR SALE

RAYLEIGH DYNATECH 625.

Bonded titanium frame (60cm), metallic purple. Mavic rims, 16-speed groupset. Hardly ridden. Genuine reason for sale. £300 o.n.o.

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2-WHEEL TRAILER with mounted box-type 12mm exterior grade plywood container size 800Lx500Wx400D. Very strong, welded steel frame construction.

Complete with steel tow-bar and universal clamping hitch. As new. Price - £60 o.n.o. Tony Johnson 01603 702040.

BROMPTON 3-speed. 10 years old, little used.. £250 o.n.o.

Peter Howe 01603 784620.

A FAVOURITE RIDE

Rachael Wix

I'd like to share one of my favourite cycle routes with you. Its around 13 miles one way and takes me along some lovely quiet roads around Coltishall and Aylsham with a well deserved pot of tea and cake at Blickling Hall to look forward to! The basic route is sketched out below - you'll need to refer to the OS Landranger map no. 133 for most details - the track round the edge of Coltishall Airfield is accessible by bike.

The highlights for me are:

passing the aeroplane spotters around Coltishall airfield - what are they doing? I'd much rather be out cycling!

seeing the church at Skeyton on the skyline then turning right to go down the hill amongst rolling farmland towards Tuttington

turning off the B1145 into Banningham and cycling through the village - past the pub!

over the crossroads to go down into Ingworth - watch out for blackberries at the right time of year

a slight detour at Ingworth (turning right rather

than left) heading for Scarrow Beck off on the left - perfect place for a summer's picnic

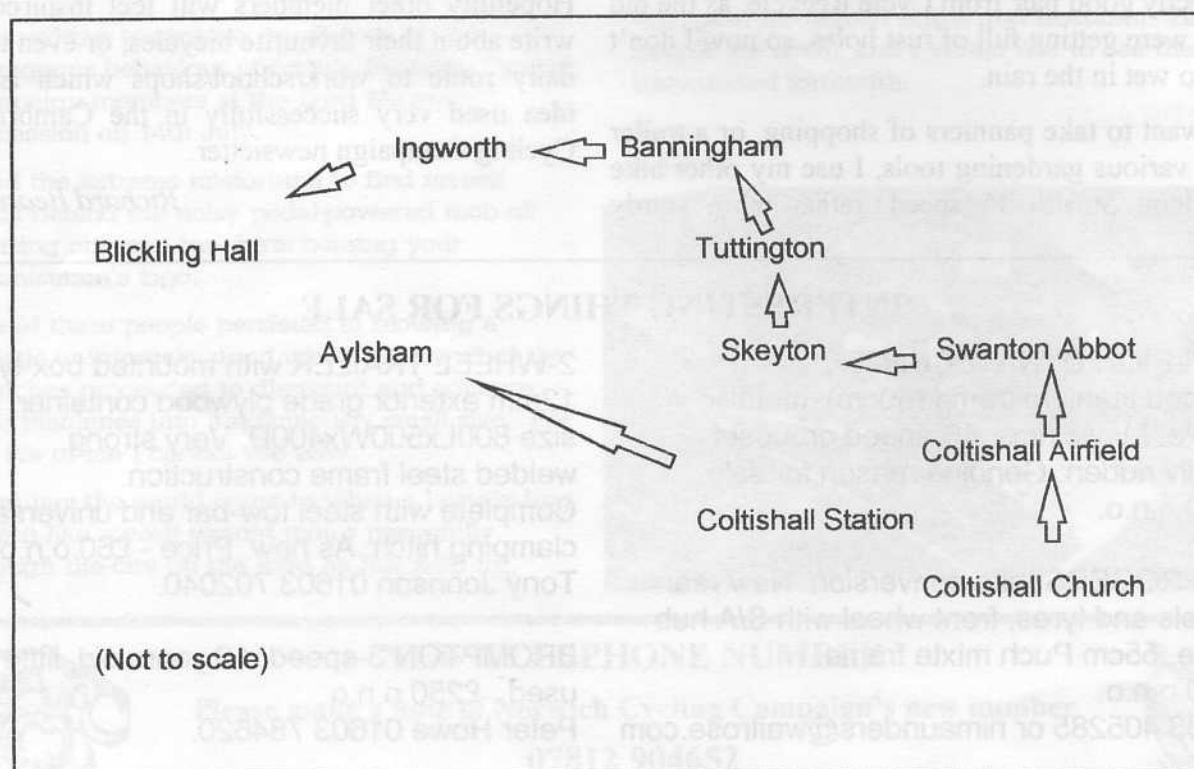
rounding the corner into Blickling Hall - seeing that wonderful building and knowing that there's a good pot of tea and slice of cake not that far away!

Whilst there are some busy stretches (crossing the A140 is the worst part of the route), much of the route is on very quiet lanes where there is time to take it easy, absorb the pleasures of cycling in fresh air and watch wildlife in the hedgerows and the fields. Alternatively, you can pick up the Bure Vally path from Coltishall (or Wroxham if you want to start the route by train) which takes you off road to Aylsham.

This route is a good length - I know I've been out cycling and had some exercise but I'm not too exhausted when I get back! If you're ever out that way, perhaps you'll have some time to sample these small quiet lanes.

Do you have a favourite route to share with other members?

Rachel Wix



BIKE CULTURE IN LINCOLN

Contacts Ian Maunders

Bike Culture Weeks were originated by the now defunct *Open Road* company, who published *Bike Culture Quarterly* and *Bycycle Magazine*. The events are now organised by Alistair and Yvonne Skinner who were early supporters of *Open Road*. Nicola and I had attended previous BC weeks in York and Normandy and we were looking forward to renewing acquaintances and making new friends.

Lincoln was unexplored territory for us and we decided to take our Bromptons on the relatively simple (but expensive) train journey there, via Peterborough. Due to work commitments, we were only able to stay from Saturday until Tuesday, but nevertheless we had a very enjoyable time.

About thirty people of all age groups attended. The events were based around Lincoln Youth Hostel and, although a number of us stayed at a nearby B&B, we took advantage of the superb evening meals served at the hostel. The evenings were very social and entertaining occasions and included a slide show, talks (including some by our very own Mike Burrows, who had ridden up to Lincoln on the Saturday on one of his 'Ratcatcher' recumbents.) and an impromptu quiz night, which was a great source of merriment.

There were a number of led rides of varying length each day, with one each day designed with families in mind. Naturally pubs and tea-rooms were featured. In addition, there was a selection of interesting machines for all to try out, including 2- and 3-wheel recumbents, tandems and cycles designed to carry disabled persons. Many of these were brought down from York by Jim McGurn, stacked high on a trailer. Nicola and I impressed ourselves by mastering a very nice fully suspended off-road tandem.

Participants had come from far and wide, including Nils from Sweden, touring Britain on

his recumbent, two friends of ours from Frankfurt, a lady from Bristol and another from the isle of Sark, who had no bike but wanted to gain confidence to cycle around the island. Mostly she rode on the back of a tandem, but she did manage to ride solo for a short distance, despite falling a couple of times!



I felt the countryside around Lincoln was less than exciting, but the almost constant views of the hilltop cathedral and the buzz of being out on the road with such an interesting range of machines and their riders more than made up for it. We certainly attracted attention along the way and in the pub car parks. Lincoln itself is a real gem, with its antique and book shops, cobbled streets and the very steep hill up to the cathedral and castle. There is also a useful traffic free and back street cycle route from the south of the town centre and station area to the Youth Hostel.

Next July the Bike Culture Week is being based in Oakham, featuring rides around Rutland Water. We are looking forward to going there and exploring new routes.

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Dates for your diary

22 September European Car-Free Day

As Norwich City Council's contribution,
Queen Street will be closed to
motorised traffic.

We will be there,
the more bikes the better!



Plus CATI (Come And Try It) RIDES

CATI rides will continue fortnightly until end-
October

For details of future rides, contact Phyll on
01603 435547

Plus
Monthly meetings
3rd Wednesday of every month
7.30pm at The Greenhouse

Wednesday, 19 September
Wednesday, 17 October
Wednesday, 21 November

**Deadline for items for the
September Newsletter is
Monday 19 November**

All contributions and letters welcome.