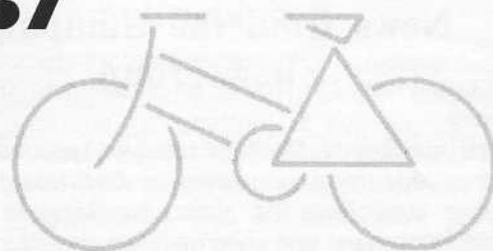


NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Newsletter Number 57

June - August 2005

£1.00 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.

Norwich Cycling Campaign is affiliated to the National Cycle Campaign Network.

The great event of the month.

Our best wishes go to Jane and Nigel Howard, married on 7th May in Norwich. Jane and the bridesmaids made a wonderful sight in colourful rickshaws traveling down Newmarket Road into the city, with Richard and Bob pedaling, and followed by a cycle cavalcade. Nigel and Jane met through the Campaign, and have been great supporters of activities, especially Cycle Recycle. It was a wonderful occasion, with a reception at the Beeches Hotel and Plantation Garden, and sun between the showers. The celebration included family and friends, and many members of the Campaign.



We wish them a long and happy marriage.

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Campaign News

News from the Campaign's newsgroup.

March

Gertrude Road: Matthew received proposals for road humps and road narrowing in Gertrude Road. Jeff replied supporting the plans, for Gertrude Road is a residential street and children often play near and on the road. The layout of the street means that motor traffic uses it as a thoroughfare, which could lead to collisions with vulnerable road users.

April

Marriots Way: Matthew reported that Norwich Cycling Campaign had received a letter from a company on the Sweet Briar Industrial Estate and whose staff use Marriots Way to cycle to work. Cycle commuters had witnessed adolescents riding motorcycles along the cycle route, and had helped an elderly gentleman who had been knocked down by a juvenile. Both Phyll and Jeff hoped that the police would put a stop to the anti-social behaviour. Katy said that she would ask members of UEA BUG to report any incidents.

Katy also posted the news that the group of travellers who had camped in the yard of a vacant industrial unit adjacent to Marriots Way had moved on, after tidying up the site.

All Saints Green: The Advanced Stop Lane in All Saints Green had been shortened during changes in the road layout.

Matthew had written, on behalf of NCC, to complain about it and received a letter from Marc Love, from Norfolk County Council. In the letter, Mr. Love said that the previous ASL layout was not to standard, the new layout is and that the layout will soon change from advisory to mandatory. He apologised to Matthew for not notifying him of the changes.

A few days after posting the original message, Matthew notified the newsgroup that the council intended to extend the ASL to its original length.

May

South Norfolk Cycling Survey: John Heaser posted a link to South Norfolk Councils cycling strategy and a cycle survey that accompanies it.

http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/south-norfolk/council.nsf/pages/cycling_strategy.html

Chris Dunlop asked how the strategy would address the issue of reducing and enforcing the speed limits on the county's roads, especially on the roads that form part of Sustrans NCN1. Phyll pointed out that Norfolk County Council is responsible for the road network in Norfolk.

The outsider

Sean Austin

This will, hopefully, be an occasional column to fill any large gaps in the newsletter. I had originally intended to avoid such a piece as I wanted to keep the articles relevant to Norwich, although I was thinking of creating a web site as a kind of editors column.

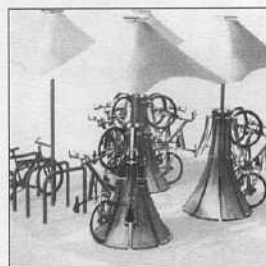
Having said that, I suppose that such a column would help to show the similarities and differences between the new town of Milton Keynes and the old city of Norwich.

Cycle parking at Norwich train station:

An article in the last issue highlighted the lack of covered bicycle shelters at Norwich train station. Here, in Milton Keynes, the Cycling Development Officer had some sheltered bicycle stands installed at Milton Keynes Central train station. They are proving to be so popular with train commuters that there are plans to install yet more stands.



I noticed on the Norwich area transport web site that those responsible for revamping the forecourt of the station intend to hide the cycle stands (and keep the existing number of cycle racks) behind the taxi rank, because they think that cycle stands are an eyesore and out of keeping with a listed building. I believe that is a very narrow minded viewpoint. There are several models of cycle stand and shelter that may fit in with the character of the building better than the ubiquitous Sheffield stand.



There are even systems that store bicycles underground, such as the biciberg featured in the last newsletter. And there are some novelty stands, such as the ones in the picture to the left, which Matthew sent me, that are much more pleasing to look at than a row of taxis or a yard full of cars.

Park and ride: As an outsider, who dislikes using buses - even more than driving into unfamiliar city centres - I believe that Norwich City Council have missed a good opportunity to reduce the amount of traffic going into the city centre by not providing a facility for motorists to park and (bicycle) ride into the city.

As a potential user of a park and (bicycle) ride scheme, I would not mind paying for the parking space (after all, if I decided to use a combination of driving, public transport and cycling it is possible that I would have to pay for car parking anyway.)

National News from the Cycle Campaign Network

New Government body for cycling

In March, the Government announced the setting up of Cycling England as a replacement for the National Cycling Strategy Board. However, the new body is to have a minimal budget of only £5m per year, which knocks on the head any prospect of a comprehensive programme to boost cycle use. The NCSB had asked for £70m for its successor, the amount thought necessary to begin to make progress on achieving cycling growth.

Cycling England says that it will be going back to Government in the autumn for more money. It may not get what it needs unless there is sustained pressure by cyclists on their new Members of Parliament to get back towards integrated transport policies with cycling a key element.

Members of Cycling England, are:

Philip Darnton (chair), Lynn Sloman (sustainable transport), Dr. Alison Hill (health), Christian Wolmar (integrated transport policy), John Grimshaw (engineering), Peter King (sport), Kevin Mayne (training), plus two more people to be appointed to specialise in education and local transport. Controversially, there is no representative of local government, which may make effective co-operation with local authorities difficult.

ROSPA road safety guide for politicians

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has produced a road safety guide aimed at elected members of national and local government. It summarises the main issues and causes of road crashes, the responsibilities of government and local authorities, and includes a jargon-buster that explains road safety terminology. Funding came from the Department for Transport.

Extra funding for cycle training

The Department for Transport has released promised funding to consolidate the National Standard for Cycle Training.

CTC is to provide a help desk service and database and will co-ordinate increasing the number of accredited cycle trainers throughout the UK.

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Insurer backs down over contributory negligence claim

Subsequent to an item in the March CCN News, insurers Direct Line backed down in their refusal to pay widow Mrs. Green full compensation because her husband was not wearing a cycle helmet when he was hit and killed by a car. The case was to have been featured in the Radio 4 programme Money Box, but Direct Line decided upon prudence and agreed to settle without any deduction.

There is now liaison between CCN, CTC and a number of solicitors specialising in cycling claims in order to compile a database of cases where contributory negligence is cited as a reason for reducing payment to cyclists. An initial trawl suggests that this is now a common occurrence. As well as helping to thwart such attempts, it is hoped that the database may provide evidence of the damage being done and additional suffering caused by rules in the Highway Code on helmet wearing and use of cycle paths, with a view to getting these removed at the next revision.

Letter to local political parties

In April, NCC sent the following letter to the main political parties asking for their views on cycling as a mode of transport in the city:

As we consider which political party would do best at solving the country's problems, so we decide whom to vote for in the forthcoming County Council elections.

Which party has done anything at all to address the problem of too many motor vehicles on our roads, a major source of carbon and particulate emissions and cause of global warming? The Labour government started off well, showing apparent commitment to increasing sustainability in transport. They set targets for increasing cycle use, calling for a doubling by 2002 and doubling again by 2012. Unfortunately they left the implementation of these targets to local authorities, many of which couldn't care a fig about increasing cycling. So these targets went by the board, along with the Traffic Reduction Strategy, the National Cycling Strategy and the English Regions Cycling Development Team whose job it was to monitor councils' performance.

Unfortunately for us in Norwich and Norfolk, our local councils come into the category of couldn't care less. Even sensible schemes devised and supported financially by others are just cast aside, as with the new Thickthorn Park & Ride and proposed Park & Cycle, which could serve the UEA, hospital and research park and, using existing cycle paths, encourage cycling into the city. Our proposed Cycle Centre, the building of which was to be financed by the Chapelfield developers,

has likewise bitten the dust, thus depriving potential cycle tourists and commuters.

People complain about traffic congestion, but the only vision our councils have is the building of the expensive and damaging Northern Distributor Route, which would encourage more car use and contribute towards more emissions and faster climate change.

As an example, whilst the County Council spends many £100,000's on car parking at County Hall, their employees who cycle are paid a derisory 23p per day for business use, rather than at least the Inland Revenue figure of 25p per mile. Recent figures show a 25% decline in staff claiming a payment since 2002. Employees wishing to cycle to work are also denied the benefit of the tax efficient cycle purchase scheme, reducing the cost by 50%, at no cost to the council.

Lately there has been no great support among any senior politicians for encouraging cycling, although this could have resulted from the transport secretary's directive to local authorities to start making plans for controlling congestion, such as road-user charging.

So, to help us decide whom to vote for, could you inform us of your commitment to increase bicycle use and how you propose to do this through local transport policies and support for employers.

See who replied, and how, in Chairman's Chat.

Mike's Musings

Mike Savage

REMINDER!

There is really no need for NCC member Mr. D Davies to park his bike at Marks & Spencer and walk all the way to Thorpe Station when using the train (Newsletter 56, p2). A few minutes walk from the station there is plenty of covered, free, reasonably secure cycle parking on the ground floor of the Riverside multistorey car park. Unfortunately the dedicated entrance to this facility at the side of the building is not signed in any way and is hidden behind shrubbery. Cyclists are further discouraged by the notice just inside the main entrance to the building: this should, of course, be totally ignored.



OUR LIVES IN THEIR HANDS!

The new traffic arrangements in Castle Meadow and Red Lion Street certainly make crossing the city east to west much easier for cyclists: but beware! Apart from the physical danger of threading your way between dozens of buses, I hear a rumour that someone with an office overlooking Castle Meadow has measured the level of noxious gases and at times these far exceed all recommended maxima!

If you use this route regularly get a mask!



Chairman's Chat

Jeff Jordan

As we approach National Bike Week, we have a programme of our most successful events. Social rides, well publicised, will encourage people back to cycling, (especially the 'Biriani ride' with the attraction of a meal prepared by Cynthia, Rachel and other members at the King's Centre, on historic King Street, part of Sustrans Route 1!) Two Dr. Bike sessions will ensure that even more roadworthy bikes on the streets of Norwich, and for our Snowball Picnic we will gather at the new centre at Whittingham Country Park, due to be completed this month.

We do need help for each of these events, so please contact me or Rachel Mold to let us know what you can do.

You will see in this newsletter that we wrote to all the main parties, asking them what they would do to encourage and support cycling, if they were successful in the county and parliamentary elections. We received no replies from the Lib Dems, or from the Conservative parliamentary candidates.

Rupert Read replied for the Green party with comprehensive and detailed policies that would be of tremendous benefit to cycling, transport and the environment in general (details on our web site).

Alison King, leader of the Conservative County Council and Adrian Gunson wrote stressing past achievements of their administration, including the cycle path alongside the B1108, and the electric and manual pool bikes for staff at county hall. Both expressed their commitment to measures to increase cycling amongst the general public and county council staff.

Celia Cameron, leader of the Norfolk County Council Labour Group, wrote supporting trade union requests for measures which would encourage county council employees to cycle. During the 4 years in opposition the Labour Group had pressed the case for pool cycles and for electric cycles to be tried.

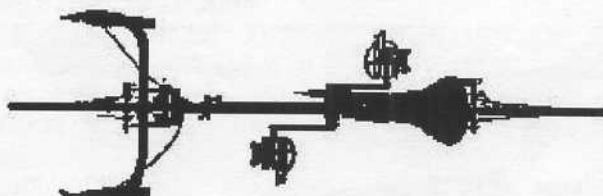
The Labour parliamentary candidates, Ian Gibson (Norwich North) and Charles Clarke (Norwich South) both wrote supporting cycling. Charles gave details of his pro-cycling actions, including chairing the All-party Cycling Group, being a patron of Sustrans, developing Safe Routes to Schools, and measures which would make roads safer, including for cyclists. He says he would hope to work with the Norwich Cycling Campaign on cycling issues.

We could not put all these replies on our web site before the election, but now we know the outcome with a Conservative county council, including the first Green party county councillor. Congratulations to Andrew Boswell of Nelson ward. We have 2 Labour MP's for the Norwich, with a Lib Dem administration in the city. I think Norwich must be in an unique position, and this leaves us negotiating with all the four parties to influence cycling policies.

All these parties express full support for measures to increase cycling and improve facilities. We need to translate this general support into agreement on definite measures, and then try to ensure these are put into practice, without being diluted or changed.

The scrapping of plans to set up a cycle centre is an example of a great project failing to be set up, due to a lack of commitment to cycling by decision makers. There is a ray of hope from the Norwich City Centre Management Partnership, who may take on this project, so let's hope we can influence and assist them.

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Leaving Sustrans after 9 years in the Supporters' Secretary seat seemed very daunting and strange at the time but with a million and one things to think about for our future new house project, the resulting time was quickly used up!



We first found the small attractive market town of Beccles whilst touring the east side of the country following Route 1 of the National Cycle Network from Hull down as far as Ipswich. Beccles was just the place

we had been looking for to settle and build a dream house – eco-friendly features, contemporary in style and the possibility of opening as a for cyclists and walkers.

Pinetrees has been the name of the 5.5 acre site set in the peaceful Waveney Valley since the second world war and we decided to keep the name although the only pine tree growing is our first Christmas tree planted in one of the new copses! People have lived on the land in various rough shacks for years and have tended an

assortment of vegetables and animals but it's our desire to treat the land with a little more respect.

Our aim is to conserve the special landscape site as much as possible. Over 700 young native trees have been planted already to restore a neglected hedge and create mini copses for the future. We've stopped the use of nitrates being poured onto the land to impoverish the soil and therefore encourage an array of wild flowers from a substantial seed bank which lies in the soil. We've started to see the return of a pair of Barn owls in the neighbouring field and are hopeful that the owl box in our workshop / cycle store will become a new home in the future. The number of small mammals has increased dramatically as a result of careful land management so we hope the population of tawny owls, kestrels and array of other bird life grows in numbers from now on.

Pinetrees has officially opened its doors to cyclists and walkers touring the area and we welcome Norwich Cycling Campaign supporters with a discount of £5 per room per night.

Each double room is comfortable and airy with an en-suite facility. Free-range eggs from our own hens and good quality organic breakfast ingredients are important to us and we feel are probably important to you so if you're considering touring over a weekend or just cycling for the day come and share Pinetrees with us as you travel through.

For more information, call Sue Bergin on 01502 470796 or email: Suzzlebergin@aol.com for a leaflet and current room tariff.



Pedal away with Norwich Cycling Campaign this June

A festival of events have been organised for this year - centring on bike maintenance checks and rides for all occasions. Come along, pedal away, have fun - and bring your friends and family too. Distribute the enclosed leaflets with this newsletter to your friends, family and work colleagues - if you need any more contact Rachael (see below) and we'll get some to you. Details of the events are also available on our web site.

If you want to get really involved, it would be great to have your support in helping with the events - an hour or so helping with :

- simple bike maintenance or filling in the Dr. Bike maintenance check form
- manning an information stall about Norwich Cycling Campaign and local routes and cycling issues within Norwich
- arrangements on the day for our three course biriani.

Such help would be great fun for you and extremely welcome by us. Let Rachael know on 01603 259 207 or rmold@lateralsol.freemove.co.uk if you're able to help at all (and many thanks to those of you who have already offered).

If you want to see what else is happening in Norwich and Norfolk during Bike Week, log into the Bike Week web site at www.bikeweek.org.uk and search the events listing.

Details of Cycle Rides & other events during Bike Week 11th to 19th June 2005

Date: Saturday 11 June

Ride/ Activity: Dr. Bike

Start Details: Bring your bike along 11 am to PM for a free maintenance check

Location/ Destination: Stall outside St Peter Mancroft

Date: Saturday 11 June

Ride/ Activity: Nippin tu Naarfok

Start Details: Meet Richard at PM outside The Forum for a gentle 2-3 hour ride. Bring your own refreshments.

Location/ Destination: Blickling Hall (option to join MacMillan sponsored ride: see back page for details.)

Date: Sunday 12 June

Ride/ Activity: Century Bike Ride

Start Details: For the ride, meet at am at City Hall, Norwich. For more info ring: Bike Events on 0870 755 8519. Visit our stand in Cathedral Close

Location/ Destination: Choose 50 or 100 miles tour of see us at the finish!



Date: Sunday 12 June

Ride/ Activity: Dr. Bike

Start Details: St John's School Summer Fair. 12 noon to PM.

Location/ Destination: St John's School, opp West Pottergate Health Centre.

Date: Tuesday 14 June

Ride/ Activity: Bikes and Beer at Barford

Start Details: Meet 7 - 7.30 pm at the pub or join Martin and friends on the ride out. Ring 01603 897738 beforehand to help with numbers at the pub and for info about route.

Location/ Destination: The Cock, Barford

Date: Thursday 16 June

Ride/ Activity: Dr Bike

Start Details: Bring your bike along 11:30 am to PM for a free maintenance check.

Location/ Destination: Front entrance, Norfolk County Hall

Date: Friday 17 June

Ride/ Activity: Bicycle Biriaini

Start Details: Meet at 6pm outside the Kings Centre, King Street for the ride and return for three course biriani at 8 pm. Biriaini place must be booked in advance, ring Rachael on 01603 259 207

Location/ Destination: Ride out to local villages and back with Mike Enjoy the meal or just come along for the ride!

Date: Saturday 18 June

Ride/ Activity: Seaside Special to Mundesley

Start Details: Meet Phyll at 9 am at Thorpe End village green or 10 am at Wroxham Station. Pub lunch or picnic. Optional return by train from North Walsham -you must book!

Location/ Destination: Ride to Mundesley. Ring Phyll on 01603 435547 for more info.

Date: Sunday 19 June

Ride/ Activity: Snowball Pedaling Picnic

Start Details: Join one of the many starting points across Norwich. Meet 11 am at:

- Roy's Car Park, Bowthorpe or
 - White Woman Lane / Spixworth Rd Traffic lights or
 - UEA Porter's Lodge · Rear of Sainsburys, Queens Rd or
 - St John's School, entrance opp. West Pottergate Health Centre.
- Location/ Destination:** 12 Noon for Whitlingham Country Park. Bring a picnic! Fun activities include Trials Bike display, as well as refreshments.

Participants enter the events at their own risk. Neither Norwich Cycling Campaign nor the organiser will be held responsible for loss, damage or injury to property or persons.

More Mutterings from Matthew



Zen and the art of proper cycle sustenance.

It had got to that point at the last Cycle Campaign management meeting when Matthew was supposed to present his monthly report to the committee. However, he had that glazed, far-away look not unlike that worn by the rush-hour drivers as they cut you up on

Grapes Hill roundabout every day. Only I was sitting quietly in the corner, not piloting a one ton metallic projectile at 35 mph. I'm always prone to philosophical daydreaming at awkward moments, but nothing a sudden cupful of water in the face can't cure. On this occasion it was my earlier experience of cycling through the city centre (Rampant Horse Street, to be precise) that had got me wondering what sort of alien mind-set must be held by the designers of the latest road layouts that have been introduced.

Leaving aside all our detailed arguments about lane-widths and kerb details (the stuff of much Norwich Cycling Campaign's trouble-making), it struck me just what control freaks the designers must be - to what an extreme degree they ensure everything is so planned and *deliberate*. Lanes for this, signals and phases for that, all designed and regulated with nothing left to chance, no movement of people allowed to 'just happen', as if they had wills of their own.



Only one way to go?

I suppose it has to be that way, but the desire to control every type of user (whilst supposedly adding bus priority to the mix) has inevitably given us an awkward, stop-start route that is far from elegant and not particularly handy for any one user, not even the buses. It's so different from years past, when most city streets operated as a self-regulating free-for-all.

The irony is that, at least in the short term, the effect of the present approach still seems to be traffic chaos. No sign of a 'modal shift' to public transport yet then. But, strangely enough, there is evidence to suggest it is gridlock that seems to be a more powerful encouragement to bike use than any of the agonizingly contrived cycle facilities. More people are undoubtedly using a bike to get to and from the city centre - simply because it offers a predictable journey time when traffic is so jammed.

Does it therefore follow that we should be welcoming more traffic chaos as the most effective means of encouraging more cycling?

It'd still be good to talk

If I could report another session of busy cycle promotional activity at the City Council's latest Cycling Forum. I would, honestly.

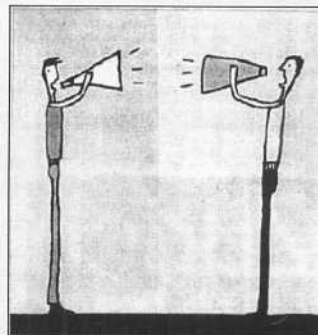
Instead our dynamic administration has chosen to devote the next few meetings, unforeseen postponements permitting, to a most urgent and vital issue - one which has been simmering for some months now and threatens to boil over and badly scald our lycra-clad legs. Namely who will take the minutes, who will send out the agendas, and who will fill in a form to apply for a bit of money from the Council to pay for someone to take the minutes, send out the agendas and fill in next year's form, and ... Oh, and I forgot, all Forum members need to be sent details each time of the car parking arrangements for City Hall.

You can therefore see that the job of providing secretarial support to a Cycling Forum involves a weighty burden of administrative activity, which explains why scant time is left for any discussion about cycling issues. Not a job for amateurs, clearly. But evidently too much for the hard-pressed City Council administration, who'd rather just tiptoe away from it all, jump into their Mondeos and roar off.

Gud in Himmel, beware the Sgnimmel.

Last time this column tried to adopt something of a Viking theme, which did rather displease Campaign member Erik Mødgaardssen. He wrote in complaining about our unfair stereotyping of Scandinavian brethren, pointing out that he already suffers an unfriendly reaction to the tusks on his bike helmet whilst using NCN Route 1, at least on this side of the North Sea. He suggests my humorous references to rape and pillage can only make things worse.

It led me to think about the political correctness of a habit I've had ever since my children were small and we used to do idyllic family bike rides out into the country. It was whenever crossing over the mighty Southern Bypass on the few graciously provided overbridges. Just as we passed over the centre line and were looking down at the identically cooped-up drivers all speeding along the dual carriageway towards oblivion, I took to yelling at the top of my voice "LEMMINGS!". Father's prerogative, you understand. I still do it to this day. I suppose it makes me feel better (in the sense of superior), but it doesn't half make my stoker jump when we're on the tandem. My wife once reminded me about this sad habit on an occasion when we were actually driving in a car along the same road and passing under a bridge with cyclists



crossing it, since when I have felt obliged to utter the reverse Viking-like word whenever in the same situation, for the sake of fair play.

Just too much ASL

There is growing evidence that the County Council traffic engineers are losing the faith, not that they had much to start with. Existing cycle facilities are starting to disappear. And I'm not talking about the useless facilities (like some shared footways), but genuinely useful things like advanced stop lines (ASL's) and/ or their approach lanes. The most alarming factor is that this dismantling of infrastructure is being done



But a faint trace remaining of former ASL at Guardian Road.

insidiously with no external consultation. If only we had a full time cycling officer there might be a chance of intervening before things start being dismantled on the street.

One example is at the Bowthorpe Road/ Guardian Road junction, where the signals have recently been re-phased, and the powers-that-be (great phrase) have taken the opportunity to set back the stop lines and simply remove the most useful ASL's. Alas for the amenity

of all the students commuting between the Dereham Road area and UEA. I have tried to establish why they've gone, and suspect this is another manifestation of a curious belief amongst some County Council engineers that ASL's are only for right-turning cyclists. Since the right turn has just been banned, they presumably thought the ASL should go. That is of course poppycock - the ASL reservoir was always intended to allow bikes to get ahead of the motor traffic and its exhaust pipes, irrespective of the manoeuvre being made.



Cars at All Saint's Green impinging on shortened ASL feeder lane.

Another one is on All Saint's Green leading to the Queens Road junction. Regular users were surprised and annoyed to see the approach lane more than halved in length following resurfacing, with no prior notice or consultation. It now means you can't get up the nearside of the line of queuing vehicles during the peak period. We're fighting this one, and you wouldn't believe the sort of half-baked 'technical' and 'safety' explanations we're

being offered for why they've done this. Competent it ain't. Car-headed it is. So much for modal priority.

Still, I suppose we should be grateful for the diminutive 2 square metres of painted ASL we've benevolently been bestowed at St Stephen's Plain, and also a quirky right turn reservoir for Surrey Street nearby. Expect to



Cute little box at St Stephen's.

see the wooden tops arriving on their little trikes. Maybe they created these diddy spaces by recycling the bits of approach lane lopped off facilities elsewhere.

Mind the gap 1

By popular demand, I've included another of my customary views from yesteryear, intended to make some profound point about traffic and landscape, how certain principles are as unchanging as the decor of County Hall. That's the advantage of being a grizzled old-timer with the full sweep of local cycling history laid out before his twinkling mind's eye, able effortlessly to draw insightful parallels and extract pearls of wisdom to cast before the grateful readers of this mutterings column. The location is at Yarmouth Road between Harvey Lane



Thorpe Narrows in 1956

and River Green. It used to be known as Thorpe Narrows, not least because it's in Thorpe and wasn't very wide - this was because the main road was closed in on both sides by buildings with only one narrow pavement. Come the prominence of motor travel in the late 1950's a decision was made to completely demolish a number of perfectly good buildings and dig the slope away to widen the road on the north side. This explains the rather odd kerb line and the garage (now derelict) rather awkwardly cut into the hillside near the bottom of

School Lane. So they created a wide open road with long sight lines, and what happens? You've got it, speeding vehicles, pedestrians having difficulty crossing and occasionally getting knocked down (a tiresome inconvenience). Not pleasant cycling either. A decade or two of hand-wringing, more injuries and eventually a decision to do something about it. How about narrowing the road? Good idea - not this time from the edges, but by means of a central refuge (pedestrian picnicking area) and a lengthy hatched zone of completely redundant road (what a waste of previously hard-won space, you might well think). Unfortunately there isn't quite enough width available for this buffoonish idea, so the pavement edge had to be set back still further (hence patched road), now leaving just 3.5m between the kerbs for

vehicles to get through. And if the 2.7m wide bus or lorry happens to be passing a cyclist at the time? Try riding along there and experience the terror of not knowing what's coming up behind as you approach each pinch point.



Thorpe Narrows in 2005

Bet the bikies didn't suffer palpitations like that in the 1950's ... So, my point: we have yet another example of poorly integrated modern road design that does not properly consider the needs of all users. The technical term for this approach is 'shambolic'.

Mind the gap 2

We users of the West Pottergate link are deliriously happy now that it's open, complete with proper dropped kerbs, offering a direct, largely traffic free route between the Earlham Road/ Heigham Street junction and the city centre. I dismount and do a little jig there every time I use it. Okay, we can cope with the bit of a squeeze past the CityCare storage container that's been plonked there for the last few weeks. And yes, I'm prepared occasionally to take a broom with me on the bike to sweep the broken glass from the underpass (bottles lobbed in a *joie-de-vivre* sort of way out of car windows on Grapes Hill.)

It may seem churlish to say anything negative about those lovely barriers that we finally got rearranged (Thanks, Tim), but I do rather worry that someone is going to ride into them one day at dusk. The problem is that while the equally-spaced vertical posts do have nice red reflectors, the approaching cyclist has to guess which are the gaps and which are the horizontal grey rails - you just can't see the difference until you are too close to easily adjust your line, especially if there are car headlights ahead. Could end up being shredded like a runner bean. The simple answer? A few blobs of reflective paint. We've suggested it. So even as we speak, the CityCare administrative machine is grinding



Pedestrian positioned so you can see the rails.

into action to deliver a timely solution (rumoured to be programmed for 2007-8 financial year subject to budgetary constraints ...)

PC on PTW on NCN1?

Subscribers to the Cycling Campaign newsgroup on norwichcycling@yahoogroups.com may have seen sad tale about an elderly man knocked off his bike on Marriott's Way by an inconsiderate young male on an unmarked motorbike. Luckily there was a Good Samaritan from nearby Walker Engineering to help. We eventually received a reply from Norfolk Constabulary to our request for better regularly policing, saying they're "aware of the situation", but adding the perceptive observation that it's "a case of being in the right place at the right time"! Clearly the old chap wasn't. Worryingly, it's been reported by members that an increased presence of police has indeed been witnessed along the path ... on motor bikes!

And finally:

The Pothole of the Year Competition Award goes to: this one, in all its craterous beauty, on St Andrew's Street. It made a dramatic appearance, was reported to the Council and was duly filled all in the space of a single week in the middle of April. So do keep those pothole cards going in to the City Council, they do the trick and help keep our streets in the pristine smooth billiard-table like state to which we have all become accustomed!



Phyll's Philosophies

In my last Philosophies I mentioned some flagship case studies featured in the new DfT book, *Walking and Cycling: success stories*. One of these was the Addenbrooke's Hospital travel plan and the impact it has made on travel behaviour, encouraging more cycling, walking, bus travel and car sharing.

I have since been informed that our own Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital is in the early stages of delivering a similar success story. There are already 30 buses an hour serving the site and a half-hourly shuttle car between the NNUH and Norwich Community Hospital (formerly the West Norwich). Last January they launched a Travel Office, selling discounted bus passes to staff, issuing cycle shelter keys and controlling four pool cars. Staff parking charges cover the cost of operating the car park, with any surplus monies ring fenced to spend on travel initiatives. Detailed planning is underway to produce an on-site bus station, along with more and improved cycle and motorcycle parking. A car share scheme is being devised, and there is already a Brompton folding bike for business use. This is all excellent news. As I said before, if Cambridge can do it, so can Norwich!

* * * *

It's humbling to know that our web site reaches to the far corners of the earth when the committee recently received a message from cyclist Ron of Michigan, USA. He was coming to Norwich for a few days and wanted to meet one / some of us to talk, see our cycling facilities and compare with the almost non-existent ones in his part of the world. So Bob and I met Ron at the Forum, had a walk about and pub lunch, then came to our home for more chat. Ron is a professional violinist. He was here to visit a friend, also a musician, now domiciled in Norfolk. The friend's composition was being given its first performance at the John Innes Centre. Our meeting went well, and I saw in the EDP that the concert did too.

It's good that we can network with cyclists from elsewhere. We've done it before, when Christine and I visited Leicester and Basel, and when we invited members of Watford 'Spokes' to stay here one bank holiday weekend. The CTC / CCN conferences, two per year, give similar opportunities. We must make the most of them.

* * * *

In 1998 a report by environmental and transport groups in the Norwich area, 'Our Can Do Vision for Norwich City Centre', written by Matthew, was produced. It's worth looking through it to see how much of this Vision is in place seven years later.

The report mentioned the Government's White Paper on Transport (1998) and the Norwich Area Transportation

Strategy (NATS) with its inclusion of a proposed mode hierarchy, with walking and cycling prioritised. The report stated the belief that there was opportunity to contribute specific proposals for the city. It called for a blanket speed limit of 20 mph throughout the city centre, an overall strategy for traffic restraint including a reduction in the number of parking spaces, and the introduction of permits for motorists wishing to enter the central area at peak times. It suggested that some new residential development should be car-free, possibly accompanied by car pool schemes and use of home delivery services. For cyclists, it called for route continuity, including uninterrupted routes with proper surface crossings. All signalised junctions should have advanced stop lines (ASL's) as a matter of course, while one-way streets should have contra-flow cycling. Cycling should be allowed through the core pedestrian zone prior to 10 am and after 3.30pm to allow for commuters and school children, while more cycle parking should be provided at overloaded locations.

For pedestrians the report called for more right of way over vehicular traffic, including more serious enforcement of restrictions with permit-operated rising bollards in certain streets. It suggested development of a key light rail project between the railway station and Ipswich Road, via Prince of Wales Road and St Stephen's Street. It called for a bus interchange at the railway station, as well as a new Surrey Street bus station, with better provision of public transport information, and of course accessibility for the disabled.

So how much of this Vision has been fulfilled? Some of it, yes, but it's time for more action in the areas of discouraging use of motor vehicles and promoting alternatives. As usual, politicians are afraid to take action which could upset motorists - they might find themselves rejected at the next election.

It's interesting to see that Cambridge Cycling Campaign is currently producing a 'vision'. 'Cycling 2020' is a 'visionary document for cycling in the city over the next 15 years. It is more cycling focused than ours, with an intended audience of policy makers, private developers, quangos, the media, national personalities, employers and CCC's own members, to use as a means of enthusing others. Is it time to update and reissue our 'Vision'? Possibly, as otherwise it gets forgotten about and developments go off in wrong directions.

Enjoy lots of happy cycling during the summer season.

Phyll Hardie

Contacts

Norwich Cycling Campaign
42-46 Bethal Street
Norwich NR2 1NR
Telephone 07812 904652

Website:
www.norwichcycling.fsnet.co.uk

Email
info@norwichcycling.fsnet.co.uk

Discussion group
norwichcycling@yahoo.co.uk

Newsletter editor
Sean Austin 01908 366381

Chairman
Jeff Jordan 01603 411898

Treasurer
Richard Bearman 403415

Membership Secretary/ Webmaster
Ian Mold 617505

Co-ordinator
Nicola Maunders 405285

Consultations Officer
Matthew Williams 503824

Other Committee Members
Phyll Hardie 435547
Nigel Howard 502188
Rachael Wix
617505

Norwich City Council Cycling Officer
Tim Mellors 212538

Norfolk County Council Cycling Officer
Tim Jarvis 222230

What's Happening?

June - September 2005

Saturday, 4th June, 2.30pm: meet County Hall roundabout for short ride to south of city.
Leader: Phyll

11th - 19th June: National Bike Week - rides tba.
SEE PAGE 7 FOR FURTHER DETAILS!

Saturday, 11th June: Sponsored ride on behalf of MacMillan Cancer Relief. 5 mile ride through the grounds of Blickling Hall. For further details and to register, telephone Jess on 01603 626433.

Saturday, 18th June: meet Thorpe End village green, 9am, or Wroxham Station, 10am, for day ride to Mundesley. Pub lunch. This is a Bike Week event. Optional return by train from North Walsham. Leader: Phyll

Saturday, 2nd July, 2.30pm: meet Thorpe End village green for ride to Wroxham Barns.
Leaders: Jan & Malcolm

Summer Evening Bike Rides 2005

Join us for a meal or just a drink at the following locations:-

Tuesday 14 June The Cock, Barford (this is a Bike Week event)

Tuesday 19 July Queen's Head, Hethersett

Tuesday 16 August The White Horse, Crost-wick

Tuesday 13 September The Parson Woodforde, Weston Longville

We aim to be at the pub between 7 and 7.30pm. Either meet us there or join us on a ride from Norwich. It would be helpful if you could phone us if you are definitely coming, as we will book a table. Give Martin a ring on 01603 897738.

CATI rides will continue throughout the summer and autumn - see forthcoming programme.

Monthly members meetings

Held at Saunders & Senior
2 Tombald Alley, off Princes Street, at 7.30pm
Next meeting:
21st July