

NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Newsletter No. 63

Winter 2006

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Next newsletter is scheduled for 1st March, contributions to
david@vanedwards.co.uk
by February 9th 2007 please!

USEFUL www. LINKS

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norwichcyclingcampaign.org
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cycleweb.co.uk
whycle.co.uk
bikeweek.org.uk
bikeforall.net
biceberg.es/INGLES/index.htm
cyclenetwork.org.uk
ctc.org.uk
Eurovelo.org
ecf.com/discover/index.htm
nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk
socialcycling.org

Our very own website
East Anglian Cycling Club
Cycleweb cycling directory
Whycle. Advice site
2006 Bike week
Bike For All
Underground bike storage
Cycle Campaign Network
Cyclists Touring Club
European Cycle Route network
European Cyclists' Federation
National Cycling Strategy
Social Cycling

Other sites
norfolk.gov.uk
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dft.gov.uk
norfolk.police.uk
broads-authority.gov.uk
transport2000.org.uk
brake.org.uk
onerailway.com
travelinesoutheast.org.uk
firstgroup.com/ukbus/eastanglia
centraltrains.co.uk
greenhousetrust.co.uk
eveningnews24.co.uk

Cover photograph: New cycle route through Upper Goat Lane



Chairman's Chat

There are some circumstances where our Campaign welcomes new cycle lanes if they make sense, are properly designed (at the detailed level), and are being installed for the correct reasons. Under current guidance segregated lanes should actually only be considered having first looked at the preferred option of integration within a calmed traffic flow. It goes without saying that they should be intended to make cycling both easier and less intimidating, many people are reluctant to cycle due to the perceived danger although, as regular cyclists know, cycling is a reasonably safe activity.

Although we read about Norwich planning applications in the Evening News, Broadland and South Norfolk issues may pass us by. My concern is that these lanes are not created in the places where they are most needed, but rather where money can be found from developers wishing to gain planning permission for new houses, flats and supermarkets. The planning authority and the developers enhance their green credentials, and can quote high levels of spending on cycle facilities. In some cases, cycle lanes are put in deliberately to try and remove bike users from the 'proper' traffic flow.

As I live in Norwich, most of my cycling is within the outer ring road, using roads rather than the few cycle lanes on my routes. When I am travelling further afield I see new cycle routes, but very few cyclists. With the increased size of the Tesco store in Blue Boar lane, and the granting of planning permission for several hundred houses a cycle lane has been created leading from the Wroxham Road, round 3 newly constructed roundabouts, to the Tesco store. At each road leading onto these roundabouts, cyclists on the paths must give way to traffic, in contrast to cyclists using the road, who would have priority.

I have yet to see a single cyclist using this cycle lane. Very few people would be travelling by bike from the Wroxham direction to do their supermarket shopping at Tesco. Residents of the homes to be built will only be using the last few yards of the cycle lane to reach Tesco, those travelling from Norwich can easily use Blue Boar Lane, more direct and almost traffic free now that it is a no through road for cars.

With hundreds of new homes being built in this area, many people will be travelling into Norwich to work, study, shop and for entertainment, and I feel that if these journeys were to be made by bike, rather than by car, it would be a real benefit to the community and the environment. The Park and Ride facility, and a direct bus into Norwich will be a great help, but the flexibility, speed and economy of cycling would appeal to many. The Wroxham Road bus lane does assist cyclists on a well used route, and if other measures were used further into Norwich this would potentially be more effective than cycle routes further out.

An Advanced Stop Line for cyclists at the Magdalen Gates crossing would be helpful, combined with an extended pedestrian phase in the traffic lights. As there are barriers on the corner of each pavement, the distance is too great to allow pedestrians time to cross more than one of the roads, or to cross diagonally. Cyclists could choose to dismount, walk across the junction and down Magdalen Street to the beginning of the bus lane at Stump Cross. Even without changes, this is my fastest and most direct route into central Norwich, and one already used by many cyclists. Unfortunately some cycle along the rather narrow pavement.

This criticism of Sprowston planning could be repeated for the Hethersett cycle path, the cycle lane from the new A11 roundabout to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. Very few cyclists will travel in from outside Norwich, and Colney Lane is a very convenient route for cyclists, since it is now a no through road for cars.

My argument is that the scarce resources spent on cycling 'facilities' should be focussed on improving routes which cyclists already use, or would do with changes. That usually means expenditure at junctions which are currently problematic, rather than frittering away funds on lengthy stretches of roadway which are not going to generate cycle use that is not there already. Fraser's article on the Pound Lane cycle lanes will give an account of their usefulness, when properly planned!

It should be genuinely advantageous for cyclists to use the provided cycle lane rather than the road, and to be honest that rarely is the case. Good examples of this are those roads which are more direct, but not open to car use. King St, Castle Meadow, etc. I find bus lanes an excellent arrangement, good and wide, and with buses causing relatively few problems (other than their emissions!)

Jeff Jordan



More Mutterings from Matthew

OK, spake the Editor, this edition is going to be different. I want you to cut out all the whingeing and muttering, you have an executive role in the Campaign and delegated powers from the management committee. The punters out there just want a straightforward account of what it is you claimed to have been doing for them since the September issue. Under the heading of making cycling in Norwich better that is.

Ooh he's a hard man that David. Accountability he wants, accountability he gets. As Paul Simon sang, there must be fifty ways to leave your members in no doubt of your determined efforts to further the cause (I'm sure it scanned better than that).

Did I say fifty? Well maybe twenty, anyway...

1. Chapelfield Cycling Project. There have been three further monthly afternoon meetings of the project team, composed of managers of the shopping centre, representatives of the city and county councils, and us. The team's job is to allocate total spending of around £200,000 ring-fenced from planning money on improvements to city-wide cycle parking, selected cycle routes and publicity. We have helped compile a shortlist of specific items, including identifying cycle parking sites in the city centre which will get cover and/or more Sheffield stands, and got together a plan for improved cycle routes through Chapelfield Gardens (round the edges) and through the subway which will be put out to public consultation shortly ahead of implementation in 2007. One of the biggest projects is an improvement to the surfacing on Pottergate, which has been approved in principle and will make a big difference if the City Council can find the staff resources time to design it. A request has been made to draft in an engineer from Mott MacDonald to do this.

2. St Peter's Street. We've kept an eye on the re-paving scheme that has been ongoing for the past three months, and have a good relationship with the designer. Halfway through the construction process in September, we alerted him to a defective surface on the speed table opposite the top of Upper Goat Lane, and this speed table has now been fully reconstructed, as well as the northbound connection signed. See the photo on the front cover.

3. Streetscape Design Manual. Earlier in the year we'd submitted various comments and amendments the draft of the new design guide for Norwich's city centre streets to its main author Ben Webster at the City Council. In mid September we received our complimentary final copy of the booklet, together with a note of thanks for our input. This is the sort of low-profile background effort that I believe is worth putting in to help reduce the likelihood of design problems in future schemes.

4. Gentleman's Walk Cycle Parking. This was our most prominent piece of campaigning in the last quarter of the year, albeit yet fully to bear fruit. We were featured prominently in the local press on 4th September, who also supported our stand in their editorial. A more complete account of this campaign appears elsewhere in this newsletter. Cycle parking in this part of the city centre remains under enormous pressure (see this recent Saturday morning picture of the Guildhall stands, for example).



5. All Saint's Green markings. An issue we've mentioned before is the unfortunate removal of half the length of the cycle lane approaching the advanced stop line (red box) for outbound approach to the junction with Queen's Road. This makes it more difficult for bike users especially in the evening peak period. Previous communication with city officers eventually got them to concede this was in error, and they promised to reinstate it. Every three months we have been reminding them, and we did so again, also involving some councillors. We may need to ratchet things up soon to get appropriate action - it's only paint required.

6. St Stephen's Street markings. Arguably a fairly minor matter in terms of work required, but making a

significant potential difference for users. After little more than a year, the cycle markings have partly been worn away, and we have emailed the County Council in September to request a re-paint. Another nearby issue we spoke to the city council officer about in October is the position of the temporary stall (watch repairer) opposite the bottom of Surrey Street. This trailer is often backed right to the edge of the kerb, creating a hazard for the handlebars of the cyclist squeezed on the nearside of passing buses.

7. Former Jarrold's printing works. When a planning application was submitted in early September for redevelopment of this site off Barrack Street, we duly visited City Hall to inspect the plans and noticed that the proposals included a 'pedestrian bridge' to connect to St Helen's Wharf near the Adam & Eve Public House. We were concerned that there was nothing in the planning documentation to indicate that this would be usable by cyclists, as we had previously been led to believe. We emailed our objection to the officer dealing with the case and were even more concerned to find him clueless on this particular issue, although he volunteered to find out more. Thankfully, a few days later we received a reply indicating that the proposals were in fact for a 'cycle and pedestrian bridge' in principle, although the structure had not yet been designed. In the absence of any strong officer support for clarification of the bridge use, we were left thinking it was probably as well that we had raised the issue at this stage before it was too late.

8. Fellowes Plain cycle link. You will know from previous newsletters how frustrating it has been to see the developer being allowed to try to back out of the planning obligation to provide this link (from opposite Grove Road through to the Union Street area), even though we did remind city officers about it at an early stage. Twice more (in August and again in October) we have tried to get heads banged together, this time through the influence of the certain councillors who came on the VIP ride in June. We've received a couple of email replies suggesting that there may still be a glimmer of hope we may get something the planners could actually have ensured was provided by the developers as a matter of course if only they had bothered to do the planning.

9. The Forum planning applications. Two separate applications were submitted in August and September in regard to the ice rink and a photographic exhibition respectively, both on Millennium Plain. We formally objected to the ice rink on the basis that in previous years there has been unauthorised obstruction of the highway (on St Peter's Street, near the church) for several months, causing difficulties to users of the cycle link from Bethel Street to Theatre Street. While the committee obviously granted the planning permission, we are pleased to see this year that the ice rink construction has for the first time been kept behind the metal studs marking the edge of the highway. Our response to the photographic exhibition application was along similar lines, to ensure that it did not obstruct the cycle route, either directly or through persistent vehicle parking, a constant problem on Millennium Plain. The Forum management may in the last few months have started to take their responsibilities more seriously in terms of keeping vehicles off the Plain (which is their private land), with the introduction of some locking bollards. There is also now a sign up on the wall which for the first time acknowledges that there is actually a cycle route crossing the site!



10. The Avenues resurfacing. Anyone who regularly cycles down that road will be well aware of the works which finally happened after years of complaint by Norwich Cycling Campaign and others about the very poor surface. Regrettably, now that that work has been done it has triggered a new series of complaints about the negative impact on the large number bike users resulting from speeding traffic, lack of enough significant traffic calming and the removal of pre-existing markings. Frankly the whole route is a poorly planned mess, and somehow we need get a proper review carried out, and hopefully this time be part of that process. We're currently at the stage of collecting together a list of complaints, but will need help from individuals if are to make a real difference. Could you be the person to take this on?

11. Wymer Street. After our eventual success last year in getting the West Pottergate route reopened for cycling, we've noticed that certain details agreed for the nearby links have yet to be completed. One is the remaining far-from-flush kerb between Wymer Street and Douro Place. It is still believed to be the highest vertical upstand to a dropped kerb in the city, at around 45mm (see photo). We've again been in touch with the City Council to ask for action in rectifying this.



12. Orchard Street. It is nice to see our long campaigned-for suggestion of closing off Orchard Street to through traffic finally reaching fruition after an experimental closure period. This road was a rat run for motor vehicles between Heigham Street and Dereham Road, and it has now been kerbed off with a most useful cycle slip.



13. Earlham Green Lane. You might think that Norwich Cycling Campaign would be wholly supportive of the City Council's proposed West Earlham Speed Management Scheme which is intended to tackle the problem by the usual range of traffic calming measures. Well, much of it is good, but not all, and we've had to object to what is planned (or rather not planned) for Earlham Green Lane. We also had a letter published in the local paper outlining our concerns (see separate article).

14. King Street / Rose Lane junction. In the last issue I gave a little round-up of locations where there are kerb upstands making legitimate left turns unnecessarily hazardous. My attention has been drawn to another one to add to the list - at the city end of King Street at its junction with Rose Lane. We will be pressing the Highways Maintenance team to do something about this.



Further along King Street (which is part of National Cycle Network Route 1), we have been seeking to establish who placed a barrier across the road at the Mountergate junction, and why. Several times we have asked for its removal, and we understand this will, at last, be done, very soon, and possibly by the time you read this.



15. Colney cyclepath. Many cycle paths (and some main road routes) suffered this year from lush summer growth of vegetation. One of these was the so-called cyclepath running down the north side of Watton Road from Wilberforce Road towards Colney and Bowthorpe. This is particularly heavily used because of the frightening volume of motor traffic now using Watton Road near Earlham Park. Not being able to find out precisely who was responsible for trimming here, we made representations by email to both city and county council officers (Tim Mellors and Max Barnes respectively), and I'm pleased to report that the worst section of blocked route has now been trimmed back.

16. Chapelfield East link to Chapelfield Gardens. Just in for attention is a complaint that the connection between the existing Chapelfield Gardens cycle path and Chapelfield East has been blocked. We had already been pursuing the need for a proper flush kerb to replace the nasty granite upstand at this location. Recent inspection confirms the arrival of a set of sewer rings to prevent vehicle access (presumably a temporary measure), with a nasty unlit barrier that could easily be ridden into by an unsuspecting cyclist (see photo). This is typical of the sort of thing we have to tackle: (a) follow up reported problem, (b) identify who is responsible, (c) persuade them to carry out remedial action, (d) follow up, again and again if necessary....(e) keep complainants informed.



17. St William's Way cycle lanes. We inspected this site at the early stages, despite having absolutely no contact from the highway authority or any consultation input in its design. A number of people have complained about the concept and the design, and we will need to make a representation in an appropriate form. See Fraser's article elsewhere in this newsletter.

18. St George's Street future closure to vehicles. A grand proposal is imminently likely to be given the go-ahead in principle that will involve closing St George's Street to through traffic and carrying out environmental improvements to the area around St Andrew's Hall and the Norwich School of Art. Most cyclists will welcome this idea, provided we can still ride through, but as usual, the devil is in the detail (DEVINET) and so far there are few proper drawings available. Concerns we have already raised include the removal of

the railings outside the Art School that currently provide much-needed cycle parking for students and others (and sculpture space?). We are insisting that the new scheme AT LEAST replaces the existing on-street parking by means of Sheffield stands and perhaps tethering rings.

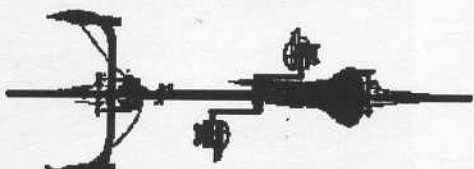
19. Invitation to meet Charles Clarke. Nobody is quite sure what the Norwich South MP is cooking up since he left the Home Office, but Norwich Cycling Campaign have several times been invited to attend supposedly non-political meetings to help with transport input to 'Developing a Green Agenda for Norwich'. At the very least, this involves keeping an eye on the agenda and minutes of these meetings, not least Charles's often-repeated conviction that what we need is 'cycle lanes and cycle paths' to all destinations. (It's been suggested that he wants somewhere to use the Segway he may be buying!).



20. Pothole reporting. This may not be the most high-profile or sexy work done by your Cycling Campaign, but for those who have to daily negotiate some crater at the edge of the road, simple action to get it reported and rectified can mean a great deal. All members can do this with the Campaign's pothole report cards. Over the past years we've generally found them to be highly effective in getting timely action. The latest pothole to be reported was that monster in Prince of Wales Road opposite the Recorder Road junction near Foundry Bridge. No action as yet, but we'll not leave it long before we pester again . . .

Matthew Williams

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A report on the new Cycle Path from the Heartsease Roundabout to Sainsburys Pound Lane

The cycle lane begins on St. Williams Way shortly after the Heartsease roundabout with the first of many sunken drain covers. Cars enter the cycle lane when avoiding other vehicles waiting to turn right.



Due to broken white lines and no yellow lines, cars can park in the cycle lane,



forcing cyclists to pull out into the main carriageway.



At the Pedestrian Crossing near St. Williams Loke, the cycle lane ends at the start of the white zig-zag lines. This is the point where the road narrows to allow for the central island, exactly the most hazardous moment for cyclists and exactly where we most need a cycle track. This clever design feature is repeated at the other end of cycle path approaching the Yarmouth Road roundabout in contravention of the latest guidelines on such matters - even taking the cycle lane along the pavement is not recommended as it admits the road is not safe for cyclists.



Not everything is bad, at the approach to the Thunder Lane junction the solid white line and red tarmac make it feel much safer, and the Laundry Lane/ Pound Lane junction is well marked with a good slip lane.





Most drain covers are sunken to about one and a half inches but at least one is almost two and a half inches deep, and those under the trees were hidden by leaves and other debris.

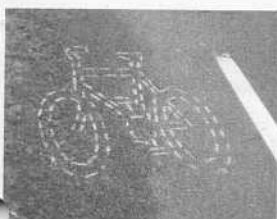
Although there are very well marked Advance Stop Lines at the Sainsbury's traffic lights, it is difficult to get across the traffic to the red tarmac entry lane.



However, once at the traffic lights it is fairly safe to go straight across to the cycle lane on the opposite side of Pound Lane, and then get back on to the road.



Approaching the Sainsbury's traffic lights from the Yarmouth Road is fine if you are following the Ring road, but there is no provision for cyclists travelling straight on or turning right into Sainsbury's, who have to take a dangerous route across the slip road to the traffic lights.



Can you see it??

All in all rather a poor job, which was done without any consultation with cyclists' organisations. It enables the council to claim to have added over a mile to cycle routes without adding enough to the safety of cyclists.

Fraser Tomsett

My Cycle to Work

When moving from the Unthank Road area to Eaton Rise, I wondered what my journey to work at UEA would be like. How would I find a new route? As ever it was a mixture of talking to others and a bit of exploring!

So, I leave my house in Beatty Road and wiggle through the Eaton Rise maze including a crafty cut through between Irving Road and Welsford Road to cut off a corner (found this by exploring!). I then have to cycle down Eaton Road and being usually on the later side, get caught up in all the school traffic of all varieties - parents in cars/armoured vehicles, pedestrians en masse spilling out onto the roads and cohorts of cyclists careering up and down pavements. Dodging the odd pot hole in the road (I must use those pot hole cards we have for reporting such delights) and poorly installed drainage cover, I then turn into Waverley Road to cut off a corner through to the Newmarket Road. Turning left I pick up a bit of the cycle path along Newmarket Road just to the traffic lights and then dog leg across Newmarket Road into Judges Walk - yes I know this



route uses the pavement on the other side of Newmarket Road but it does make my route so much easier and I do cycle with especial care whenever there are pedestrians using that part of the pavement. And I got this part of the route from talking to others!

Up Judges Walk it's then another dog leg over Unthank Road to take advantage of another cut-through this time to Buckingham Road. I wind my way round to the left then right to join South Park Avenue. Rather than cycle straight through Eaton Park, I choose to cycle down South Park Avenue and turn into Eaton Park towards the bottom near the community centre. Here I see all manner of dog walkers, City Care vans and my favourite - the growing assortment of gentlemen who gather for an early game of pitch and putt. Every so often, I pass a couple of them cycling along with their golf clubs stashed along the cross-bar! Then it's a wiggle through the barrier to prevent cycles, pushchairs and wheelchair users having easy access to the park to North Park Avenue followed by a right hand turn into the set of residential roads that run in parallel with Bluebell Road. Again, there is a crafty cut through but this one has a specific "no cycling" sign on it. Most cyclists I see ignore it - and I even had my photo taken by a man sitting in a deckchair opposite the cut-through one summer's day thus providing him with proof that cyclists do not always dismount along that particular alley. I see his point but on the other hand, if I continued down South Park Avenue, I'd have dangerous right turn on a corner into Bluebell Road. From the end of the alley, it's a stones throw (and another busy road to cross) to get into the University campus and the start of a different obstacle course - cranes and lorries from all the building works going on, cyclists careering across the zebra crossing at the top of the hill from the Earlham Road University Drive entrance and buses and National Express coaches dropping off and collecting fare paying passengers.

However non-highway code compliant parts of my cycle-ride to work are, I always know how long it will take me, I get some exercise, I can (just) always park my bike near my office and I get to see some gentlemen gather for a very civilised pitch and putt experience! What more could you ask from a journey to work.

Rachel Mold

Phyll's Philosophies

I've been a member of Norwich Cycling Campaign for 15 years now, writing to the local newspapers for much of that time and collecting and filing any cuttings of interest. Looking through these it is interesting to see if there has been any improvement in the cyclist's lot.

My first letter to the Evening News was printed in 1985 in response to a reader's complaint about that old chestnut, cycling on pavements. I asked, 'Has he ever done a count of cyclists and pedestrians using a stretch of pavement in Norwich? If so, he'd discover what a rare specimen a pedestrian is. Pavements were laid at a time when people actually walked. Now, except in the city centre, they are largely redundant. These pedestrians are too busy driving about in cars.' I suggested that some pavements could be shared by pedestrians and cyclists, which is of course quite commonplace now.

The first Norwich Century Ride was on 5 Oct 1992; 2250 cyclists from all over the country took part. I was one, on my new Nigel Dean, the only time I have attempted it. There was no 50 mile option, but that was all I managed before I had to give up. Gosh, was I saddle sore! There were letters of protest about the new Magdalen Street bus lane which was prohibited to cyclists, also about British Rail's prohibition to the carrying of cycles (even the British Medical Association got involved). One resident of The Avenues (Jan 1993) didn't fancy the new cycle path being built along his road, in spite of his having 'been a cyclist for 57 years'. It seems to have been accepted as a useful facility, at least until the road's recent resurfacing. Former Campaign member Frank Lincoln made a suggestion (April '93): 'The UEA has not only good public transport but also a good supply of brains. It must be obvious to both faculty and students that the only way we can cut congestion, pollution and road accidents is to reduce the number of car journeys by getting people onto two wheels . . . I submit that the UEA needs not an extended car park but better and more secure cycle parking.' Which of these did it get, or did it get both?

1993 was the year the CATI rides were started, which received some media attention: 'The first ride saw 14 cyclists pedalling from the Heartsease roundabout, through the Plumsteads, Witton and out to Blofield Heath before returning.' We evidently used a lane which, though still available to us, is now too dangerous for crossing the A47. In October I wrote 'We have met fortnightly since Easter and been supported by a total of 24



cyclists at various times, ranging in age from 12 to over 70.' Amazing that CATI rides have been going between Easter and October every year since, with some of those first riders still participating.

June '93 was our Bike Week. This had rides most days, a Breakfast Ride to North Walsham, starting at 7am on the initial Saturday, a protest ride against the proposed Northern Bypass on the Sunday (attended, I remember, by hundreds of cyclists), a Newcomers' Invitation Time Trial and the Wednesday Bike to Work Day. There was also a Dr Bike session and a Wonderful Wheels family event at which one could meet the City Council's new cycling officers, presumably Andy Watt and Tim Mellors.

In those early days there was animosity between cyclists and drivers, probably not improved by the regular Critical Mass rides organised to demonstrate that cyclists have as much right to use the road as other road users, and supported by 'hundreds of angry cyclists' who 'slowed Norwich traffic to a crawl.' (Feb '95) These elicited letters from readers, some supportive but many condemnatory: 'When can we expect a campaign to reclaim the pavements? It's not pedestrians' fault if the council doesn't supply enough cycle routes but we're the ones forced to jump out of the way by selfish greenies and car-hating zealots.' Also: 'Make them pay tax and insurance.' At the end of one UEA organised Critical Mass ride the police arrested a 17 year old protester and the ride organiser, Cathy McNulty for wilful obstruction, as she cycled round to find out what had happened to him. They were later released without charge.

In April '96 a plan to allow motorcyclists to use bus lanes, and even cycle lanes, resulted in many letters to the press, including one from Philip Insall of Sustrans, Bristol, where motorcycling councillors apparently pushed a similar scheme through. It was not a success - too intimidatory for cyclists - and the plan was dropped for

Norwich. We all breathed a sigh of relief!

Also in '96 the scheme to convert the disused city railway line, which became the Lakenham Way, was hatched. Lack of any form of cycle parking at the newly opened Castle Mall gave rise to a two-person protest at the entrance, which had the desired effect, now well used. In March '97 I attended a conference on cycle tourism in the east, where the East of England Tourist Board designated this region England's Cycling Country. This was an inspirational move designed to encourage European cyclists to explore our countryside and cycle routes but which now appears to have quietly fizzled out. What a pity. However, this was the beginning of the successful National Cycle Network in this region. Route 1, between Wisbech and Beccles via the North Norfolk coast and Norwich, was opened in May '97, three years earlier than originally planned.

Bike Week '97 included the first commuter challenge. Four modes of transport were selected for a race from Waitrose, Eaton, to Hay Hill in the city centre during the morning rush-hour. The bus traveller made it in the shortest time, the cyclist came in second, followed by the car driver and the pedestrian. However, the journey cost the car driver, more than twice what the bus passenger paid, while of course the cyclist and pedestrian paid nothing.

This my first cuttings file ends with a news item from Berlin (June '97). An opponent of the motor car won his battle against a fine imposed for denting a car during a pedestrian demonstration. His preferred form of protest was to walk over all cars parked illegally on the footway. He'd done this about 2000 times since 1988, usually without causing any damage. 'I am demonstrating my right of precedence as a pedestrian,' he said. Now - there's an idea!

Do you remember the long-drawn-out protest over the construction of the Newbury bypass? When the scheme was planned, the Dept of Transport forecast a 47% cut in road deaths along the route. The road has now been open 5 years and instead of a cut there has been an increase in deaths by 67%. More vehicles than expected use the road, with peak hour traffic on the bypass now at the same level as in the town centre before it opened. Conservationists say this demonstrates the tendency of new roads to attract more traffic, which is one reason that the Campaign to Protect Rural England strongly opposed the bypass. If the Norwich Northern Distributor Road is built it will have a similar effect, as well as being very damaging to the environment. The Government has just started to warn of the catastrophic effects of global warming, something which we environmentalists have been saying for the past decade. Could this possibly affect whether the NDR is built, or will these new concerns be brushed aside?

Some people have expressed their disappointment that the CATI ride season is over, especially as the weather has been so mild. They would like to continue cycling out with a group. For those available midweek, may I suggest that they contact Colin of the CTC, 01603 412398, to get news of rides out on alternate Wednesdays.

Be safe, be seen, these dark winter nights, days too sometimes.

Phyll Hardie



What's Happening?

AGM & Social

Thursday 21st December 7.00 -10.00pm at King's Centre, King Street, Norwich. Bring food and drink to share. This is your chance to help shape the campaign by standing for the committee. Jeff Jordan is standing down so we will definitely be electing a new Chairman this time.

Monthly Members' Meetings

Thursday 19th January, 7.30pm at Saunders & Senior Offices. 2 Tombland Alley, Norwich.
Thursday 15th February, 7.30pm at Saunders & Senior Offices. 2 Tombland Alley, Norwich.
Thursday 15th March, 7.30pm at Saunders & Senior Offices. 2 Tombland Alley, Norwich.

Thursday evening pub rides:

It's that time of year again – lights and winter woollies !!

26th October	Dun Cow, Swainsthorpe
30th November	The Bell Inn, Salhouse
28th December	The Ship, South Walsham
25th January 07	Two Friends, Blofield Heath
22nd February 07	Shoulder of Mutton, Strumpshaw
29th March 07	White Horse, Crostwick

We aim to be at the pub between 7.00 and 7.30pm. Either meet us there or join us on a ride from Norwich. It would be helpful if you could phone me if you're definitely coming as I can give details of meeting arrangements, if required, and will book a table.

Hope to see you

FraserTomsett

Give me a ring on 01603 471827. Mobile: 07843588708. e-mail: fraser92@ntlworld.com

The Overtaking Game

Dr Ian Walker is a psychologist at the University of Bath and, to study driver behaviour towards vulnerable road users, he has spent the last few weeks cycling through the streets of Bristol and Salisbury wearing a ladies wig! This is not just his leisure pursuit, but a scientifically valid experiment.

His bicycle was fitted with an ultrasonic distance sensor and a video camera to record the colour and type of each passing vehicle. He cycled over 200 miles along main radial routes, city centre and suburban roads between the hours of 7am and 6pm. His cycling speed was between 10-12 mph where possible. As well as collecting loads of statistics his research comes to some pretty startling conclusions. Specifically the closer to the kerb you cycle the more room passing vehicles give you. Helmeted riders were given on average 8 cm less room than un-helmeted. Women (or at least Dr Ian in a wig) were given on average 14cm more room than men. Drivers consistently gave more room to people wearing ordinary clothes while cycling than to Lycra clad cyclists.

He also categorised the type of vehicle into HGV, buses, vans, taxis and cars. Interestingly it was the HGV's and buses which gave him least room - the so called professional drivers. Taxis were next as one might expect, but 'white van man' gave an average of 1.27m room, or only 6cm less than cars generally.

What conclusions can be drawn from all this? Well apart from a fascinating read, the study shows that drivers really do base their decision to overtake or not on what they see - i.e. where you are on the road, whether you are wearing a helmet and type of clothing. Experienced riders often ride well out from the kerb and pull in slightly as cars pass, maybe the best defensive stance to take. Of course all the figures apply to overtaking only, so they aren't necessarily an argument for ditching the helmet, donning a long haired wig, and riding in the gutter for the rest of your days - if only life were that simple!

Summary of article published in A to B magazine, October 2006. Ref: www.atob.org.uk and www.drianwalker.com

Richard Bearman

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 views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the policy of Norwich Cycling Campaign.