

NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

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A newcomer's perspective

I met Norwich Cycling Campaign at this year's Norwich 50/100. So I was pleased to be able to join several events in this year's bike week. On Monday Sarah led a gentle ride to Wymondham. There were three new faces beside myself and we were a bit of a motley crew in fitness terms. A detour of a few back streets of Wymondham timed us perfectly to lunch safely in the dry just as rain started to pelt down. Fear of further deluge deterred us from a visit to the abbey and we enjoyed a relatively dry ride home.

On Tuesday we were about to leave for Heathersett when an Italian woman came rushing up brandishing a leaflet. She had no bike but asked to join the ride! Martin, the leader, looked initially bemused and then somewhat alarmed as in a mad moment I loaned her my bike and trotted off home for a spare. Picking up my other bike I joined the others at Eaton. In Heathersett beer, food and company were good but the journey home proved more eventful. The heavens opened just as we were leaving and my new friend sported a rear wheel puncture. It was dark, pouring down, and I had neither tools nor know-how. Martin gallantly offered an inner tube but I didn't know where to begin with a back wheel in a thunder storm and reassured all it was ok to leave us. The skies were incredibly beautiful with the most violent thunder and lightning and frankly, once sodden, I enjoyed the experience. Not my new Italian friend and, as we walked, I was mildly chastised for not belonging to the equivalent of the Italian bicycle AA! Oh the mad English!

On Thursday I discovered the delights of Fraser and Andrew's recumbent world and was introduced to Rachel's' Brompton (apologies for my near fatal error of referring to it as a 'shopper!') I enjoyed the company, it was a fun evening, my £3.50 winnings offset the cost of my food so I may be tempted to bingo again!

Friday's Bicycle Biryani saw Richard lead a large group of us out via Marriott's Way and back via Old Catton in glorious evening sunshine. We were very impressed on our return by the stunningly blue and yellow colour-coordinated curtains, tables and balloons, and a delicious feast.

Concerns have been expressed about low turn-out for events but I really appreciated a different ride being on offer each day. Although the week did make rather a hole in my pocket with its emphasis on buying food and drink, I really enjoyed the light hearted, fun but caring perspective on cycling, quite different from my usual selfish fitness training experiences.

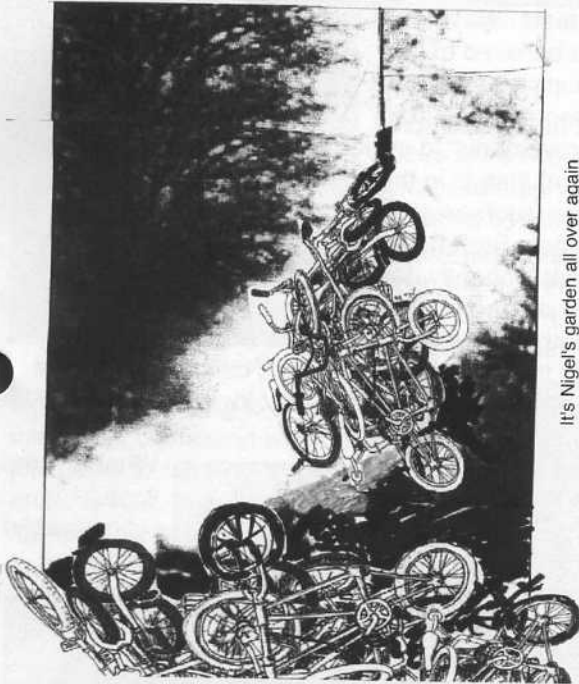
Tina Potter

Cover: Bank Holiday Monday, Whitlingham Lane, Norwich



More Mutterings from Matthew

We have interrupted the normal cycle of Matthew's Mutterings in order to bring you an important and disturbing report about a new crisis that has hit the city.



It's Nigel's garden all over again

DISEASE RETURNS TO AFFLICT CITY

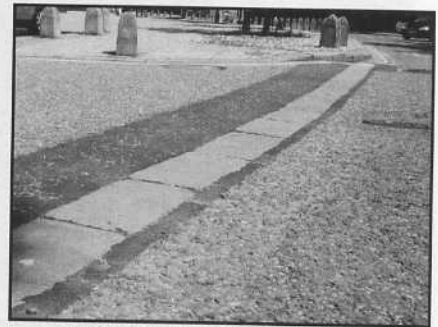
Citizens face renewed clampdown - but is it too little too late?

Local government officials have confirmed that Norwich is facing a renewed outbreak of foot-and-bike disease, the debilitating tendency to regard walking and cycling as serious forms of transport. The scale of the outbreak has surprised senior officers. An unnamed source admitted that initial slight concern gave way to growing alarm when it was discovered that some of Norwich City Council's own technical officers were showing the symptoms, leading to fears that it could be spread through the way they carried out their work, and perhaps even trigger a pandemic of walking and cycling. It now seems inevitable that only a major cull will avoid a calamitous blow to the local car industry. It has been a baptism of fire for the new administration since they took control at the last election. A series of disasters have hit the city against the already fragile local situation following the melting of the ice sculptures and the failure of the football club to reach the play-offs. Then came the forcible replacement of puppet man's props by mob rule, responded to in retaliation by the ill-advised placement of a large brain in Hay Hill by tense officials, followed by something of a cerebral stand-off. Central government intervened by using unitary

status legislation to deliver a 'yes-but-no-but-yes-but' appeasement gesture to local people, and Morph, a plasticine-like council leader moulded by public opinion, could have been forgiven for thinking he had been bought time. No, he was in danger of being squashed.

Just as bucket and spade were being unpacked in a time-lapse sequence shot at Hemsby, the news broke that workmen had been seen unilaterally creating new flushed kerbs out of vertical upstands at Bedding Lane and Chapelfield East, and Morph immediately

had to return to the city to chair the hastily reconvened COBLA emergency committee (Clampdown on Bike Legitimising Activity). And not a moment too soon. Reports



Vertical upstand spoilt at Bedding Lane

were already coming in of further outbreaks of pavement widening and cycle-friendly construction right across the city.

In Chapelfield Gardens, it became apparent that the previously frowned-upon act of cycling through the park was being tolerated and even helped, with the removal of barriers and conversion of the underpass beneath Chapelfield Road into a cycle path.



Chapelfield Gardens activity

When questioned under caution, one of the workers let slip that there were placards all made up and ready to install that actually stated 'considerate cycling welcome'

but this has yet to be confirmed by council sign acceptability inspectors.

Over at the Fellowes Plain development on the old N&N Hospital site, rumours began circulating that the developers had succumbed to the infection and suddenly agreed to implement a path connection through the boundary wall opposite the



Wall to be breached at Fellowes Plain



