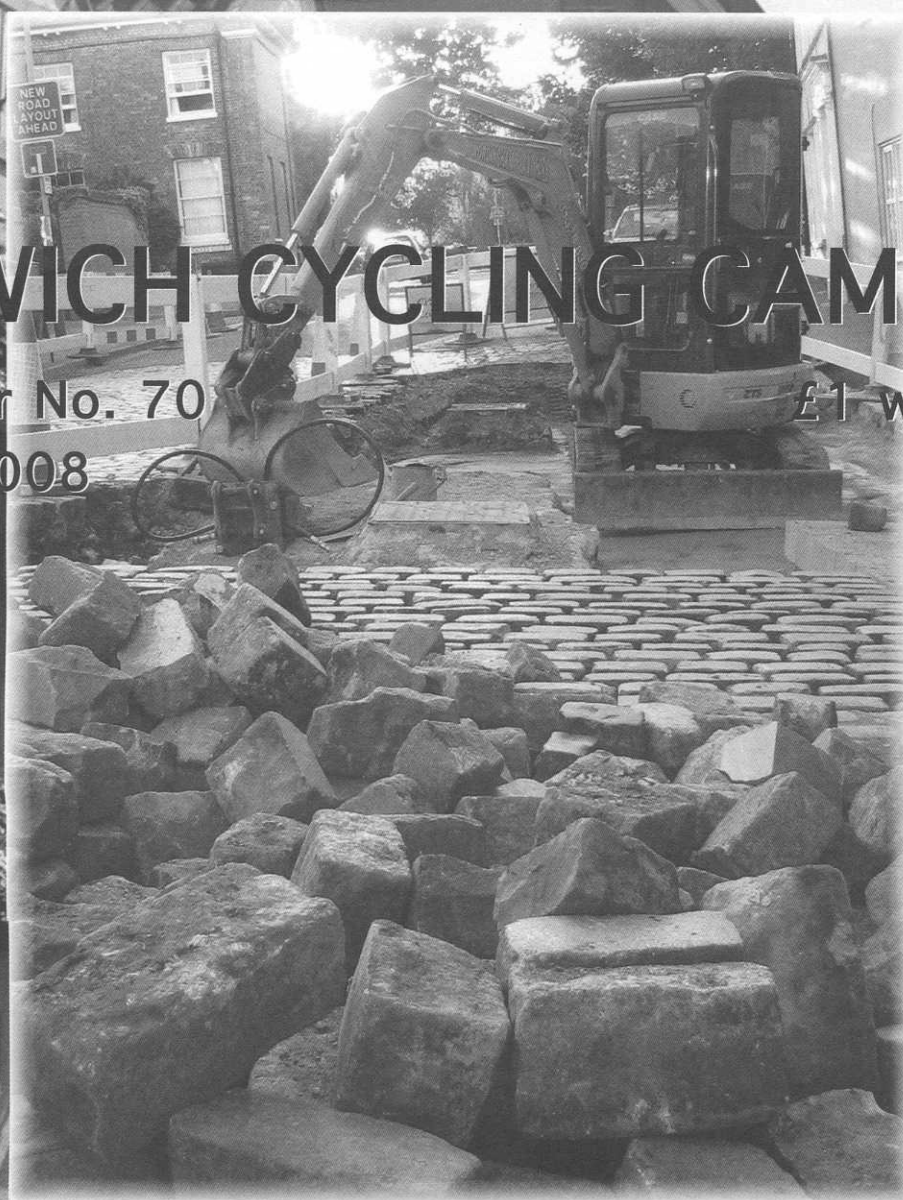


NORWICH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Newsletter No. 70
Autumn 2008

£1 where sold



And all for our sake...

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The editor has done two years duty and is stepping down after this issue. Any volunteers please contact Richard Bearman
richard.bearman@cooptel.net Tel: 504495

What's Happening?

Monthly members' meetings

Thursday 16th October 2008, 7:30 pm at United Reform Church, Princes St, Norwich.

Come and Try It (CATI) Cycle Rides

Saturday, 4 October, 2pm: meet Thorpe End village green for ride to Blofield. Leader: Phyll, 01603 435547

Saturday, 18 October, 2pm: meet County Hall roundabout for short ride round Whitlingham Broad. Leader: Phyll, 01603 435547

The CATI ride season finishes here. Hopefully it will resume on Easter Monday 2009, but contact Phyll nearer the time, or see website www.norwichcyclingcampaign.org

Cover: Pottergate improvements. Photo and idea: Matthew Williams



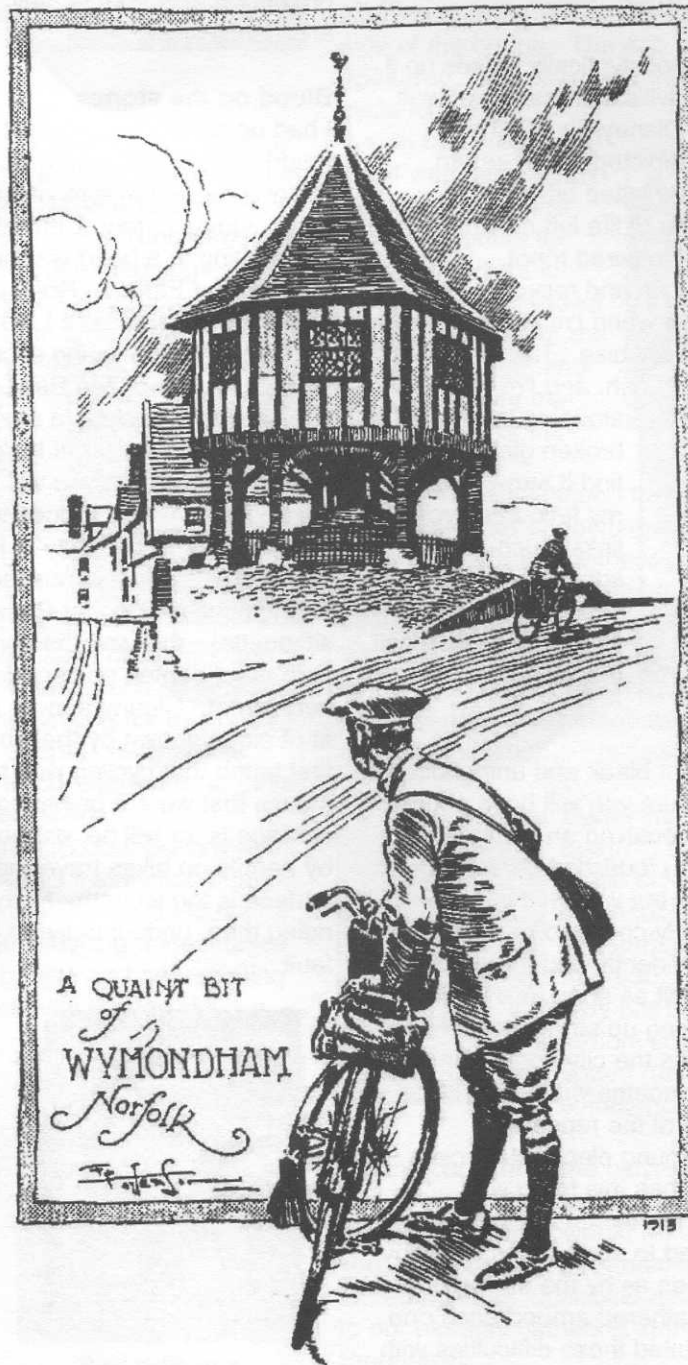
Wet Wheels to Wymondham

Those of us not put off by the thought of a few drops of rain gathered outside the Forum 9am Saturday 21 June. There was a dozen of us who set-off with a complete range of confidence (will I actually get to Wymondham? versus we need to prepare for our long distance ride), preparedness for rain (t-shirt versus wet gear) and alertness from the following night (still recovering versus lots of sleep and ready to go!). By the time we'd turned into Chapelfield Park we'd lost one cyclist (t-shirt and still recovering) but the rest of us carried on towards Bluebell Road (another cyclist pulled up) then along Earham Road to get to the path along the back of Bowthorpe to join the road again at Three Score.

The city bit done, we had a lovely cycle down to Bawburgh and then Marlingford before crossing the Watton Road. We took it slowly and kept stopping so that folks not used to cycling could catch their breath from the

short hills. It was cloudy but dry so we had time to soak in the countryside - the verges, trees, smells and wildlife. We pedalled on and took the back road into Wymondham, parking the bikes under the archway to the car-park.

The rain started in earnest just as we arrived so we agreed to meet in an hours time to cycle back and dived into our respective joys of Wymondham (cafes, shops, market stalls, pubs). I personally had a lovely cup of coffee and very yummy slice of victoria sandwich cake followed by a good mooch around the market stall (leek and lettuce plants safely tucked away) and in the excellent bookshop tucked in one of the courtyards. We collected one of the cyclists who'd originally pulled up in Norwich (he'd decided to go a different way) but set off less a couple of others



who were going to cycle on further as part of their training for their long distance ride. The weather was damp and miserable but the route back was quicker (via Ketteringham and Cringleford) as it was shorter and less hilly. A couple stopped off en route in Cringleford to see what the school fete had to offer - I think it was the fire engine and firemen that most appealed though! The rest of us wheeled our way back down the Newmarket Road with not a Foulger's lorry in sight! The best bits - that victoria sponge cake of course and also the satisfaction of seeing someone who didn't think they could cycle to Wymondham and back realise that she'd done it, enjoyed it and might even do it again!

Rachael.



More Musings from Matthew

Blowing in the wind

They say times, they are a-changing. The days of cheap energy are over... the days of cheap anything are over. In fact, the days may be over. So, in the context of our role as the Cycling Campaign for Norwich, are we at least beginning to see a change in people's travel behaviour? Could utility cycling really be about to see a major surge in popularity? Are we at last winning the war? Or is it just the end of the beginning, the middle third of a battle in the first section of the five-part conflict, with at least three stages of skirmishing still to come? Oh, work it out for yourself!

Now I've got you thinking apocalyptically, hands up if you saw this year's end-of-civilisation-as-we-know-it animated film offering from Disney/Pixar? The computer-generated story depicted a post-urban world after its inhabitants had jetted off into the sunset. One of the few signs of life left moving in the landscape was a little solar-powered robot programmed to clean things up and recycle. That's exactly how I feel some days when I'm out and about our bleak windswept city on my bike. The reason is I usually carry a dustpan and brush, and I'm often



stopping to sweep up broken glass when I find it strewn across my favourite cycle links (such as the subway under Grapes Hill or Three King Lane). Just call me Wall-Matt then.

Elephant dung

Actually, our city was far from bleak and uninhabited during the summer, as I'm sure you will have noticed. Not only it seems have we received an extended visitation from the rampaging touristic hordes from northern Essex and the like, but we have also been the unlikely hosts of a brightly-coloured herd of elephants. These beasts evidently had a pre-arranged cunning plan to split as soon as they set foot off the train, quickly taking up strategic positions on thoroughfares right across the city centre, and standing sentry for several months without so much as batting an eyelid in spite of the repeated ministrations of numerous young elephant-fanciers and their parents. So what has this to do with cycling? You might expect me to start whingeing about the obstruction caused to cycle paths, if not by the bulky animals themselves as by the throng of camera-clicking admirers gathered around each one. But no, we bicyclists negotiated those difficulties with

our accustomed stoicism and aplomb. For me, the trouble came when on one occasion having leant my trusty machine against its usual wall and turned away, I went back and found my bike nestling up against one of the elephants. Endearing at first, but after the third time it happened I began to realise there was bit of crush going on, and now of course they are inseparable...



All over each other

Blood on the stones

I had persuaded myself that the final phase of resurfacing of Pottergate was a success story borne out of a naive idealism via some stubborn campaigning.... nay, a pulsating race-against-time, culminating in a heart-warming victory of hope over despair and Earlham Road commuters cycling happily ever after... but I may have been mistaken. True, the last remaining section of bumpy granite setts at the top of Ten Bell Lane has been re-constructed to include a smooth surface just for us (see cover photo)! But look behind the scenes of public rejoicing and you will find a darker, disturbing tale of carnage and bloodshed. I have not shirked from my journalistic duty to investigate. Indeed I have lately spoken in hushed tones with an anonymous resident of Pottergate (appearing only in silhouette) - this was the very person who has seen fit to erect printed posters declaring carnage in that very street. Clearly a more serious response than the fit of pique shown by the Norwich Society when they first found that cycling was to be encouraged. It seems that we are being legitimately warned that the carnage is, or will be, or should be, caused entirely by people on bikes travelling too swiftly because the surface is too smooth. Nothing to do with reckless riding then, undoubtedly it's Norwich City Council's fault.



I feel in my rattled bones that more trouble is likely to ensue not far away at cobbled Princes Street, where some adjustments are underway to change the traffic flow as part of the rejuvenation of St Andrew's Plain. Not that I'd dare suggest a smoother surface is being planned on that street, rather that the direction of one-way motor traffic flow is to be reversed in the bit between St Andrew's Plain and the top of Elm Hill. That would be bad for cycling if it wasn't for the cast-iron assurance I've been given that there will be far fewer cars and the same stretch will be made two-way for cycling. You sound unconvinced... maybe we should wait and see.



Courtesy unleashed in the park

Community wardens have reported their concerns at a growing problem of social behaviour breaking out in the Chapelfield area of the city. Whereas a few years ago no-one would think twice about walking through the park smashing cider bottles and mugging passers-by of an evening, it is now hardly possible to even ride a cycle through without someone smiling and saying hello, or being confronted by stunning flower beds and pretty buskers.

This apparent change in character of the park and in the behaviour of its patrons has been traced back to what is now regarded as a rather foolish decision two years ago not to impose a ban on illicit activity such as bicycle riding through the subway and singing (or even only one of these), but instead to adopt a softly-softly approach requesting people to be 'courteous' to other persons, as if they were almost human.

A spokesman for the Chapelfield Gibbet Society said 'We always felt that the ill-advised installation of an unmarked dropped kerb opposite Dencora House was an act of extreme folly, just inviting undesirables to start looking out for other people and appreciating one of Norwich's green assets. It's looking like our worst fears are being realised.' A spokesman for Norwich City Council said that there had been extensive consultation, as a result of which it had been decided not to erect a sign saying 'don't pinch this sign', which thus proved the scheme had been a success.



Best behaviour

Missing logo

Would you be prepared to lie down in the road and have a double-decker bus park on top of you? Well nor would I, which may perhaps explain why the logo we were expecting has done a runner. I refer to the new 'compact' advanced stop line (ASL) that we now have at Thorpe Road near the railway station, at the approach to Foundry Bridge just past the bus lay-by. I was looking forward to a triumphant declaration of the good news after a five-year campaign to get this ASL - at an obvious location where inbound cyclists need to be ahead of the queuing traffic because we are usually wanting to turn right on the far side of the bridge. The ASL box appeared, but where was the cycle logo?



It then occurred to me that I was being stupid expecting one - the box is of course for First bus drivers to park their front wheels in when waiting for the lights to change, and we'll just ignore the motorcyclist for the moment. The



Feel free

alternative explanation I have been given is that the white-liner's art of painting a bicycle has now finally been lost. We had witnessed a deterioration into surrealist tendencies over recent years, and you can take that for a subtle plug for my forthcoming book: 'The bicycle logos of Norwich: an illustrated history', in the shops for Christmas.

[Editor's note: After Matthew had written this article, the logo miraculously appeared!]



Suffering the rumbling cramps again

While on the subject of buses, those jolly green and cuddly six-litre turbocharged behemoths of the road, I was shocked to hear they are being blamed for the terrible condition of the rustic speed ramps along our urban spine, including Castle Meadow.

Having completed the bicycle logo book (more plug), I have to admit to having become something of a ramp-fancier, but I would rather you kept this to yourself (you are nevertheless most welcome to join the enthusiasts' specialist newsgroup and come along to our monthly gathering in the bus shelter on St Stephen's).



To the ardent urban cyclist, a damaged ramp represents a special kind of challenge, but you soon get to know the right way to tackle your favourite example. Whether the defects are just a matter of being repeatedly whammed by bus wheels or rather the result of original defective construction is an interesting point (one endlessly debated in the bus shelter).

As evidence, I hereby present to you my hypothesis as to why certain of the lesser ramps of Brunswick Road are uncommonly unpleasant to cycle over.



Spot the difference



The reason is that the operative who constructed them didn't have his glasses on. You can see the odd kerb stone which should have been laid with its flat face forming the ramp was placed the wrong way up, making for a nasty kerdunk every time we pass over it. Beat that for fascinating fact of the day.

The road to nowhere

Just around the corner from the aforesaid ramps is the delightful Fellowes Plain, a picturesque little development of exclusive apartments arranged around a pond bearing the plaque "Danger Pond". You will recall an historic agreement signed at the UN in New York earlier this year to puncture a section of the wall surrounding the historic N&N hospital



Walled out

grounds to allow a cycle route connecting across the Newmarket Road junction to Grove Road. We had been looking forward to a Berlin-style 'so

where were you the night the wall came down' moment soon, but this hasn't happened yet. In spite of the recommencement of the Cold War (and probably also the freezing over of Hell while we wait), I have been assured by the developers Charles Church that this will happen in due course - they just need to sell a few more properties first...

Unbelievable in this day and age

And also not a million miles from the old N&N site, I can't help but draw your attention to another fine example of the art of 21st century cocking up of a simple 20th century issue. Here we go again I hear you murmuring as I hark on yet again about the matter of cycle stands. [See copied letter on page 10] Why oh why oh why oh why oh why is it sooooooooooooo difficult for designers and their Norwich City Council Planning department minders to ensure new cycle parking is (a) properly sited in a prominent place, and (b) not comprising wheel-grabbers but Sheffield stands? The answer? 'It's worth allowing completely useless cycle parking just to wind you up, Mr Meldrew.'

Eaton Road goes round bend

As night follows day, so it seems that off-road cycle paths in Norwich create unforeseen difficulties. At least, they are apparently unforeseen by those in City or County Hall who have the boringly repetitive flash of inspiration to get the bikes off the road with a quick re-designation of the footway to shared use. Consider the junction of Newmarket Road cyclepath with Eaton Road. Pleasing as it may be to see increasing numbers of CNS students cycling to school, there is merry mayhem every schoolday morning where the cyclepath meets the signalised junction, where it appears there is no direct legal connection into Eaton Road without having to go directly onto the road doing a detour around two sides of a triangle. The result is that many people are taking the direct route resorting to cycling round the fence line onto the undesignated footway. Cue outrage and apoplexy from residents. Before enforcing the law, we believe it would be sensible to rationalise this junction by making the Newmarket Road cyclepath continuous across the Eaton Road junction in front of the stop line, thus making it easier to insist that cyclists get onto the carriageway as soon as they enter Eaton Road and the last 150 metres of the blissful journey to school. Any



alternative suggestions please?

Motor city draws nearer?

The Boundary Commission have certainly set the cat among the pigeons with their suggested changes. In the space of a few weeks Norfolk County Council seem to have gone from the status of walking dead to masters of the universe (well, of Norfolk, and a bit of Suffolk, but most importantly with TOTAL CONTROL over that upstart Norwich).

However it all turns out in the end (cynical, moi?), those devotees of the evil empire have seized their chance to pull another petrol-headed flanker, or to put it another way, to put in place another part of their long-term plan to strangle the city centre within a



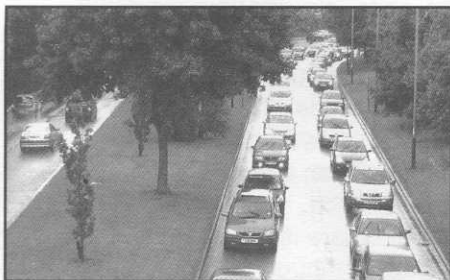
How it was



Early 1970s destruction



By 1973 it was lovely

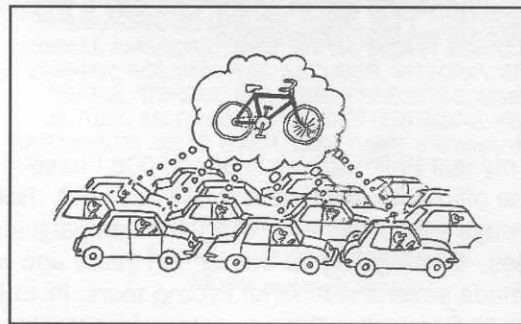


The joy of the open road

complete urban motorway.

We got to hear about a plan to rip out much of the central reservation on that fearsome dual carriageway Grapes Hill to make space for another lane of traffic, i.e. four lanes going down the hill! Alas poor crocuses. The nearside lane would be 150 metres of left turn only, just what we cyclists like when we're wanting to travel straight on (a quaint custom known as 'following the road'). Does it really need Norwich Cycling Campaign to point this out?

The madmen in County Hall have tried to keep as quiet as they can about this scheme so the Norwich natives don't get restless. But if forced to explain, they intend to sell it as a public transport improvement, um, allegedly so that buses don't get delayed swishing round into that bracing open freeway, Dereham Road! In my humble view, that's every bit as bonkers as claiming the proposed road-building near Anglia Square will cut air pollution.



And finally..

It's not much, but this modest lump of tarmac near the footbridge off Earham/Unthank Road wouldn't have happened without a campaigning effort by your loyal, local Norwich Cycling Campaign.



Little things

Matthew Williams



Phyll's Philosophies

A true tale on the CTC website shows how valuable cycling could be and why it should be promoted more. A mother in Sheffield wrote about her son who has Asperger's Syndrome, which manifests itself as deep depression and anxiety. At an appointment with his psychotherapist the boy was asked to colour a sheet of paper to reflect his feelings. He coloured the whole page black, using sharp, thick, heavy lines to express his feelings, but at the bottom of the page was a small yellow triangle. The psychotherapist asked what this represented and he replied, 'Riding my bike.' He went on to explain that when he is out riding his bike everything seems OK and manageable. As a result the parents decided that the whole family should get bikes and go for at least one long ride a week. The boy has decided that although he would still like to become a scientist when he grows up he would like to spend one day a week as a professional cyclist. Marvellous!

Since my last Philosophies in June 2008 I have become official full-time carer to my husband. Bob has always supported my cycling and campaigning activities. Since giving up our car ten years ago we have made several wonderful cycling tours, including London to Cornwall in 2000 to celebrate our ruby wedding. Five years ago we made our longest tour ever when we took the train to Liverpool and cycled home along the Trans Pennine Trail to Hull and then on Route 1. It turned out to be our grand finale for since then Bob has been beset by problems of age and infirmity - well, he is 83! He no longer has the energy and strength to ride his beloved touring bike; this has been passed to our son Gordon and is now doing good service in rural Oxfordshire. Even the electric Giant Lafree has become difficult for Bob, mainly due to its weight and that of its battery. Although one's body is no longer capable the mind is still as active and willing as ever. A frustrating situation but one which we just have to accept and adapt to as necessary.

Back in Newsletter 39, December 2000, I wrote in my (then) Chairman's Chat about our visit to the Manchester 'Wheels for All' scheme. Enterprise Park has an athletics track where 'Wheels for All' keeps its specialist equipment for use by disabled cyclists and their carers. There were Duet wheelchair bikes, solo and tandem (side by side) hand-cranked wheelchairs, plus variously adapted bikes, trikes, quads and tandems. We joined some of the disabled users to try them out. I was very impressed and thought what an asset for Norwich if we could have a similar scheme, possibly based at our (then) proposed cycle

centre in the Chapelfield complex and using the peripheral path around Chapelfield Gardens to ride on. But my dream for Norwich was deflated like a lead balloon, as always on the consideration of cost. Now, with a frustrated disabled husband the availability of such a scheme would indeed have made him happy, as well as many others in similar circumstances. Even our proposed cycle centre fell through, something still felt with great resentment by city cyclists.

The Come and Try It (CATI) rides started in April 1993 with a few adverts in shop windows and a letter in the local paper. I had been thinking that there were probably many potential cyclists about who would welcome going for a ride in a group but who didn't feel confident, committed or even fit enough to join an organised cycling club. Amazingly, that first advertised ride attracted 14 participants of all ages and conditions of fitness but who, for the most part, could be described as 'novice' or 'returner' cyclists.

I had put together a programme of fortnightly Saturday afternoon rides for the summer months, generally between 12 and 20 miles in length, with hopefully a convenient tea stop. I led the rides with husband Bob, in his fluorescent yellow jacket, bringing up the rear. The idea was that the rides should be enjoyable, sociable and not too strenuous. Throughout the summer the number of participants varied between 3 and 20 depending on the weather. Our rides generally started in the Norwich area, somewhere around the city periphery and going out into the surrounding countryside. A variety of starting points allowed people from different parts of the city to join in; novice cyclists don't want to travel several miles before setting off on the ride proper.

The CATI rides have been going every year since that start in 1993. We have had families join us, one for several years with the boys progressing from *trailer bike to their own machines*. One time we had a couple on a tandem with 3-month-old twins in a trailer and a 2-year-old on a kiddie seat. The rides have always been open to anyone; participants don't need to be members of anything, though some have gone on to join the CTC or some other group. I've had chats with people in other parts of Norfolk, even in other counties, asking about our group and wishing they had similar in their areas. There's plenty of scope out there for anyone willing to take the responsibility of starting such a group. Of course, there are others in existence. There is a CATI group now in South Norfolk. There is a 'Pedal Back the Years' group in Cornwall, though its name rather sounds as if it's confined to a certain age range.

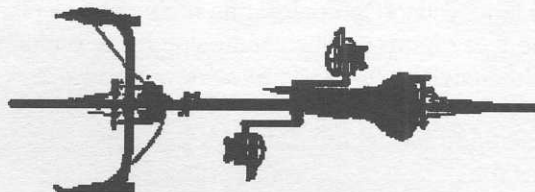
We've also met a similar group in Somerset, led by the local Sustrans ranger.

Now, because of Bob's increasing frailty, which could eventually mean I am unable to leave him on his own, I need someone willing to take over our CATI Group. Since we are now affiliated to the CTC for insurance purposes, all ride leaders need to be members of the CTC, or willing to join. CATI leaders need to be able to ride slowly and to be sympathetic to beginners' needs. It can feel like leading a class of children, but they soon gain confidence and fitness and enjoy the companionship. One just needs patience. Meanwhile I would be available to advise or train any potential leaders or ride organisers. Anyone interested please telephone me on 01603 435547.

As I write, the Olympics have just finished. Haven't we done well! We've done particularly well in the cycling events gaining 13 gold, 4 silver and 2 bronze medals. Will this result in more people taking up cycling, do you think? Since we'll be hosting the next Games could there be the possibility of a velodrome being built in the eastern region? I suggested this after visiting the Manchester one in 2000. Norwich would make the ideal venue, I reckon. We can but hope...

Phyll Hardie

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Dawson returns to lead lobby for safer roads

A new campaign group is to be launched next month to press the Government to invest in the road network on road safety grounds.

The Campaign for Safe Road Design aims to highlight how "quick, simple and affordable it is to save life by treating the roadside hazards that can kill and maim". The campaign will be chaired by John Dawson, who was the AA's policy director for ten years until 2004 and is now chairman of the European Road Assessment Programme that rates the safety of roads across Europe.

"Few other investments in the economy deliver a higher eco-

nomic or social return – not least by reducing the burden of emergency treatment and long-term care of people disabled in crashes," says the publicity material for the launch event on 8 July in the House of Lords.

Bodies endorsing the campaign include the AA, RAC Foundation, Freight Transport Association, EuroRAP, PACTS (the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety), the Institution of Highways and Transportation, Institute of Advanced Motorists motoring trust, CSS, Road Haulage Association, Driving for Better Business and Roadsafe.



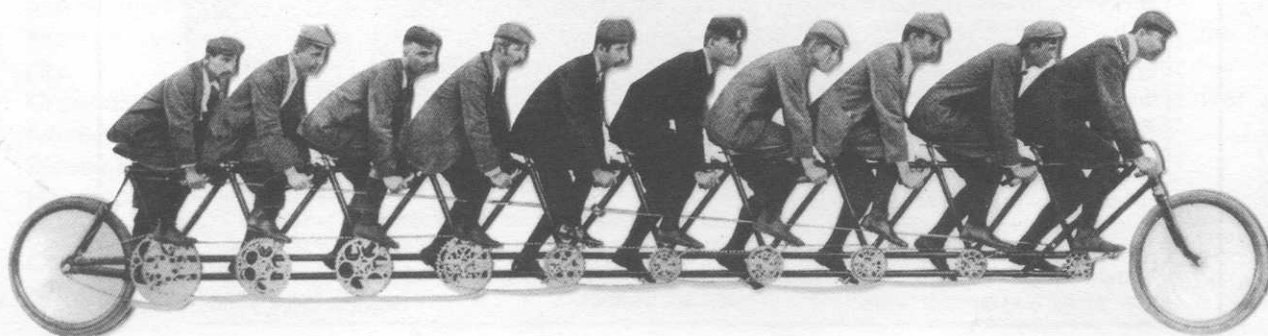
AGM

**All members are warmly invited to attend the Annual General Meeting,
Thursday 20 November
at the United Reformed Church, Princes Street.
Prompt 7:30pm start for AGM business
followed by an illustrated guide to "Norwich: The historic cycling city".**

**If you have any photos of cycling in Norwich anytime from 1945 that
you'd like to share with fellow cyclists, please do feel free to bring them
along either as a photo or digital image
(audio-visuals provided).**

**Please bring some buffet style food to share. Tea and coffee will be
provided or you are welcome to bring your own drinks.**

See you there!



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.