



CycleDigest

cycling in the urban and rural environment

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About CTC...

CTC - the national cyclists' organisation is working for all cyclists.

Through our services and activities we aim to improve the conditions and facilities for cyclists in urban and rural environments. Cycling is people-friendly, community-friendly, environment-friendly, and has a proven, measurable health benefit to the nation.

CTC also supports a network of fully accredited cycle campaigners, ready to give expert advice on cycling provision in their area, backed up with local knowledge. Members of our Right to Ride Network are authorised to represent us at ground-level and operate to set standards. If you'd like to make use of this excellent resource, whether you need help on an on-road, offroad or public transport issue, please contact CTC on 01483 520735, email righttoride@ctc.org.uk or via www.ctc.org.uk

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New publications, web info and diary dates

All Systems Go for CTC's Regional Benchmarking

CTC has just heard formally that it has funding from the Department for Transport to roll out benchmarking regionally throughout England. Working in partnership with the ERCDT (English Regions Cycling Development Team), CTC will be running six to eight regional benchmarking projects up to May 2005. To achieve this CTC is recruiting a project officer to work alongside Tony Russell, the existing project manager.

CTC's original 3-year Benchmarking Project enabled local authorities to compare and review their provision for cyclists, getting the best out of each other's experience and helping to identify examples of good practice. Over the autumn, CTC will be working with the ERCDT Co-ordinators to gauge the level of interest for the next project within each region and to establish which ones are most keen to participate. The first region is likely to be the North West, where several authorities have already expressed interest.

The extended project will also enable CTC to continue to work with those local authorities that participated in the initial three year project, and which are now implementing the action plans that resulted.

CTC is encouraging continuing involvement from Wales and Scotland, both of which were well represented in the UK-wide project, and is hoping for support from the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive in this respect.



Hand-held Mobile Phones Banned while Driving

The Government announced in June that it is to create a specific offence of 'driving while using a hand-held mobile phone', to carry a penalty of 3 points plus a £30 on-the-spot fine, which could increase to £1,000 if the case goes to court. This is welcome news, but CTC supports road safety organisations such as Brake (www.brake.org.uk) in calling for the use of hands-free phones, which are equally distracting, to be banned whilst driving too. It is also to be hoped that the legislation, once introduced, will be rigorously enforced.

Local Authorities Get their Cycling Marks

Each local highway authority in England now knows how it is doing in the eyes of the English Regions Cycling Development Team (ERCDT). The team, which reports to the National Cycling Strategy Board, has spent a year contacting local authority officers, sifting through policy and strategy documents, examining published data and carrying out site audits. The information they gathered was then subjected to a uniform structured methodology and scoring system and the results have now been sent, in confidence, to individual authorities. The assessments will be published eventually, but not in the form of detailed league tables and only after each authority has had the opportunity to comment. The intention is not to 'name or shame', but to point them in the right direction. In fact ERCDT will be returning to work with individual authorities to conclude agreed action plans and encouraging them to participate in CTC's Regional Benchmarking initiative. The summary sheets, however, are being made available to the Department for Transport and the Government's Regional Offices, to help inform their judgments on this year's Local Transport Plans 'Annual Progress Reports'.

020 7944 2977

www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk

The National Cycling Strategy Board now boasts two new members: olympic gold cycling champion, Chris Boardman MBE and public health expert, Dr Alison Hill.

News from the Commons Transport Select Committee

- **New Inquiry: Traffic Law and its Enforcement**

The Committee is to investigate traffic law and its enforcement, a move that many cycle campaigners will welcome. Amongst other key questions, the Committee will consider whether sufficient priority is given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. Deadline 6 October 2003.

transcom@parliament.uk; 020 7219 6263

- **Urban Charging Schemes**

In its response to the Committee's report on Urban Charging Schemes (May 2003), the Government acknowledges that London's scheme, 'appears to be working well' and agrees that "...charging, when properly implemented can have a significant and positive impact on reducing congestion." Local authorities have the power to implement such schemes and it is now up to them to assess their likely effectiveness and if favourable, to develop 'workable proposals.'

- **Multi Modal Studies**

Multi Modal Studies (MMS) were intended to help develop sustainable transport solutions across England, but in its report "Jam Tomorrow?: The Multi Modal Study Investment Plans", the Committee expresses great concern that many serious issues, such as congestion, pollution and environmental damage, may not be tackled adequately as a result. In its response, the Government affirms its fundamental faith in the 10 Year Plan to deal with many of these problems. Happily, the Government supports the Committee's call for more travel education and travel reduction.

- **Road and Pathway Maintenance**

CTC has welcomed the Committee's 'Local Roads and Pathways' report which recognises that local authorities are failing cyclists by not maintaining roads well enough with them in mind and suggests that this deters potential riders. To address this, the Committee recommends that the Department for Transport revise 'Cycle Friendly Infrastructure' to contain a review of maintenance procedures and techniques. CTC, which gave evidence at the original Inquiry, calls for better inspection, fault reporting & response systems. It is hoped that this will result in a drop in the number of cyclists claiming for damages & injuries caused by badly maintained roads – claims which often prove costly to local authorities.

Transport Committee Reports and Government responses available from:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtran.htm#reports

Tel: 0870 600 5522; Fax: 0870 600 5533

customer.services@tso.co.uk (paper publications are priced)

Bike Week 2003

One of Dr Kim Howells very first appointments as Minister of State for Transport was with his bicycle, in celebration of Bike Week. On June 18th, he and almost 40 MPs and peers from all political parties met for a sunny, outdoors breakfast at the Royal College of Physicians in Regents Park and then cycled to Parliament Square. The ride was organised by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group and aimed to raise awareness of more and more evidence that there is a link between obesity and cancer.



Dr Kim Howells takes part in the Parliamentary Bike Ride

Bike Week 2003 also saw 1,220 local cycling events and rides throughout the UK, attracting 116,385 participants. Local authorities were the biggest single category of event organiser, while cycle clubs and campaigners also organised hundreds of events for novices. Bike2Work was the most popular theme this year. Bike Week has been developed over the past three years to appeal to all cycle owners rather than just cycling enthusiasts, in response to a request from the main funder, the Department for Transport. The cycle industry has recently announced £25,000 funding for Bike Week 2004, - see www.bikeweek.org.uk.

Lawless cyclists let side down, says cycling MP

Ben Chapman, MP (Wirral, South) regular commuting cyclist and cycling advocate, managed to secure a rare event in Westminster Hall on 14th May: a debate on the provision for and regulation of cyclists. He took the opportunity to express his dismay over lawless cyclists who pose risk both to themselves and others and give a bad name to all cyclists. Whilst he called for firmer law-enforcement, he added that in return for respecting the law, cyclists' needs should be adequately provided for. David Jamieson, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, said in response that lawless cyclists "...can certainly expect no comfort from the Government," but equally, that "Better facilities for cyclists alone are of course not enough. Cycling needs to be widely seen as a practical, mainstream form of transport."

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/cm030514/hallindex/30514-x.htm

(House Of Commons Daily Debates 14/5/03 columns 94 – 101WH)

The Helmet Controversy: campaign update

By Roger Geffen, CTC Campaigns and Policy Manager

CTC has attracted widespread coverage for its strong opposition to a Government publicity campaign aimed at teenage cyclists, which uses macabre images of skull X-rays to promote the use of helmets.

CTC's position is "agnostic" about helmets. We believe that, given balanced information, cyclists are best placed to judge for themselves. However, we are highly sceptical of promotional campaigns which argue that:

- 1 "Cycling is dangerous". A report for the Government (TRL 286) found that helmet promotion campaigns were "strongly linked to a decrease in the number of cyclists observed", presumably because they add to people's fears of cycling. Yet the Government has acknowledged (and we greatly welcome this) that "the health benefits of cycling far outweigh the risks." At a time of alarming rises in obesity, why does the Government persist with publicity campaigns likely to scare people into increasingly sedentary lifestyles?
- 2 "Helmets will make it safe". There is a conspicuous lack of "real world" evidence to support the wildly optimistic claims sometimes made for helmets. Increased wearing has NEVER been linked to reductions in either the risk or severity of cyclists' injuries; indeed, there are several cases where the opposite has occurred. This is a counter-intuitive finding, but there is evidence to support a number of possible explanations: the theory, for instance, of "risk compensation", i.e. that people take greater risks when they feel better protected. The absence of a "helmet dividend" may be partly explained by people, especially younger cyclists, taking greater risks because they think helmets make cycling "safe" (in fact most helmets are designed only to withstand impacts equivalent to a fall from a stationary riding position). This makes it all the more important that helmet promotion campaigns should not give people a "false sense of security" by exaggerating the claimed benefits.

CTC's letter-writing was supported not only by large numbers of cyclists, but also by MPs, health sector organisations, local authorities and many others. DfT responded with three different "standard letters" from ministers, all of which leave questions unanswered. We also pointed out several factual inaccuracies on the government's "Cyclesense" website (www.cyclesense.net) for teenagers, which greatly exaggerated the dangers of cycling. These errors have since been subtly corrected, but in ways which make it look more like a defensive response to CTC rather than an information-source for teenage cyclists! Meanwhile a complaint about the "Cyclesense" campaign has now been lodged with the Advertising Standards Authority; their initial view (just received) is that the Department does indeed have a case to answer.

See www.ctc.org.uk for more, plus briefing sheets.

Winning Ways to Travel Planning

The use of alternative modes of transport to the car is an important strategy in Travel Plans, so CycleDigest sent CLIVE OXX of CTC London along to ACT's (Association for Commuter Transport) 'Winning Ways to Travel Planning' conference on June 24th, to hear about the contribution that cycling makes to such schemes

The conference gave an insight, via case histories of award winning Commuter Travel Plan Schemes, into the measures which ACT members are taking to reduce traffic congestion and pollution caused by commuter journeys. Attendees included ACT members, transport consultants, representatives from government bodies and local authorities, transport operators, commercial companies, office centre developers, NHS care units, universities and colleges and NGO/partnerships.

The conference was held at the Stockley Business Park at Uxbridge, a case study in itself. This is an impressive new development of prestigious offices set in extensive landscaped grounds. The 1998 Transport Plan for the Park proposed transport alternatives in advance and the results are now in operation. They have, for example, led to the design and purchase of buses suitable for women and the elderly and a website system which provides travel information direct both to screens in tenant companies' offices and to a Commuter Centre. Cycling is encouraged with a 'Borrow a Bike Scheme,' evident as soon as people enter the Centre. A rack of six bicycles is prominently displayed, offering the free loan of a bike for four weeks, the provision of helmets, with advice and information all attractively and prominently displayed nearby. These services are next to comfortable seating with notices entreating cyclists and people awaiting buses to take a free cup of coffee or tea while they talk or wait. When cyclists leave they can cycle safely on the new towpath along the nearby Grand Union Canal. Visitors may view Stockley Park's model Commuter Centre in advance of the official opening on September 15th, by ringing Zoe on 0208 573 5923.

Talking with delegates highlighted the increasing importance of Travel Plans in traffic planning. It was also apparent that those involved in persuading people to commute by bike and not by car, must persuade companies to allow direct talks with their employees to explore why and how to change

their habits. Such talks should take place on a regular basis. Speaking to managers about the theory of Travel Plans without follow-up contact with employees is not likely to result in change.

Details of the experiences of other award winning schemes incorporating cycling included B&Q, Dublin Cycling Campaign and Orange. These deserve study too.

Further information & contacts:
Tom Farnsworth, Marketing Manager, ACT
Tel.: 020 7348 1970 mail@act-uk.com

Resource information includes: –

- ACT Travel Plan Resource Pack, produced by Steer Davies Gleave on behalf of AEA Technology for the Department of Transport (DfT) Best Practice Programme. Tel.: 0845 602 1425 or download from www.transportenergy.org.uk/bestpractice
- Cycling Works! How Employers can make it easier for employees to cycle (National Cycling Forum) / Cycling to Work (Traffic Advisory Leaflet 11/97) gives advice and guidance to employers on Good Practice (DfT). Tel.: 020 7944 2978 or see www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk/cycling_to_work.html

Bristol City rewards Travel Planning Employers

To encourage more companies to take up travel plans, Bristol City Council, together with the councils of Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council run an Avon Area Employers Travel Plan Award Scheme. This year, winners included Ikea, Norwich Union Life, Arup & the Environment Agency. For more: Tel.: 0117 903 6559; ben_searle@bristol-city.gov.uk

EMMA

Liaising with In Town Without My Car on 22nd September and European Mobility Week, a new European initiative - Mobility Management Awareness (EMMA) - aims to give local authorities and companies the chance to promote their travel plans and put sustainable commuter travel in the spotlight.

01223 717852

Katherine.vonglos@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
www.emma-day.info

CTC Has Mixed Response to Government's Road Plans

CTC is strongly opposed to Alistair Darling's plans for £7billions' worth of road-widening schemes. CTC believes that this will encourage yet more traffic and the associated dangers will make it even harder to entice people out of their cars onto bikes. However, CTC does welcome the decision to reject a number of road building proposals along the South Coast, which were recommended by the South East England Regional Assembly through the Multi Modal Study. CTC South East campaigners are relieved to find that, in this respect, the Secretary of State has adhered to his stated policy presumption against new schemes which damage environmentally sensitive areas (in this case the South Downs).

News in Brief...

More cycling projects funded

Dr Kim Howells MP, minister responsible for cycling, announced grants totalling £2.285M to 155 bidders for the second round of the DfT's Cycling Projects Fund. A large number of the grants were allocated to provide cycle parking facilities at schools, colleges and workplaces. CTC itself won £48,000 to create a new pool of 100 cycle trainers as part of its recently launched national adult cycle training scheme. www.ctc.org.uk
www.dft.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2003_0073

Common sense and courtesy in Essex

Essex County Council has introduced a new road safety campaign, 'Share the Road,' focusing on everyday situations and simple suggestions for a thoughtful and more positive attitude towards other road users. Section devoted to cyclists. The aim is to reduce road casualties. 01245 437781; Katie.brimley@essexcc.gov.uk

New name for cycling charity

The cycle promotion charity Cycle West has changed its name to Life Cycle UK to reflect its growing influence on national policy and practice.

Peter Andrews 0117 929 0440
www.lifecycleuk.org.uk

Snowdon Bridleways

After something of a battle, cyclists in Wales have succeeded in moulding the Snowdon Voluntary Agreement into a more cycle-friendly format. The agreement restricts cycling at peak-times in the summer (May to September) and is designed to reduce conflict between cyclists and walkers. Signs, leaflets and posters are now much friendlier towards cyclists

Attitudes to Walking and Cycling

Results from the Office of National Statistics' October 2002 Omnibus Survey concerning people's attitudes to walking and cycling were published at the end of July. Relating mostly to Great Britain, key findings are:

- 13% of respondents said they cycle at least once a week (16% men, 10% women). 60% said they never cycle;
- 58% said that they currently use a car to make journeys within walking or cycling distance;
- About half of cyclists mainly use roads without cycle lanes for their cycle trips; about one in ten mainly use on-road cycle lanes & similar proportions mainly use cycle tracks away from roads and cycle mainly in parks or the open country. The remainder uses a mixture;
- The average satisfaction rating given by respondents for walking conditions was 6.4 out of 10. The equivalent average for cycling conditions was 4.6;
- 27% of people think cycling conditions have improved over the last two years, compared with 11% who think they have got worse;
- Almost three-quarters of adults agreed with the statement 'The idea of cycling on busy roads frightens me';
- 23% would cycle more if car parking was more expensive & 26% if it were more difficult.

www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/page/dft_transstats_023228.hcsp

More Cycling, Fewer Casualties

While cycle usage rose from 2001/02, the number of cyclists seriously injured fell by 9% (to 2,320), and the number of cyclists killed by 6% (to 130). Could it be that more cycling means it's safer to cycle?

Road Casualties Great Britain: 2002 - Main Results.
www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/page/dft_transstats_022247.hcsp

London's Cycling Oscars 2003 - Nominations Wanted!

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is inviting nominations for its unique annual awards for projects that have done the most to benefit cycling in London. Deadline October 3rd 2003.

For guidance and criteria, visit www.lcc.org.uk/news/current_news/Awards_Criteria_2003.doc Or contact Tom Bogdanowicz on 020 7928 6112; office@lcc.org.uk

Midlands RPC Shows the Way with Local Cyclists

In an example of well co-ordinated effort, local cycling groups from CTC, and the Cycle Campaigns Network (CCN) surveyed 58 of the 110 stations in the Midlands Rail Passengers Committee bailiwick, and the results were committed to a report in just 3 weeks. The report Bike-Rail 2 on the cyclists' interface with the railway (access, ticket purchase, information, parking) was launched on 12 June, in Wolverhampton, following up the earlier Bike-Rail report of 2001. This method of combining grass-roots knowledge with the co-ordinating ability of the official reporting body was welcomed by the then minister, John Spellar, as a way to combine the strengths of both to good effect. The document can be downloaded (.jpg) from www.railpassengers.org.uk/Midlands.

Thoughts on Statistics

In the last issue CycleDigest reported that the DfT had revised their traffic level estimates back to 1993 and had concluded that pedal cycle traffic had risen by over 5% (1993 - 2001), and not dropped by 11% as previously thought. ROGER GEFFEN, CTC Campaigns and Policy Manager, considers...

The Government's annual Transport Statistics Great Britain report is based on estimates of traffic (including cycle traffic) observed at a representative sample of count sites. However, each site is intended to represent a particular category of road. We understand that there was previously just one category of rural road, which included everything from heavily trafficked 'B' roads through to country lanes. This category has been subdivided, and the resulting disaggregation of the data suggests that the cycle flows on the new country lanes category are much higher than had been estimated when the two categories had been lumped together. There are a lot of roads in this category, so scaling up the sample data to produce a national figure has resulted in a higher estimate of overall cycle use. Both we and Sustrans feel that DfT is probably right in placing greater faith in the new (rather than the old) estimate.

DfT also conducts a second survey, namely the National Travel Survey (NTS), which is based on household interviews. This collects much more detailed data about, for instance, the purpose of people's journeys (this obviously cannot be observed at on-road count sites). As this data is more costly to collect, the number of participating households means that the data is only statistically significant when three years' worth of data are combined - that is why the NTS publications are "National Travel Survey 1994-96", or "National Travel Survey 1999-2001". The Commission for Integrated Transport recently confused the picture by quoting a 17% reduction in cycle use between 2000 and 2002. However, they were using data from two single years, hence it is statistically suspect to quote this as demonstrating a 17% reduction. Even when comparisons are made between different three-year periods (e.g. between 1994-6 and 1999-2001), it is doubtful if one can rely on statistical fluctuations in the use of minority modes, such as cycling.

It all points to the need for more data to be collected on cycling, if we are to be able to monitor "what initiatives work best" in increasing cycle use, particularly at the local level (the NTS data is only statistically significant at the national level, even after aggregating three years' worth!) But in terms of interpreting the limited data it currently collects, we believe DfT is doing the right thing.

On the Roads - Facts and Figures

- Costs of uninsured drivers are estimated at £1280M from 1997 - 2001, adding an estimated £15-£30 to each motorist's premiums in 2002; approximately 1.75 million vehicles are unlicensed, a loss to revenue of £193M during 2002-3 (offset by £110M in fines - 819,000 offenders were brought to book). A range of measures were announced in May to modernize the vehicle registration system, including stepping-up of DVLA's enforcement activities. House of Commons Daily Debates www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmhansrd.htm for 05/06/03 - column 563W & 19/06/03 - column 337W
- 30-49 year olds are primarily to blame for traffic growth in the past thirty years, say the Lib Dems. Press release 11/06/03 www.libdems.org.uk/index.cfm/page.homepage/section.home/article.4825
- estimated traffic levels rose by 2.5 per cent between 2001 and 2002, almost exclusively due to the rise in the number of cars and taxis; motorcycle and pedal cycle use rose by 5.5 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively from 2001 to 2002. Motorcycle traffic has been growing since the mid-1990s, while the rise in pedal cycle traffic is more recent.

Road Traffic Statistics for Great Britain: 2002
Tel: 020 7944 3095 Fax: 020 7944 4442
roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk
www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_023321.pdf

Cyclists Pleased to be Quids In

CTC has welcomed the announcement by train operator Arriva, the preferred bidder for the Wales & Borders Rail Franchise, that it plans to abolish a £1 bicycle reservation fee from the end of this year.

It is hoped that this will signal a step towards improvements to cycle facilities across the network, including cycle access and parking at railway stations throughout Wales to match the major investment proposals for car parking.



Introducing Dave Holladay, CTC's new Public Transport Campaigner

Dave has extensive experience in the fields of public transport and bikes. He trained in industrial and mechanical design, has worked for both British Rail and Sustrans and has been closely involved with CTC and DfT initiatives. Dave will work part time. To contact him, please ring CTC's main number 0870 873 0060 or email dave.holladay@ctc.org.uk

Bikes with Public Transport – Information failure

By Dave Holladay

In my travels it never fails to amaze that the really useful information about a local service (especially a bus) is only available at the point you arrive to catch it, and sometimes only from the driver when the bus arrives! In this vein CTC gathers in as much information as possible on services which carry bikes, on bus, coach, and boat, as well as air and rail. CTC's Information Office uses a small library of routes and timetables, and welcomes details of any services running now or planned for future launch. When you've funded a bus, trailer, or bike rack, it does help to tell people it is available for use.

Bikes on trains continues to be the main issue, and many reports come in of messed up bike reservations, especially it seems through some telesales and websites, where perhaps an inherent fault in the system exists, or an operator-specific detail is not widely known. We'd like to identify any pattern or specific problem so that we can work on resolving the issue with those running the service.

Congratulations to Scotrail for finding a way to provide additional capacity (in a road vehicle) to move bikes between Wick and Inverness for those returning by rail from an end-to-end ride.

National Trails to be free from 4x4's

Thanks to an amendment to the Railways and Transport Safety Bill from Baroness Scott of Needham Market, permanent Traffic Regulation Orders should ban non-essential mechanically propelled vehicles from National Trails (long distance routes mainly for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders). The Baroness explained that she thought the Trails were increasingly under threat from 4 x 4 motor vehicles and off-road motorbikes, which both damage the surface and detract from the enjoyment of other users.

Speeding Drivers Grilled by Pupils

Drivers caught speeding outside a school in Lancashire may either choose a £60 fine and 3 points on their license, or a grilling by a panel of pupils. So far offenders have mostly opted for the latter and have found themselves facing such questions as: "what would you say to my parents if you had run me over and killed me this morning?" It is reported that some of the drivers were 'visibly shaken' by the experience. www.ribblesdale.org/speeding.htm

Cycle Parking for London's Students

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has launched a major programme to provide safe cycle parking at all of London's school and colleges. The Transport for London initiative is a direct response to a problem regularly highlighted in youth forums - that people are put off cycling to school if they don't feel their bikes will be secure. Also launched is the London Cycling Action Plan six year strategy, which sets out measures to help deliver the lifestyle and economic benefits of cycling.

www.tfl.gov.uk/streets/cycling/cycling-action-plan.shtml

TfL: 020 7941 4500

News in brief...

Southampton Sweeper Smooths Way for Cyclists

Southampton City Council, concerned that debris causes major problems for cyclists, have used LTP funds to purchase a dedicated cleansing machine for cycle routes. CTC's Right to Ride Representative, Jim Deeley, attended its launch in June and describes the sweeper as a 'great asset'. For further details 023 8083 2366.

Southampton City has also set up a Police Tactical Cycle Unit to carry out stop checks, proactive (intelligence-led) patrolling, instruct on cycle safety and deal with cycling and motoring offences.

Mileage for the Peerage

Peers now enjoy a motor mileage of 56.1p per mile for the first 20,000 miles (25.9p thereafter). Their bike mileage, however, is only 7.2p per mile.

Trials to the limit

Leeds is piloting 'Speed Behavioural Research Trials', to examine drivers' behaviour when their vehicles are fitted with devices (limiters) to detect and control speed. (28/05/03 DfT press release www.dft.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2003_0063).

Tracks and racks back

Trainless for 34 years, Chandler's Ford in Hampshire has now regained its rail link. Work on the station includes parking for 40 bicycles.

020 7654 6000 www.sra.gov.uk (15/05/03 SRA press release).

Bells on bikes

The Pedal Bicycles (Safety) Regulations 2003 stipulate that bells must be fitted on all new bikes, but there will be no requirement for the owner to have a bell when the bike is in use.

Hi-Vis in Dorset

The campaign group Dorset Cyclists' Network has decided to use a generous donation of over £900 to subsidise high-visibility waistcoats for its members - the waistcoats will also advertise DCN's website. Enquiries to DCN on 01202 880966 or www.dcn.org.uk

Hardrock Trail

A new white knuckle, 18 mile, mountain bike route using granite rocks as part of its features opened in May in Dalbeattie Forest near Dumfries-shire. The 'Hardrock Trail' is the first of the new Seven Stanes mountain bike centres to open in key Forestry Commission locations across the south of Scotland by 2004. The project has created jobs & boosted the local economy. 01387 272440.

www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-5K3MQL

Quick Response bike for St John Ambulance

St John Ambulance in Surrey now has its own quick response bike, able to get to places than an ambulance can't, with a blue flashing light and siren, onboard radio, oxygen cylinder and full medical kit. It will also keep the First Aiders themselves fit.

01483 450000 enquiries@surrey.sja.org.uk

A Cycling Revolution? York's Magic

By Tony Russell, CTC's Benchmarking Project Manager



The Roundabout Problem

Roundabouts are the most feared feature of the road network for cyclists. So says Cycle Friendly Infrastructure. Attempting to crack this has become something of a Holy Grail for cycle route designers. We are treated to coloured surfacing around the edge of roundabouts, colour across the entries and fully segregated cycle tracks. Regrettably, few schemes have adopted the 'continental' style of design, with single lane traffic flows and approach angles designed for low speeds.

Of particular concern is the number of schemes that have gone in providing a cycle lane around the outer edge of the roundabout. Few experienced cyclists choose to use these, as they put the approaching cyclist at the edge of the field of vision of drivers waiting to enter the roundabout, introduce a potential conflict with exiting traffic and substantially increase the distance a right turning cyclist is expected to travel. Most worrying is where these lanes are put in on large multi-lane roundabouts, suggesting to the cyclist that this is a safe way to negotiate the roundabout.



Over the last couple of years, a great deal of interest has been generated by a new roundabout scheme in York, at the junction of Heworth Green and Malton Road, on a main radial route about a kilometre north-east of the city centre, opened in September

2000. In this article we look at how this scheme was developed, how it is working and its applicability elsewhere.

Origin of the Scheme

This was previously a priority junction with a poor accident record, congestion in peak periods and high off-peak speeds. Traffic volumes were 24,000 vehicles per day, including 800 cyclists. Under free flow conditions, 60% of vehicles on the main road exceeded the 30mph speed limit, and 18 accidents had occurred at the junction in the preceding five years.

City of York Council needed to address these issues, and in 1998/99 an area study was commissioned from consultants. This study came up with a package of proposals including a roundabout at this junction.

The consultants also looked at signalling the junction as it was recognised that cyclists would prefer this. However, a roundabout was chosen as the preferred scheme on capacity and safety grounds.

Research

The Council design staff were given the brief of designing a suitable roundabout. As a first stage they researched existing schemes which attempted to accommodate cyclists at roundabouts. They visited a number of schemes elsewhere in the UK where annular cycle lanes had been introduced, and looked critically at their operation. A common shortcoming of these schemes was that they all had cycle lanes around the edge of the roundabout, not where cyclists normally ride and with potential conflicts at exits / entries.

The Preferred Design

Following on from this research, a scheme was developed which brought together lessons learnt from previous schemes in the UK, with practice elsewhere in Europe. The resultant scheme was based on a continental style roundabout with an annular cycle lane.

The annular cycle lane has green surfacing and is 1.2m wide. It is set in from the edge of the roundabout by up to 1.5m, bringing it closer to the line that cyclists would take through the junction. On the approach to each exit, the cycle lane splits into one lane exiting the roundabout and another continuing round, with direction arrows in each cycle lane. This aims to make it clear to drivers what manoeuvre a cyclist ahead of them intends to make.

The design of the roundabout itself is based on continental style design to keep traffic speeds low. Three of the four entries are single lane, and on the fourth the two traffic lanes, each with its own cycle lane, are divided by a traffic island. The circulatory carriageway is single lane, with an over-run area around the central island for long vehicles. On each approach, the give-way lines for general traffic are set back from those for cyclists. The annular cycle lane also makes the roundabout look smaller.

Cyclists coming from the city centre, continuing on the main road, are provided with a dedicated cycle lane, which avoids the need to give way.



Research has suggested that a continental style roundabout should be able to accommodate entry flows of up to about 2500 vehicle per hour (Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/97). However, the Safety Audit, drawing on Dutch experience, raised questions about the safety of an annular cycle lane. In the event, it was decided to include this on an experimental basis.

Roundabout

Consultation

In view of the novel design of the scheme and the issues surrounding the introduction of a roundabout on a main route used by cyclists, the scheme was subject to an extensive consultation process. Some 3000 leaflets were distributed, with 1000 returned, and 30 road user groups were consulted, with nine replies. A public exhibition of the scheme attracted 200 visitors, and separate meetings were held with local cycle groups to discuss details of the scheme. As an aid to the consultation exercise, a three dimensional graphical illustration of the scheme was developed and displayed.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the scheme has produced very encouraging results. Average speeds on the main road have been reduced by 14mph to 17mph, and the early indications are that accidents have been reduced substantially, by some 85%. At the same time the number of cyclists using the junction has risen by some 25%.

There are substantial queues on the main inbound approach in the morning peak, which was not anticipated by the computer model of the scheme. However, queues elsewhere have been reduced.

Benchmarking

The CTC Benchmarking Project visited York in July 2001, including a presentation on and inspection of the roundabout. The scheme attracted considerable interest, as it is a novel and bold approach to the problem of accommodating cyclists safely on roundabouts. As well as the overall design, the group was impressed by the use of direction signing on the circulatory cycle lane and the detailed consultation process including the very helpful three-dimensional graphic. Some suggestions were made about improving the signing, and the maintenance implications for complex schemes such as this were highlighted.

User Feedback

The substantial reduction in traffic speeds has made the junction appreciably safer and more comfortable for cyclists. However, this is seen largely as a result of the tight geometry of the roundabout, and there are mixed opinions about certain aspects of the design, notably the annular cycle lane.

Use of the cycle lane considerably increases the distance for cyclists making certain movements at the junction, particularly on the main route into the city where they are effectively making a right turn. Some also feel that it offers a false sense on security for those using it. Whilst some cyclists feel safer taking the more direct route, others use the cycle lane apparently without incident.

Although the scheme is widely recognised as an improvement on the previous situation, there is still an opinion amongst some that a roundabout was not the most suitable form of junction, and that traffic signals would have been preferred.



Conclusions

Monitoring of the scheme does demonstrate substantial improvements for cyclists compared with the previous arrangement, largely on account of the reduced speeds through the junction.

There is general agreement that the continental style of roundabout design, with its tighter geometry and single file traffic, has been very effective at encouraging drivers to slow down and take care when using the junction.

However, there are mixed views on the inclusion of an annular cycle lane, but it is impossible to isolate its effect from the rest of the junction design. Inclusion of the cycle lane gives a strong visual message and makes the roundabout look smaller. On the other hand, the cycle lane still puts the approaching cyclist near the edge of the field of vision of drivers waiting to enter the roundabout, and possibly creates a false sense of security.

Nevertheless the scheme appears to work well with the high levels of cycle use observed, of over 800 cyclists per day. Drivers using the roundabout can generally expect to encounter cyclists, a good proportion of them within the cycle lane, and so take appropriate account of them.

There must be some question, however, as to whether the same design, with an annular cycle lane, would be as effective in a situation with low numbers of cyclists, where drivers would not be especially looking out for them.

It should also be emphasised that the continental design is fundamental to this scheme, and the addition of an annular cycle lane onto a conventional roundabout is not recommended.

There is still a feeling amongst some local cyclists that they would have preferred signals. Possibly this is a situation where it could have helped to involve them more prior to the decision on the form the junction being made. This would have made the process more transparent and enabled them understand the relative benefits of the different options and the reasons for the choice that was made.

- Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/97: Cyclists at Roundabouts: Continental Style Geometry
- Sign Up for the Bike: Design Manual for a Cycle Friendly Infrastructure; CROW, The Netherlands, 1993
- Collection of Cycle Concepts; Road Directorate, Denmark, 2000

CTC would like to thank City of York Council for permission to use the aerial photograph.

On the web...

- See www.wolvesonwheels.co.uk (under documents and reports) for a well researched paper on best practice for Cycle Fora, offering recommendations on how to set them up, who should sit on them and how they should operate. Written by David Holman, with a forward by CTC's Benchmarking Project Manager, Tony Russell.
- See www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/pdfs/emp2001/ir176.pdf For your cycle-related tax questions
- **Sign up to Veloinfo!**
In Issue 35 CycleDigest reported on Veloinfo, a European Union project, aiming to create a web-based expertise centre that supports cities to incorporate the bicycle in urban planning. All interested parties are now invited to sign up to the contacts database to be kept informed of progress.
operations@velomondial.net

New publications...

Transport in Tomorrow's Countryside *Countryside Agency*

Puts forward ten principles for transport, founded on a vision of sustainable development, requiring social, economic and environmental objectives to be pursued together.
0870 120 6466
countryside@twoten.press.net
www.countryside.gov.uk

In Reverse

TRANSform Scotland (the campaign for sustainable transport)

New report setting out a detailed critique of how it believes the Scottish Executive transport policy failed to deliver during the first term of the Scottish Parliament
0131 467 7714
campaigns@transformscotland.org.uk
www.transformscotland.org.uk

10 Year Transport Plan: Second assessment report

Commission for Integrated Transport

Welcomes the increased funding for transport and significant progress in many directions, but flags up key issues that will have to be addressed in reviewing the plan and stepping up the pace of delivery.

CfIT, 5th Floor, Romney House, Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RA
[cfit@dft.gsi.gov.uk](http://cfit.dft.gsi.gov.uk) www.cfit.gov.uk/reports/10year/second/index.htm

Free To Travel

Conservative Party

Fails to mention walking, cycling or the 28% of households without cars; pro-car, pro-road and pro-speed; green light to unhealthy car-dependence & parking pressure.

www.conservatives.com

The highly respected Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety has written to Shadow Transport Sec Tim Collins, pointing out inherent road safety dangers in these policies. See letter at www.pacts.org.uk

A Signal Success for Campaigning!

After two years of campaigning the Midlands' town of Towcester is once again safe to enter and leave by bike. LES HOLLOWAY, CTC's Right to Ride (RTR) Representative in South Northamptonshire, tells the story:

Background

Towcester is a market town, the centre for a dozen or more small villages and hamlets in a largely rural setting. Most motor vehicles stick to the major roads, leaving an extensive network of blissfully traffic-free lanes for cyclists and horseriders. There are few problems – until you try to get in or out of Towcester.

The problem

Towcester lies at the junction of the A5 and A43. In the early 1990's it was proposed to extend the A43 dualling westwards and to create a bypass for the village of Silverstone. This scheme was shelved, but villagers continued to campaign for the bypass. The dualling was given the go ahead in 2000, and this immediately concentrated the minds of those who like to enter and leave Towcester by other means than by car. Already difficult and dangerous to cross as a single-carriageway, the A43 was going to be even worse when dualled.

The campaign

A campaign for a safe crossing was launched at a public meeting in November 2000, which I attended as CTC Right to Ride Rep for the area. Subsequently, the South Northants Area Committee, an informal body which brings together elected representatives and staff from county, district and parish councils provided a platform for CTC campaigners, local cycling club members, the Ramblers Association and the British Horse Society. The Highways Agency was asked to send officials to answer our concerns, but their initial responses were negative: the dual carriageway had been designed ten years ago, they said, and no one had asked for a crossing then; it was impossible to redesign the road without calling in expensive external planners and delaying the construction for many years. They also claimed that a survey had been carried out on the stretch of road concerned and there were hardly any pedestrians, horse riders or cyclists crossing it. These claims were quickly shot down by the campaigners and local councillors, but the Agency seemed unmoved.

Early in 2001 campaigners decided on direct action. On a

misty February morning around 50 cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians went back and forth over the A43 under the watchful eyes of the police and the media, forcing articulated lorries and speeding cars to wait. This seemed to break the knot, and the Highways Agency announced that they would consider a light-controlled crossing once the dual carriageway was completed.

Building the road

Construction of the new road went ahead, but then came a bombshell – the Agency announced that there would be no crossing after all. The campaign was cranked into action again, and HA officials were once again summoned before the Area Committee and bombarded by emails, letters and phone calls from everyone involved.

Success at last

In November 2002 those of us who had been most active in the campaign were invited to an HA meeting to see plans for a combined Pegasus / Toucan crossing. No explanation for the change of heart was offered, but we were in no doubt that our persistent pressure was the main reason.

The new crossing was opened in March 2003, and significantly, the HA invited representatives from CTC, the BHS and the Ramblers to be present for a press photo call.

Having ridden the new crossing several times in both directions I can confirm that it works well. Horse riders are separated from pedestrians and cyclists by a barrier between the two sections, and have their own access points. The lights have a sensor which ensures that the crossings are cleared before they change – vital for horses, and pretty good for cyclists, too.

Lessons to be learned

As a novice campaigner, I followed CTC RTR guidance as much as possible. To me, the important lessons were:

- Join forces with other vulnerable road users – an alliance of interests is more powerful than a cyclists' lobby on its own;
- Get local politicians involved – they know where to apply pressure, and on whom;
- Make your case with the appropriate officials both in public and in private;
- Never give up;
- When you win, thank everyone who took part – and those who have delivered the goods. You may need their help again.

Diary Dates...

Travelwise Week

15th – 22nd September 2003

National campaign promoting alternative forms of transport. Each day will focus on a different theme, with Monday 15th concentrating on cycling, health and fitness. Local events, competitions and workplace challenges will be taking place throughout West Midlands and London.

01905 766212
www.travelwiseweek.org.uk

Cycling in Rural Areas

18th September
University of Nottingham

Local authorities are becoming increasingly aware that cycling policy within rural localities demands a very distinct approach and is far less developed than in urban areas. This conference will look at strategies appropriate to small towns and different parts of the countryside; best practice examples; and barriers to promotion. £110 / 25 (concessions)

0115 951 4132
cpd.conference@nottingham.ac.uk

National Safe Routes to Schools Conference (Sustrans)

23rd & 24th September
De Montfort Hall, Leicester

A unique event giving children the opportunity to work directly with politicians and local authority officers on an equal footing to seek solutions to school run congestion. Surveys have shown that most children do not want to be driven to school and this will give them a chance to tackle the barriers with the people who impose them. Speakers to include Sally Dowler, mother of Milly, Charles Secrett, former Director of Friends of the Earth and Stephen Twigg MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools. Workshops, showcase sessions, awards and evening entertainment.

Free to school delegations (pupils & accompanying teachers/parents);

Local authorities, organisations etc: £200 2-day fee / £25 evening event; Individuals/ school champions: £50 2-day fee / evening event free
Tel: 0117 915 0100;
Fax: 0117 915 0124
conf@sustrans.org.uk
www.srsconference.org.uk

CTC/CCN Autumn Cycle Campaigns Conference

18th October 2003

Hosted by the Sheffield Cycle Campaign, Pedal Pushers
www.pedalpushers.org.uk

Earth Centre (between Doncaster and Sheffield, nearest station Conisbrough)

Set in a former coalmine, and overlooked by Conisbrough Castle, this is not only an attractive venue and model of sustainable practice, but a key location on the Trans-Pennine Trail, the major leisure cycling route linking Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Doncaster, York, Leeds Hull and many places in between (see www.earthcentre.org.uk). The day offers a thought-provoking array of presentations from both national and local speakers, including Dr Alison Hill, new member of the National Cycling Strategy Board and expert on health. A full range of activities has been planned for the weekend around the conference.

An email discussion before and after forum will be in operation and delegates can opt to receive notification of events by SMS. (mobile phone text messaging)

Only £18.00, including lunch and refreshments and access to the Earth Centre.

Contact: Simon Geller, Conference Organiser, Pedalpushers Sheffield. Tel: 0114 2588578, mobile 07799 834837, email s.geller@blueyonder.co.uk

Or Cherry Allan, CTC, 01483 520735 righttoride@ctc.org.uk

CycleDigest available on the web

CycleDigest is available on the CTC website - www.ctc.org.uk - where you can download an Acrobat PDF version. If you would rather receive an electronic copy and save paper, email righttoride@ctc.org.uk

e-mail us your news

If your organisation has some news, drop us a line - you may want to raise awareness about a specific issue, ask questions about a difficulty or simply tell the world about the latest cycling developments in your area. Whatever your story, *CycleDigest* may be the perfect forum!

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