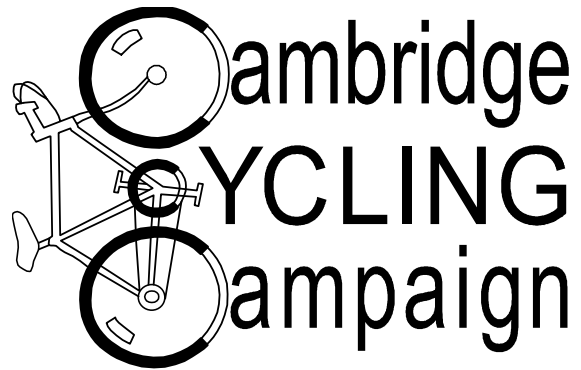


May 21, 2003

Our ref: C 03 033
Your ref:

Mike Sewell
Cambridge Agenda Magazine
Sewellmj@aol.com
01223 477439



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

P.O. Box 204, Cambridge CB4 3FN
01223 690718 (phone & fax)
contact@camcycle.org.uk
www.camcycle.org.uk

Dear Cambridge Agenda,

Cambridge Agenda Cycle Helmet Campaign

We were very interested to read your article '*Get ahead with a helmet*' (May 2003) and were surprised that we had not been contacted in advance to seek our views on this article, which we feel presents an unbalanced view on cycle helmets.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign has no problem with the use of helmets but believes their wearing should be a matter of individual choice, not coercion. This is the view taken by most other cycling organisations around the country as well as many national bodies. The British Medical Association, for instance, oppose compulsion because cycling is extremely beneficial to health; the reduction in cycle use that compulsion would cause would lead to an overall decrease in the health of the population. Furthermore, reducing the amount of cycling would actually increase injury rates because the effect of a critical mass of cyclists encourages better behaviour by drivers, the source from which danger is most likely to originate.

This factor - better driving standards - which is by far the most important one, was completely ignored in your article. No mention was made of the low conviction rates nor the absurdly low lengths of sentencing for dangerous driving. Other factors (concerning cyclists) such as better road position, good quality lights, establishing eye contact and other good practice matters were similarly ignored. One of our members even suggested that the article looked like a reprint from material supplied directly by a governmental road safety department, which has similarly taken to producing such simplistic advice. Ultimately all this has the effect of putting the blame on cyclists who chose not to wear helmets, rather than the source of danger itself.

We feel it is unfortunate that the magazine has chosen not to outline the positive aspects of cycling - a mode of transport whose users have an average fitness of someone ten years younger - as well and we hope that you will do so in future.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign

2

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Martin Lucas-Smith
Co-ordinator, Cambridge Cycling Campaign
www.camcycle.org.uk