


# why a bulletin?

we want to tell you what's on our mind at the moment

This is the first edition of Camcycle Bulletin, from Cambridge Cycling Campaign — England's largest local cycle lobby group outside London and the voice for the area's cyclists. We aim to send you future editions of this bulletin several times a year.

Our audience is you: councillors, council officers, MPs, consultants, contractors and other interest groups - people who have a bearing on cycling in the Cambridge area.

We're very happy to send you our full newsletter if you would like. But we know everyone is busy, so we'd like to keep in touch in this briefer way. Of course, we'll continue to lobby on specific things as well. In this bulletin we want to give you a flavour of the more general context that motivates us.

 *This symbol points the way forward. It says what we would like you to do. National and local policies broadly promote the same as us: better, safer and more cycling. We hope you share that vision.*

## city centre friendly

we offer our support for developing the Cambridge core traffic scheme

When everyone has their gripes about details, it is easy to lose sight of the overall objective: to make Cambridge City Centre a pleasanter place in which to work, live and shop. The City Centre is the focus for a wide area well beyond Cambridge, and we all know that the pressures on it have to be relieved. We think there is a lot of support for this. Lively disputes about the way we do it can obscure the central issue. We support the principle and want to see it moved forward.



Mapping out traffic management for the City Centre makes sense. It allows for forward planning even if it can't all be implemented at once. But we also think a shorter timescale would reduce the pain of change. People would not have to keep changing their routes and routines over a prolonged period.


It's a shame that stage 1 was often called the "Bridge Street closure". Bridge Street has opened up in our opinion. Only one of all the ways people can use the street has been restricted. It's a pleasant street



once again. It would be wonderful to see this elsewhere as well.

More people will make their journey by Park & Ride or cycle. But some streets are bound to see traffic rise. The inner ring road is likely to be the loser, so we think cyclists will need help there. Also, the direct route through the City Centre is already important for cyclists. It will become even more so when traffic levels rise on the ring road.

We need to take care not to form a "barrier of moving steel" around the Centre. While it may be a pleasanter place, it could be hard for cyclists to reach it. Managing the junctions to get cyclists across the inner ring road will be crucial.

 *We very much want to see the Core Traffic scheme moved forward and urge adoption of as rapid a timetable as possible.*

## on the road

cycling provision is much more than cycleways

"The bicycle is a vehicle. When designing for cyclists criteria analogous to those used for designing for motor traffic must be used."

Not our words, but those of the City of Edinburgh's *Cycle Friendly Design Guide* (December 1997). We have no such document for Cambridgeshire, even though there are eight times as many cyclists.

They go on to say, "a design does not have to have cycle facilities to be cycle friendly, and vice-versa. Though cycle facilities are often helpful, much can be done to assist cyclists in less obvious ways."

We find it a cause of regret that cycling provision in our area is still often equated with putting cyclists on the pavement. Indeed we still see here exactly the kind of proposals which the Edinburgh policy singles out for criticism in its opening paragraphs: "a poorly designed 'cycle route', for example a shared footway with frontage access, substandard width or poor sightlines, can be more dangerous for cyclists (and pedestrians) than the road it is avoiding."

We are dismayed by the current proposals in Milton village, for example. Last year, Cambridge Cycling Campaign published a policy statement highly critical of shared-use footways in built-up areas. Councillors have been heard to say "we spend all this money on cycle facilities, but then cyclists don't use them". They should not be so surprised. Too often schemes are fussy, narrow, bumpy, slow, full of obstructions, **sharp turns** ↗ and bumps up and down. They force cyclists to stop and start repeatedly and sometimes demand they **stop cycling altogether** ↓. Cyclists lose the normal right



of way over side roads which they enjoy on the road. They must sometimes cross and re-cross the



main road when a path is just on one side.


Pedestrians hate shared-use too. They feel intimidated by cycles travelling 5 to 10 times faster than they do, taking over their space. Illegal cycling on footways is encouraged by this kind of facility. This is just not the right way to provide for cyclists.

The recent transport White Paper says: "we are looking for local authorities to ... *adapt existing road space* to provide more cycle facilities".

The *National Cycling Strategy*, adopted as County policy in the summer, contains a model cycling policy. Among its provisions is set out a hierarchy of ways of providing for cyclists, drawn from the 'bible' of cycle planning *Cycle Friendly Infrastructure* (IHT, 1996, section 4). This puts special facilities at the bottom of the pile of things to do:

- ☐ **Traffic reduction.** Can traffic volumes be reduced sufficiently to achieve the desired improvements...?
- ☐ **Traffic Speeds.** Can speeds be reduced and driver behaviour modified...?
- ☐ **Junction treatment and traffic management ...**
- ☐ **Redistribution of the highway.** Can the carriage-way be redistributed to give more space to cyclists...
- ☐ **Cycle lanes and cycle tracks.** Having considered and, where possible, implemented the above, what specific cycle lanes or tracks are now necessary?"

Unfortunately, the reverse approach is common: "let's get cyclists out of the way of cars" is a first reaction, rather than to provide a cycle-friendly road.

 *We think the Hierarchy should be adopted as part of a wider cycling strategy for the area. Shared-use footways should be avoided in almost all urban situations in our opinion.*

## one way ahead

streets are made one-way to manage motor traffic — we say that cyclists hardly ever need to be included

It is common practice in the [Netherlands](#) → and Denmark for No Entry signs everywhere to say "except cyclists". This is because they know that direct routes are cycle friendly. They know from experience there is rarely a problem with a narrow cycle using a street which a car could not.



We know this in Cambridge too. But because rules are inflexible, we have to do this by "pretending" to cars that a street is one way. No entry signs apply just at the end of the street. An island allows cycles past.

Yet there are still about as many truly one-way streets in the City as there are exceptions. Changes in streets that have been converted have been ad-hoc.



In Romsey, some "one-way" streets allow bikes two way while very similar nearby streets do not. Cyclists often go the "wrong way" down Romsey streets (and a blind eye

is unsatisfactorily turned to this) because they don't perceive that there is a problem - and nor do we.

While there is a need to keep a way clear for bikes at the closed end of "one way" streets, the islands currently required add expense. Also, the width of an island is often the limiting factor in converting, where a change would otherwise not be a problem. Yet we know from [Malcolm Street](#) ↑ that a full width island is not necessary. We know from [St Philips Road](#) → that islands are frequently in the way - here they actually force cyclists into the path of cars because the official way is blocked by parking.



Council policies are to promote cycling. Opening up more residential and central streets to cyclists is a cheap, effective way to do this. European experience would say what's the fuss about just doing it?



*We are asking that a systematic survey of one way streets is set up to see which can be opened up for cycling. We have listed our priorities in a report, *One Way Streets*, published in June 1998.*

## deadly twins

the mini roundabouts at the end of Trumpington Street still have one of the highest cyclist casualty rates in the County.

The Environment & Transport Committee last year deferred replacing this junction with traffic lights. The scheme will return to committee in October 1998. The problem isn't going to go away as many journeys by bike converge on this junction. The casualty rate is high not just because it is a hazard but because it is so well used by cyclists. Councillors knew that roundabouts and cyclists don't mix, yet chose to do nothing.

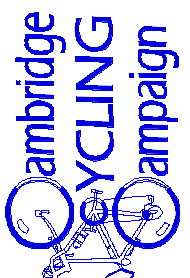
One excuse for doing nothing was that the Core Traffic Scheme would have an impact on the junction. Indeed it might. It seems clear that the effect would be to put more traffic through the junction, and across the main direction of cycle movements, creating more conflict. The ability of the junction to cope with the motor traffic may well require traffic signals anyway. But the three years before Silver Street might be closed is too long to wait. Cyclists are being hurt now.

We don't believe there are any reasonable alternatives. Putting cyclists on the pavements won't work: most cyclists will not use them. This would just be a waste of money. The junction is the direct route, on the desire line. Opening up alternatives in Newtown and Coe Fen would be welcome, but would not be addressing the same users.



*Please, install traffic lights this year. You know it is going to be done eventually. Stop the trips to Casualty now.*

Cambridge Cycling Campaign was formed in 1995 to provide a voice for cyclists in the Cambridge area



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