

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



September 13, 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Cycling campaigners and council officials return from fact-finding tour in the Netherlands

About the trip

Fourteen cyclists from Cambridge Cycling Campaign and from the City & County Councils have returned from their fact-finding trip to the Netherlands.

We visited a number of small towns and villages as well as a few cities (including the Hague and Utrecht), as well as riding between them.

The Campaign invited Cycling Officers and cycling promotion officials from the City and County Councils, four of whom joined the group.



Martin Lucas-Smith, Co-ordinator, who was amongst those on the tour, said:

"It is no exaggeration to say that, literally everywhere we went, cyclists were thought about and catered for. The quality of provision was uniformly high, an order of magnitude better than that found in the UK. It is not surprising that the Netherlands has levels of cycling higher than even Cambridge."



For better, safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge

The trip was the sixth trip organised by the Campaign. Previous visits have included to Münster (in Germany), Århus (in Denmark), and Groningen (in the Netherlands).

Photographs available

Hundreds of photos from the trip are available on the Cycling Campaign's website, at: <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/events/visits/netherlands/> .

Click on any photo on the webpage to get a high resolution copy.



Journalists may make free use of these pictures to accompany stories about the trip or raising standards of cycling provision in Cambridge.

Cycling in the Hague

As part of the trip, the group was given a presentation on 'Cycling in the Hague' by one of the cycling officers employed by the Municipality of The Hague, the equivalent of the City Council here in Cambridge. Facts from the Hague included:

- Planning for cyclists is done according to the principles of: convenience, directness and speed. Safety exists almost automatically as a result.
- The Hague has 270km of cycle paths within city, with more outside the city boundary.
- There is no shared use. Pedestrians have their own space.
- The Hague has 19 staffed cycle parking locations, having c. 6500 cycle parking spaces in total, in addition to general on-street cycle parking.
- All residential areas are 30 km/h (20mph).



Clare Rankin, Cycling and Walking Officer, Cambridge City Council discussing cycle parking with the Manager of the cycle parking facilities in the Hague.

Lessons to be learnt

Tour leader, David Hembrow said:

“Given sufficient political will and funding, Cambridge could be a world-class cycling city, but we are currently a long way off this. In the Netherlands, cycling is popular because the authorities have made it convenient, direct and fast. Compare this to parts of Cambridge, and the UK more generally, where obstructions, bollards, shared-use pavements, unfriendly road crossings and loss of priority are the norm.”

Clare Rankin, Walking & Cycling Development and Promotion Officer, Cambridge City Council, said:

“My colleague, Dave Bradford, and I thoroughly enjoyed our fact finding mission to the Netherlands. Cycling around Den Hague, Utrecht and Houten filled us with enthusiasm and inspiration as to what could be achieved regarding the future development of Cambridge so that new residential areas reflect the importance of cycling as a mode of transport in the city. A lot can be learnt from the Dutch experience of obstacle free, continuous routes which combined with the positive attitude and priority given to cyclists made cycling a real pleasure - and walking too with no guard rails and very few shared paths with cyclists.”

Martin Lucas-Smith, Co-ordinator, who was amongst those on the tour, said:

“In the Netherlands, cycling was treated as a real mode of transport, rather than unhappily co-existing between cars and pedestrians as often happens in Cambridge. Cycling there is easy and everyone does it. No wonder they have over 40% of journeys by bike in some cities in the Netherlands.”



Lindsey Rushmore, Travel for Work Partnership, using this smooth, direct crossing, in Holland.



Compare with the new King's Hedges Road in Cambridge: indirect, and lots of obstructions

New developments in Cambridge

Tens of thousands of new houses are planned to be built around Cambridge in coming years. It is essential that these are built in a cycle-friendly manner if levels of cycling in the area are to be maintained, and gridlock is to be prevented.

Campaigner James Woodburn said:

“It is very important that the lessons from our trip are learnt for the new developments happening around Cambridge. Cycling could be the main form of transport in these new developments if cycling is designed in properly from the start. We want to work with Developers and with Councils to show them the real benefits for everyone that could be achieved by prioritising cycling.”

More facts

- A wide, smooth cycleway greeted our arrival. 3m wide paths were the norm.
- Pedestrians, cyclists and motorists each had their own space, rather than sharing.
- Obstructions are so rare that they are signed with a sign: ‘pole in cycleway’.
- Crossings across sideroads were direct and smooth. Cyclists didn’t have to give way / dismount.
- We never saw a ‘cyclists dismount’ sign.
- 30km/hr (c. 20mph) zones were common.
- Surface quality was generally extremely good. Cracks in the cycleway were rare.
- Cycle parking was extremely plentiful, though it was not always very secure.
- Space was made for bikes on all trains.



Next time?

We hope to return to the Netherlands perhaps next year, and hope that senior transport planners and local Councillors and will next time join us, to see for themselves what is possible.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

1. Full information and links about our trip can be found at: <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/events/visits/netherlands/> .
2. For further information please contact: David Hembrow, Cambridge Cycling Campaign on 01223 690718 or via e-mail to contact@camcycle.org.uk .
3. Contact details for each of the Council officials who went on our trip are:

- Patrick Joyce, Cycling Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council.
01223 716025 or patrick.joyce@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
 - Clare Rankin and David Bradford [job share], Walking & Cycling Development and Promotion Officer, Cambridge City Council.
01223 457108 or clare.rankin@cambridge.gov.uk and david.bradford@cambridge.gov.uk
 - Rushmore Lindsey, Travel Plan Advisor, Travel for Work Partnership.
01223 712455 or lindsey.rushmore@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
4. Cambridge Cycling Campaign was formed in 1995 and has over 750 members. Run by volunteers, it campaigns for "better safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge". Its website, at www.camcycle.org.uk , contains a wide range of information on its activities.
 5. The trip was the Campaign's sixth fact-finding visit to see how cycle-friendly cities elsewhere provide for cyclists. Details and photos from these visits can be found online at: <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/events/visits/> .