Mount Pleasant
Digging up King’s Parade
Blind people and cyclists
Cyclefest ’98
Ring Road blues
Hills Road – progress
Now that the Campaign has survived to the ripe old age of three, we need to hold another AGM. This will take up part of the regular open meeting on Tuesday 6 October. As usual, the meeting is in the Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Every campaign member is welcome to attend and entitled to vote.

This year we have invited Shona Johnstone, chair of the County Council’s Environment and Transport Committee, to speak to the AGM. This is a very influential committee; we welcome the opportunity to meet Ms Johnstone and to hear her views on The Politics of Cycling and Transport at the County Council. There will also be a chance for Campaign members to ask questions about cycling-related matters.

The schedule is:

- 7.30 Free tea, coffee and biscuits
- 8.00 Invited speaker Shona Johnstone
- 8.45 AGM Business
- 9.45 Meeting closes – and adjourns to the Zebra

AGM Business

The formal business of the AGM will be brief, consisting mainly of:

- Short reports from some of this year’s officers, including a summary of the recent Strategy Day.
- Motions – to be submitted to the Co-ordinator 501050 by 6 pm on Sunday 4 October at the latest.
- Elections – see opposite.

Elections

This year, these officers are standing for re-election:

- Treasurer – Simon Nuttall
- Co-ordinator – Clare Macrae
- Membership Secretary – David Earl
- Liaison Officer – David Earl
- Newsletter Editor – Mark Irving
- Officer Without Portfolio – Nigel Deakin

Two posts are vacant, and we are very keen to find members to take on these jobs:

- Press Officer
- Stall Officer

The first post to be filled is that of Press Officer. David Earl took over as Acting Press Officer during our first year, when our first Press Officer left Cambridge. Last year, he dropped the ‘Acting’ and took on the post permanently. However,
with two other Campaign jobs as well, he has decided to step down from the Press Officer post this October.

The Press Officer’s work mainly involves writing press releases for the Campaign and following them up. Ideally, the Press Officer should have e-mail access and especially the facility to send faxes. David is keen to stress that he will be around to help – but just doesn’t have enough time for the job any more. If you would like to hear more about it, please give David a ring on 504095.

Sadly, Paula is stepping down as Stall Officer after three years of running the Saturday stall in the Market Square. If you would like talk about what’s involved, do give Paula a ring on 323057.

Clare Macrae

Open meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 October</td>
<td>AGM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 November | Slower Speeds Initiative  
speaker – Don Mathew, consultant on transport and the environment to the CTC and others |
| 1 December | Cambridge Core Traffic Scheme  
A discussion |

All open meetings start with tea and coffee at 7.30. Business at 8.00 includes the opportunity for you to raise issues close to your heart. If you want to make suggestions, influence Campaign policies or lend a hand, an Open Meeting is the place to start.

York trip

The date for our fact-finding trip to York mentioned in the last issue has now been confirmed. We’ll travel up by train on the evening of Friday 23 October, and stay Friday and Saturday night. We’ll hire bikes for the weekend. Members of York Cycle Campaign have kindly offered to show us around what is now sometimes described as Britain’s premier cycling city. It will be a welcome chance to compare notes, and swap ideas, with fellow campaigners.

If you would like to join us for what should be a very enjoyable weekend, please contact me. We’ll be making final plans early in October, and booking train tickets in plenty of time to get Apex seats.

Clare Macrae

Cover picture is Carter Bridge (see article on page 4)
National Cycling Awards

We have nominated a local cycling feature in each category of the National Cycling Awards, as promoted by the Cyclists’ Touring Club. The awards will be made at the CTC-LCC–CCN conference in London on 10 October.

Best Facility: Carter Bridge

(Cambridgeshire County Council)

Although finished in 1991, we felt this bridge still deserves recognition. It cost £2 million to build and provides cyclists with a high-quality alternative to a busy and hazardous road bridge. British Rail imposed tight constraints on the bridge, meaning that it had to span 16 tracks at a height of 6.28 m, enough to clear the electrification catenary. Thus the main span of the bridge, 86.4 m long, is suspended by four cables from one side of a tower. Two more cables connect to an underground counterweight on the other side of the tower. The tower is hinged at its base, and so the main span is held up by the counterweight, each cable carrying a load of 58 tonnes. The walk and cycleway is completely enclosed in a transparent polycarbonate tube. Eight security cameras monitor the bridge, and pictures are transmitted by microwave link from the top of the tower. The approaches to the bridge rise at 1 in 20 and are heated to prevent the formation of ice. The bridge was named the Carter Bridge in recognition of county councillor Tony Carter’s work in promoting the scheme from its inception in 1985.

Best Route: Cambridge South East Cycle Route

(Cambridgeshire County Council)

The Carter Bridge is part of this route which now delivers cyclists from a wide area of the south east of the city into the centre. It features traffic-calmed routes, cycle lanes, cycle crossings and traffic lights with a cycle phase. I feel this route is under-publicised. I certainly didn’t know it had such a grand name. It’s far from straight, and features many junctions, four with traffic lights. However, it had the advantage of a publicity brochure that I could submit with the award nomination.

Most Effective Complimentary Activity: Cycle Friendly Employers

(Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority and Friends)

This organisation employs a cycle promoter to actively encourage local employers to provide facilities for cyclists. It gives advice on insurance for pooled bikes and conducts travel surveys. It is hard to know exactly what is meant by complementary activity: we could have suggested the cattle grids on Midsummer Common, lockers at the Park and Ride sites, or the green cycle-filter lights on Newmarket Road.

Stop! Thief!

How secure is your bike? What more could you do to prevent it from being stolen? In Newsletter 16 (February 1998 – Making life easier 4: The sweeter aspect of the sorrow of parting) David Earl discussed the importance of investing in a good U-lock and investigated the types of bike insurance policies available, noting however that,

the best insurance of all is not to lose the bike in the first place, but even the best lock is not going to deter a professional thief.

Worryingly, there have been several bike thefts recently in north Cambridge. If your bike has quick-release wheels or expensive components, it may be at risk from bike-part theft when parked outside, if you only lock the frame to a Sheffield rack or similar.

In one recent incident, a neighbour of mine had the front headset and stem (worth around £600) stolen from a Univega mountain bike. Fortunately the thieves were disturbed before they could remove any other parts. The bike was directly in front of the owner’s third-floor flat, and was locked to the staircase railings. The area was well-lit and clearly visible to the residents of the surrounding blocks of flats, yet the theft occurred between 9.30 pm and 11.30 pm one week-day evening. The day after this theft, two of my neighbour’s friends living nearby had two Kona mountain bikes (worth around £500 each) stolen from a locked shed.

Bike-part theft may not be covered under the terms of some insurance policies, since individual parts are sometimes regarded as accessories. Contact your insurance company if in doubt.

Sarah Elsegood

Clare Macrae adds: We have also heard from a member who lives in a block of flats where bikes can be parked behind two locked gates. She recently left her bike unlocked there for just a couple of minutes, and sadly it was stolen. So take care!

Heartfelt thanks

After working on almost every Newsletter for three years, more than any of its three editors, Debby Banham has had to give up copy editing this publication. I shall miss her friendly and highly competent collaboration. Thanks, Debby, for the hard work you have put in, making sure that what we published was always easy to read, concise, consistent and in good English.

Mark Irving, Editor
Plans are being drawn up for changes to the junctions at both ends of Mount Pleasant – the part of the ring road between Castle Street and Madingley Road. At the top of Castle Street (known as Murkett’s Corner) our proposal to construct a central approach to the junction from Huntingdon Road, helping cyclists past left-turning traffic, has essentially been accepted for inclusion in what was originally a pedestrian crossing scheme there.

In fact the plans have been extended further still to include advanced stop lines (most without approach lanes) on other arms of the junction. So we have responded by firstly asking for approach lanes, but also to go the whole hog and provide advanced stops at every signal. In a recent reply, we got the usual ‘not enough room’ response to approach lanes, but a commitment to include an advanced stop line at the Mount Pleasant approach which will certainly help cyclists who want to go to Histon Road and Victoria Road.

In order to provide signalled pedestrian crossings without provoking gridlock, it will be necessary to ban turns from Castle Street to Mount Pleasant and vice versa. This will create an interesting impact on Shire Hall. For cyclists it is not too much of a problem, though. It would not be too hard to provide a cycle-bypass of that corner for left turns, and the County Council has agreed to consider this.

When we looked at the area, we found that there is actually already a convenient way into Shire Hall from the Mount Pleasant area via the blocked-off Castle Row. In fact, having discovered this, I’ve been using it for my trips there recently. So we suggested signing this alternative, and again the County Council is considering it.

At the Madingley Road end (which is in fact Lady Margaret Road), traffic lights will be introduced soon, together with advanced stop lines. Apart from the accident record, it is very hard to turn right out of Lady Margaret Road during the day, so these lights should be a great help to cyclists.

However, once again we are seeing advanced stop lines proposed with no way to get to them. Half-width forward stop boxes were also proposed on some approaches here. This meant that no protection would be offered from the left-turning traffic stream out of Lady Margaret Road, for example.

Therefore we suggested ways for cyclists to be more effectively provided for at both these junctions. The County Council has responded favourably regarding the half-width stop boxes, but again not on approach lanes for cyclists.

### Maintaining capacity

As always, the issue is one of road space. If two traffic lanes weren’t demanded, there would be plenty of room for approach lanes. But two or three traffic lanes are always demanded so that different directions can be moving at different times, and, in the County Council’s words, ‘maximising the amount of storage space for vehicles’. This is so that the capacity of the junction can be maintained.

While the ability to move the maximum number of vehicles through traffic lights in a given time has reduced in importance, motor vehicle capacity is still apparently the overriding criterion in the design of any junction. In this instance we were told:

*replacing one of the traffic lanes would cause excessive delays at the junction. Recent counts have shown that this would mean displacing 927 vehicles (over a 12 hour period) from the outside lane, into the single approach lane. Also, there is very much an element of suppressed demand for the right turn into Madingley Road, as this manoeuvre is so difficult at present.*

Does that mean that we can’t have an approach lane because the new junction might then not be catering for this suppressed demand? I hope not! The situation with approach lanes was summed up like this:

*Experience has shown that in most cases, cyclists can still make their way to the front of a queue, without the help of an approach lane.*

Therefore, an advanced stop line will still be of some benefit.

We remain unconvinced. Nevertheless, the changes to these two junctions are good news, we think.

David Earl
During September the County Council has been briefing councillors and interest groups like ourselves on the ideas for the next stages of the so-called core traffic scheme.

The first stage was the restriction in Bridge Street. There are likely to be some changes made there as well, especially to the arrangements at the closure itself. We expect to hear about these in November.

There are no great surprises in what is being suggested to further limit private cars coming into the heart of the city centre. The space freed up will be used to make things easier for buses and cyclists. The next phases limit the amount of through traffic in three areas: Parkside, Silver Street and Emmanuel Street. This last is effectively part of the bus station. These will probably be tackled in that order. In principle, this could be done over three consecutive years, but it seems more likely that it will take five or six. This is because there is only a limited amount of money available. More significantly, it would be a very high-pressure exercise for the Council, both politically and just getting the work done to schedule. There would be a lot of flak flying in all directions about the changes. There are also County Council elections in the middle of the period.

While there are lots of details, the principles of each phase are easy to summarise:

- Short Street and Emmanuel Road closed to private motor vehicles roughly where the pelican crossing to the Grafton Centre is now
- Silver Street closed to all motor vehicles, including buses and taxis, somewhere in its narrow section
- Emmanuel Street closed somewhere to private motor vehicles

Some of the immediate consequences of these need to be coped with as well. For example, the first stage may be accompanied with changes of priority at the Emmanuel Road–Parker Street junction, signalling Four Lamps roundabout at the east end of Short Street, and banning left turns by private cars out of Downing Street.

Later on, places will have to be found for tourist coach drop-off points to replace the current sites on Silver Street. The queue for Lion Yard car park also has to be much more rigorously controlled, or traffic will just lock solid on Trumpington Street, the only way out for cars being the narrow section of Pembroke Street.

In the third stage, the direction of traffic flow in Park Terrace (the north side of Parker’s Piece) may need to be reversed.

Widespread implications and influences

Reducing traffic in an area heavily used by cyclists has to be a good thing. While the Silver Street closure would be mainly a cyclist- and pedestrian-focused scheme, Parker Street and St Andrew’s Street would be aimed more at improving bus movements. However, as Bridge Street has amply demonstrated, even though there is potential for overall traffic reduction, there will inevitably be increases in traffic elsewhere.

There are two other schemes being drawn up at the same time which also have to be taken into account:

- The University’s West Cambridge development means that there will be much higher cycle flows to and from the west of the city centre, putting pressure on Burrell’s Walk, Sedgwick Street, West Road, Silver Street and Grange Road. Traffic calming, restraint, or whatever needs to be implemented in the Grange Road area. On the other hand, the West Cambridge development may take some large employment centres away from the city centre, possibly reducing traffic impact.

- There is a city centre counter-proposal to the huge edge-of-town shopping development at Kings Hedges Road, which is being considered by the public inquiry inspector at the moment. The city centre development is known as the Grand Arcade and would involve redeveloping the whole area bounded by Lion Yard, St Andrew’s Street, Downing...
Street and Corn Exchange Street. Clearly this will bring many more people into the city centre.

As a result of all of this, we can expect to see much more traffic pressure on the inner ring road. Gonville Place, Lensfield Road and Fen Causeway will all have to take much more traffic. East Road and Maid’s Causeway are likely to be more heavily used.

This means some of the knock-on effects need to be considered. From our point of view there is especially likely to be a negative impact on cyclists using those streets.

Secondly, while this is not part of the plans as they stand at this outline stage, we are likely to see pressure to further pedestrianise bits of the city centre. This might be all right if...
If you’ve been in town on recent Saturdays you’ll know that it has been hard to get past the excavations in progress at the King’s Parade end of Trinity Street, an area officially known as Senate House Hill. Whose sense of humour was it in days gone by that gave it this name?

We were a little alarmed when we recently received notification of the closure of King’s Parade for all of the first quarter of next year, so we sought the true story. King’s Parade probably carries one of the highest concentrations of cyclists of any street in the country, and that in five minutes every hour as lectures finish.

In fact the digging, which we expected for street remodelling next year, will be done section by section. Cyclists will probably have to walk past these, at least if the density of pedestrians is as high as it was on the Saturday I was there. The closure order is just a catch-all formality to allow the work to be done.

Because the area being considered is so wide, there is a lot of scope for other details to be included. For example, the impact on the ring road could include doing things for cyclists in the Newtown area (south of Lensfield Road). We will certainly want to promote making Bene’t Street two-way for cyclists. Radical proposals for the Grange Road area would not be out of place.

The plans are at a very early stage at present, so there is a lot of scope for making suggestions and comments. Political support is not assured for the scheme. The Silver Street closure is especially vulnerable to being left out. Cycle-focused measures are possibly not seen as benefiting the voters electing the controlling group on the County Council. What would be seen as politically (and indeed financially) unacceptable proposals, such as closing Lion Yard car park, are not on the agenda.

What is guaranteed, however, is several years of howls of protest from motorists, politicians, the Cambridge Evening News, and a busy time for us keeping up with all the Council’s momentum. First decisions will be made at the cycle of committee meetings starting in late September and October this year.

David Earl

Digging up King’s Parade

If you’ve been in town on recent Saturdays you’ll know that it has been hard to get past the excavations in progress at the King’s Parade end of Trinity Street, an area officially known as Senate House Hill. Whose sense of humour was it in days gone by that gave it this name?

We were a little alarmed when we recently received notification of the closure of King’s Parade for all of the first quarter of next year, so we sought the true story. King’s Parade probably carries one of the highest concentrations of cyclists of any street in the country, and that in five minutes every hour as lectures finish.

In fact the digging, which we expected for street remodelling next year, will be done section by section. Cyclists will probably have to walk past these, at least if the density of pedestrians is as high as it was on the Saturday I was there. The closure order is just a catch-all formality to allow the work to be done.

It is complicated by the need to replace water mains there. This is what is happening at the moment. The works will happen in three ‘waves’ moving south down King’s Parade. When Senate House Hill is initially completed, which it should be by the time you read this, the road will be dug up in sections past King’s College. After it passes Great St Mary’s Church, the bus bollards and bike route will be replaced with something more like the arrangement agreed for the street remodelling, with bikes travelling either side of the buses.

Once complete, the water works will start all over again at Senate House Hill, around the end of the year. They will go back again down King’s Parade. Permanent bollards will be installed. Finally, after the exam period is over, the pavement widening and resurfacing of the street will be done. Everything should be finished by early summer 1999.

An interesting side-effect of the current works is that Trinity Street and Green Street have temporarily been made two-way. There is no evidence of this on the ground, though. The Council is not anxious to publicise this, but for motor vehicles there is no other way out. Market Hill (another of those little pimples) is also two-way for the time being, but controlled by traffic lights. Green Street in particular should, in our opinion, be two-way for cyclists anyway.

It has to be considered truly amazing that on this occasion digging up the street to lay water mains is happening before the street is completely and expensively resurfaced.

David Earl

Membership corner

We had 541 members by the beginning of September. The youngest is Sean Irving, shown here, four weeks old, with Lorraine and your Newsletter editor at the barbecue celebrating National Bike Week.
We learnt recently of a local cyclist, Meredith Williams, who was injured in a collision with another rider on a blind corner on the path over The Tins – the quarry between Cambridge and Cherry Hinton. After a night in Addenbrooke’s, he tried reporting the incident at Parkside Police Station. He was told this didn’t count as a Road Traffic Accident, so he couldn’t be given an incident number.

This raised serious alarms with one of our members, who asked us whether this was correct.

I’m amazed to report that, according to the CTC lawyer (who was most helpful), yes, this is correct.

The Road Traffic Act 1988, section 170, is entitled ‘Duties in case of accident’. It begins:

170.—(1) This section applies in a case where, owing to the presence of a motor vehicle on a road, an accident occurs by which—

(a) personal injury is caused to a person other than the driver of that motor vehicle, or

(b) damage is caused—

(i) to a vehicle other than that motor vehicle or a trailer drawn by that motor vehicle, or

(ii) to an animal other than an animal in or on that motor vehicle or a trailer drawn by that motor vehicle, or

(iii) to any other property constructed on, fixed to, growing in or otherwise forming part of the land on which the road in question is situated or land adjacent to such land.

It goes on to list the driver’s responsibilities, including when, and what, to report to the police.

The key phrase, though, is ‘owing to the presence of a motor vehicle on a road’.

This means that cyclists and pedestrians, if they collide, regardless of location, are not under any obligation to report the matter to the police. Furthermore, the police are not under any obligation to record such a collision, if someone chooses to report it.

**Why this matters**

A lot of emphasis is placed on ‘accident’ figures by local authorities. Any flaw in the data collection process can bias the figures. For example, many cycle organisations have expressed concern that shared-use paths could be more hazardous than the road. It seems from this incident that collisions on them would probably not be recorded.

Although not of concern to the police, I am also worried that insurance companies will be less likely to honour any claim in the absence of an incident number.

---

**What can you do?**

There are two offences that cyclists can be charged with. One is Dangerous Cycling (maximum fine £2,500) and the other is Careless Cycling (maximum fine £1,000). These offences apply to bridleways as well as roads. Apparently, the best way to make any complaint to the police is in writing, preferably addressed to the Chief Superintendent.

In this case, the only redress for the injured cyclist would have been to write to the police, stating, for example, that he felt the other cyclist was cycling carelessly on a path which he believed to be a bridleway, and giving the other cyclist’s name and address.

So when is a collision not a collision? When it doesn’t involve a motor.

To research this subject, I bought copies of the 1996 Highway Code and the 1988 Road Traffic Act, and spent some time comparing the two. I’m happy to lend out my copy of the Road Traffic Act if anyone’s interested in it!

Incidentally, I’ve mentioned this incident to a few of our members who cycle regularly over the railway bridge by the quarry, and several have said that they slow down and ring a bell before the blind corner. This seems a wise tactic, although as Meredith said, ‘In this case, though, I think even a foghorn would not have attracted the attention of the other cyclist. Shouting at the top of my voice was not enough to make this guy even look in the direction he was travelling.’

*Clare Macrae*
Readers of the Cambridge Evening News may have noticed that we received some poor publicity recently.

Tensions between cyclists and motorists have taken a sinister turn after a woman driver returned to her parked vehicle to find a notice containing veiled threats – which police now say could be deemed as intimidating behaviour.

The article continued:

The notice quotes the contact number for the Cambridge Cycling Campaign – but the organisation has since denied any association with the document, and expressed surprise that someone was using its name as a contact.

In fact, the motorist first wrote to us, asking us about our policy on vandalism. We answered that we don’t condone vandalism, and we asked for information about the circumstances of the incident.

The next thing we knew, a News reporter was asking for a quote.

Only after the article was eventually published did we actually see the text of the note, and we can see why someone would be worried about it.

Your vehicle is parked inconsiderately in this lane. You may not have thought about how mothers with prams will be able to get through the minute gap you have left, or how elderly people can pass through this space. It may be that you do not care and feel you have a right to park where ever you wish.

You may be more concerned about your vehicle. The lane is legitimately used by numerous cyclists, avoiding the roads which many motorists are attempting to drive them from in the first place. Aggrieved by the space left by yet another car in which to wheel a child seat on a bike through they will simply make the space by breaking back your wing mirrors and body trim, probably severely scratching your paint work with sharp metal pedals and brake levers in the process.

Due to my close association within local government I am unable to leave you my details as policy in the City on topics such as these is not surprisingly contentious, however I suggest you contact the local traffic police or traffic wardens and ask their opinion of your parking. The majority of law enforcement does not have much time for cyclists’ rights to the highway, so for another perspective contact the Cambridge Cycling Campaign on (01223) 504095 or email camcycle@pobox.co.uk. I am sure their 500+ members will be keen to help re-educate you.

We discussed the note at our September meeting. The overwhelming feeling was that most people would feel threatened if they received such a note. The majority also felt that it wasn’t unreasonable for someone reading the note to think the Cycling Campaign might be responsible for it.

Having traced the note’s author, who is a member of the Campaign, we asked this person not to use the Campaign’s name in any threatening context in future, nor write anything which might imply they represent the Campaign.

This is an appropriate moment to state the Campaign’s policy on letter-writing, which was adopted at one of the very first monthly meetings. This is that letters on behalf of the Campaign must be on headed paper and signed by a committee member. Since earlier this year all letters and reports have a unique reference number too. We’re trying to avoid surprises, and to have a consistent, co-ordinated and collective approach to what is said on behalf of the Campaign.

Car parking in bike lanes

We’ll make car-parking in general, and in bike lanes in particular, the subject of a future article, as it is not as straightforward as we might like it to be. For example, cars are unfortunately allowed to park on the bike lanes in Gilbert Road as the lanes are marked with dashed lines, and so are only ‘advisory’ for cars.

In the meantime, if you want to complain about a parked car, phone the traffic wardens at Parkside police station, on 358966.

Some years ago Cambridge Friends of the Earth (FoE) produced a leaflet for members to place on car windscreens. We have occasionally talked about whether it would be worth producing our own, with equally carefully chosen words. We’d like to hear members’ views on the FoE leaflet, on whether we should produce our own, and indeed whether you find parked cars to be a problem as you cycle around the City.

Clare Macrae
Opening Barton Road

Barton Road is not on my side of town, but I had heard of the plans for a cycle route down there, and the rounds of negotiations with the local residents. I volunteered to go to the opening as a representative of the Cycling Campaign, as no-one else could make it.

The event was in the form of a bike ride from Shire Hall to the cycle route and back. At Shire Hall I met up with the opening party, which consisted of Councillors and Officers, including John Edwards, the senior engineer of the project. Unfortunately he couldn’t use his own bike because it had been locked to another in the bike sheds, so he ended up borrowing one of the Kensington bikes provided by Geoff’s Bike Hire.

We set off down Lady Margaret Road, and I think a few of the party were quite surprised at how busy and dangerous the right turn onto Madingley Road is. This junction is set to be controlled by traffic lights, but we are likely to lose the privilege of turning left into the road from Castle Street (see page 5).

The group spread out down Grange Road, but we all arrived at the cycle route at the end of this road where it forms the stem of a T-junction with Barton Road. The cycle route crosses the end of Grange Road on a raised crossing, and cyclists are supposed to make sure the route is clear before moving on. Motorists turning in or leaving Grange Road have right of way. I was worried at this sight of the junction because it is designed in such a way that unobservant cyclists think that they can carry straight on over Grange Road without looking, and I saw one cyclist do just that. I am worried that a vehicle will turn into the junction into the path of a cyclist. This type of junction occurs several times on the route and the combination of this danger and the requirement for the cyclist to give way frequently tempers my enthusiasm for the route.

The group stopped on the cycleway for photographs, blocking the route. It was amazing how soon we had a bunch of agitated bona-fide cyclists waiting to get past. This confirmed that the route is well used by cyclists going both ways, although it is rather narrow for busy two-way cycle traffic.

At the east end of Barton Road, a new set of traffic lights has been constructed. This features a cycles-only phase of the lights. There is also a separate pedestrian crossing, and its phase is linked to the cycle-crossing phase.

The cycle crossing is activated by detectors mounted in the cycleway. These detectors respond to metal in the bike, and if you haven’t got enough metal, or the right sort, you’ll have to press the button. Once detected the ‘Wait’ light comes on. I spoke to the engineer about these detectors, and complained that often they don’t detect bikes. He explained that the detectors are most sensitive at the corners, and so to increase detection the wire loops in the ground are now arranged in a butterfly formation adding two more corners.

At the Barton Road lights, the engineers had to face the added problem of two-way traffic on the cycle route. Cyclists completing the crossing go over the detectors for cyclists coming the other way, which ordinarily would trigger a new crossing request. They solved it by staggering two butterfly loops at each side. If the loop nearest the road detects first then the system infers that the cyclist has completed the crossing and doesn’t register. I’m grateful that they thought it was worth going to all that effort to save me having to push a button: it puts cyclists on the same terms as motorists!

After photos for the press at this junction, we headed back for a buffet lunch at Shire Hall. Being face to face with a lot of councillors and officials whose allegiances you don’t know is a scary experience, and it was a time to tread carefully so as not to upset people. It was heartening to hear how well respected the Campaign is, and there were some very favourable comments about the Newsletter.

Simon Nuttall

Cycling shorts

The first of the new County Travel Surveys mentioned in the last issue took place on Wednesday 26 August. Over 10,000 forms were distributed, including 900 to newly-signed-up Cycle Friendly Employer, Cambridge University Press.

On Sunday 22 November, the city centre cycling and motor vehicle ban will be applied from 12.30 p.m to 6 p.m, because of the launch of Christmas festivities. We haven’t objected to this, as it is a special event on the public highway rather than the beginning of a permanent restriction.

We also have news of another local cycling-related survey. Local publication Fen Edge News has recently distributed the Cycling in the Fen Edge Patch Survey, produced by Cottenham Village College Design Group. It seeks to find out about existing cycle paths, and find out what, if anything, discourages villagers from cycling into Cambridge.

Between 14 and 23 November, local cyclist Caryl Coomer will cycle 400 km from the Himalayas to the Ganges in aid of Mencap. Caryl is seeking sponsorship. You can contact her on ☎️ 860081.

Peterborough City Council has opened the first stage of the Green Wheel, a Millennium Commission project to open a vaguely circular leisure cycling and walking route round Peterborough, serving major attractions such as Flag Fen. The project also includes ‘spokes’ linking the ‘wheel’ with the city’s urban core.

Last issue we publicised a set of phone numbers for reporting potholes. One of our members has told us that he phoned the Ely number at 2 p.m one day, to report a pothole in Waterbeach. It had been patched before he got home that evening. I am impressed.

Holt Fen Bridge, a new footbridge over the River Ouse at its meeting with the River Cam, was officially opened on Saturday 1 August. It is a footpath, though, not a bridleway, so you can’t legally cycle over it.

We reported on cycle insurance in Newsletter 16. Recently, the CTC ☎️ (01483) 417217 has made its Freewheeler insurance available to non-members.

Clare Macrae
Ready, set, go!

Young cyclists... are you fed up with pushchairs or prams?

If your mum or dad owns a bicycle make sure they read this!

0800 834 105

D.TEK cycle trailers

- Enjoy family cycling: We stock the United Kingdom’s widest range of child trailers.
  Carry children safely. Comfortable and Weatherproof. New or Used. Your can HIRE or BUY with next day’s delivery.

- Full range of trailer bikes for older children (4 years plus).

- Luggage trailers for shopping or touring.

- Custom-built PET TRAILERS (suitable for any breed, including St. Bernard’s!)

- Sample hire rate: 14 days for just £4.96 a day (includes nationwide delivery and collection by courier).

Full written details on request.

D.TEK, FREEPOST, Licolle. Thetford, Ely. Cambs. CB1 1BR. Tel: 01353 648 177, Tel: 07071 CYCLES Fax: 01353 648777
Letters

Westley Waterless

Dear Folks,

I thought that I really must write to express my thanks for your organising the leisurely cycle ride which I joined on the 9th August. By the time I reached the tea stop I had been relieved from the chronic stress aches in my neck and shoulders which no amount of osteopathy or massage has ever done. I had never joined one of your rides before as I had no idea of the likely pace or distance and was concerned whether at my age I could keep up with the group but there was no problem whatever in that respect: leisurely means leisurely. The run was headed by David who made sure that any stragglers caught up from time to time and was ready with help for any problem.

Westley Waterless was the tea stop but unfortunately it lived up to its name and the tea room was closed. This didn’t matter though as we found an all-day pub nearby which enabled all to obtain refreshment, alcoholic or teetotal as desired. We travelled on quiet roads from Cambridge and used cycle paths where available. I think it would be useful to state in the diary that bridle paths may well be used to ensure that members come along on a suitable machine and can relax and enjoy the quiet countryside without fear of wheel collapse. I was OK, I came along on a pre-war roadster with a pair of substantial stainless steel wheels I rescued from an old Raleigh.

A minor quibble is that I had no indication of length of ride or likely duration and so could not tell my wife when I was likely to arrive back home. Perhaps this too could be stated in the programme as I am sure that others may have the same problem.

Anyway, I parted company with my new friends near Six Mile Bottom and thought I would go home by the quickest way – ha ha. First, I had a puncture before I reached Quy (a blackthorn prickly) and then I was cut up by some maniac on one of the slip kerb that one finds planted in such places. I did a somersault, chest hard on the galvanised barrier, sprained both wrists, had various cuts from glass, gravel and debris from previous wrecks and have a left leg purple from the knee downwards. I will go home the quiet way in future. At least the bicycle landed on top of me and so was not damaged.

Best wishes. I look forward to the next ride.

Keith Morris, Bar Hill

I’m pleased to report that Keith has recovered from his ordeal. I must say I really enjoyed that particular ride, and it was great to see some new faces amongst the nine riders.

In the past, we’ve always avoided quoting distances, for fear that it might put people off coming (20 miles sounds like a terribly long way if you’ve never cycled that way at a gentle pace). However, Keith is one of several people to have made this point recently, so I’ll make an effort to plan further ahead and publish destinations in each newsletter.

This will have a couple of added bonuses. We can start occasional rides by train, for a change of scenery, and we can let the Tourist Information Centre and Cambridge Evening News know about rides too. We’ve always said non-members are welcome too, but we’ve never really told non-members!

Clare Macrae

Another use for a helmet

In recent years, my primary reason for wearing a cycle helmet has changed, and it is not one I see aired very often, if at all: I wear a cycle helmet because it is the best (possibly only) place to mount my helmet mirror.

When I first bought the mirror a few years ago I was surprised at how useful it was. When I broke it a few months ago and had to wait a while to get a replacement, I was disturbed at how relatively unsafe cycling felt – as a result of being less aware of the overall road environment.

Whilst I’m not totally convinced by either side of the argument about whether helmets are worth it in a crash, I’m fairly sure that my helmet/mirror significantly reduces my chances of being in a crash to start with.

Dave Prince

I use my helmet to hold a mirror, too, and I hope never to need the helmet for anything else. This featured in Newsletter 10.

Mark Irving, editor

Interview with John Richards

I am concerned about John’s idea of protecting the cyclist by making them give way (e.g. Milton Road/Barton Road), so that the onus is on the cyclist to not make an “error” and not the motorist, as the cyclist always comes off worse in a collision. I suggest that John (and many other planners) is making a severe and repeated miscalculation, looking at this from my profession of interface design. A motorist has on average 20+ hours of driving tuition, must pass an exam, and has to be over 17. A cyclist can be any age with no Highway Code knowledge and open to the elements which can reduce concentration. Give Way markings on the roads are more likely to be ignored/missed by young cyclists than by motorists, and ‘giving in’ to motorists perpetuates their belief of ‘owning’ the road, when the message in city centres should be to share it.

Indeed giving cyclists priority at junctions consistently would raise the awareness of cyclists’ existence among drivers, and not only when one meets the other. Pavlov’s theory of conditioning will bear out this long-known concept.

Matt Polaine

CAMBRIDGE: Fire-fighters used a bucket of water to extinguish a bicycle fire in Drummer Street last night. (Cambridge Evening News, 8 August)
Blind People and Cyclists

David Earl and Mark Irving first met Fizz Marvin on the Cycling Liaison Group, on which she represented the views of blind and partially sighted people. We asked Fizz, a Campaign member and former rehabilitation worker for blind and partially sighted people, to tell us about her clients’ experiences. Thanks, Fizz

Clare Macrae

This article is a plea for better understanding between cyclists and all pedestrians, especially blind or partially sighted ones. I realise that I am probably preaching to the converted: Cambridge Cycling Campaign members are in any case among the most responsible cyclists and may think that my comments do not apply to them, but please read them anyway.

Cyclists and blind pedestrians often have trouble recognising each other, especially since these days visually impaired people often carry their white canes folded up or hidden for fear of being mugged. We shouldn’t assume that, because there is no white stick to be seen, the person we are approaching has perfect sight and hearing, or is aware of our approach at all.

Many visually impaired people live alone and have to go out alone. Many are elderly. More and more often recently they have been telling me how frightened they are to step outside their own home for fear of cyclists on the pavements. People with visual impairments want and strive to be as independent as possible and it is simply not fair that this vulnerable group of people should be imprisoned at home, or penalised financially by being forced to go everywhere by taxi, for fear of collisions with bikes whose riders are often acting illegally by cycling on pavements not marked for shared use.

Cyclists meeting a pedestrian on a footpath often pass very close, perhaps because the footpath is narrow or there are overhanging shrubs, and they may be cycling quite fast. Their approach may be unheard due to other traffic noise, and as they pass, the unexpected draught created, or the brushing of clothing, can be terrifying to a pedestrian and can disorientate a totally blind person to the degree that they completely change direction without realising and get lost on a familiar road. If the cyclist rings a bell or gives other warning of approach, even if the pedestrian already seems to have noticed him or her, the shock of meeting will be lessened.

Blind or partially sighted people may be unaware that a particular pavement is shared-use. They may not be able to see or feel the dividing line even if there is one. So cyclists who are completely in the right place may nevertheless be confronted by a pedestrian who is in the wrong place, but does not know it. Even when a shared-use path is marked at both ends with the appropriate tactile paving and has a slightly raised centre divider, it is still possible for a blind person to wander out of the correct lane without realising. Of course, cyclists do this too, but they can correct their actions.

At traffic lights a waiting blind person may hear that motor traffic has stopped and so may step into the carriageway to cross without realising that a cyclist has not stopped. Living in town I often see bikes ignoring red lights, or setting off before their light has turned green. Please be aware that the pedestrian in the road may need your help, not your abuse.

At marked crossings and dropped kerbs those lumpy paving stones (usually red or yellow, officially named tactile paving) are intended to help people who can’t see to locate the control box to stop traffic flow, and also to warn them that they are about to step out into traffic. Tactile paving is supposed to be installed at every dropped kerb but it is doubtful that it will be, although the situation is improving. Without tactile paving (which is in any case hard to feel through the soles of winter shoes), a blind person may not be able to differentiate a dropped kerb from the usual bumps in the pavement and so may step unexpectedly into the carriageway, especially at corners.

Blind and partially sighted people are not very confident as a rule. They tend to move slowly and cautiously. Perhaps the collisions between them and cyclists happen because they have not got out of the way as quickly as the cyclist expected. There are many collisions, often in quiet areas with plenty of room for the cyclist to avoid the pedestrian. They are mostly not reported to the police because the injured pedestrian feels that nothing can be done as the cyclist cannot be identified. The frustration this causes can lead to the sort of ‘road rage’ where people cycling in pedestrian areas are dragged from their bikes or shouted at.

I have used up all my allowed space without even mentioning the perils of bikes parked or lying in unexpected places, like in front of shop doorways, another cause of difficulty for people who can’t see. Children seem especially good at this, though some of them are especially good at helping blind people too.

Cyclists are being encouraged to use pavements rather than carriageways because collisions between them and motor vehicles are usually fatal to the cyclist while collisions between cyclists and pedestrians are not usually fatal to either party. I believe that collisions between cyclists and pedestrians are completely unnecessary, but it is the cyclist’s responsibility to avoid pedestrians by giving notice of their presence, by reducing speed, perhaps even to walking pace, and by giving way. Saying, ‘Excuse me,’ and ‘Thank you,’ where appropriate might also help to promote goodwill rather than fear and antipathy and to reduce the strong feelings of indignation in pedestrians, sighted or not, at the invasion of footpaths by wheels. Perhaps members of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign could set an example and influence the behaviour of all cyclists for the better.

Fizz Marvin
A constant problem with cycling after dark is the need for bright, reliable and theft-proof (or dirt cheap) lights.

For years now, I've favoured using old-style bolt-on battery lights together with dynamo lights. This gives redundancy and usually adequate light. And as both are bolted firmly to the bike, I've never had a problem with theft. However, more recently, I have wanted brighter lights. The reasons for this are

- to be more visible
- to be able to see well off the road
- to help me detect black-clothed unlit 'stealth' cyclists in winter on my commute across Midsummer Common.

I decided to use a 12-volt system. The obvious lights were the sealed 12 V halogen spot lamps designed for home use, so long as they could be attached to my cycle in a robust manner and did not fail prematurely due to vibration. It turned out that it was possible to construct an entire lighting system for a little less than £10, which made it worth trying.

You will need soldering skills to construct such a light yourself, and I take no responsibility for burnt fingers, burnt bicycles, exploded batteries, etc. Don't take these as full instructions. The critical parts include:

- A battery. A 12 V 2.1 Ah (ampere hour) battery weighs about 800 g, and this is what I usually use. It gives less than one hour’s lighting, but this is more than enough for my commute. You could use a heavier, higher capacity battery, or a NiCd or other battery if you prefer, so long as it is 12 V, but I recommend avoiding disposable batteries (20-watt lighting would be expensive with these). I bought mine from Greenweld Electronics, a mail-order surplus supplier. They are also sometimes available from Bull Electrical, a similar surplus company, or locally, from Gee’s in Mill Road.
- The mechanical structure consists of two Jubilee clips and some 40 mm plumbing parts, which are a perfect fit for the lamp. These I bought locally from Ridgeon’s.
- A fuse – very important. A shorted battery could easily cause a fire.
- A Philips Standard Line Halogen Bulb, 12 V 20 W 10° (type no. 6642, aANSI no. ESX). Must have front glass. I have one light with a 36° bulb (more common); this works fine, but I am wary of dazzling oncoming traffic. I recommend pointing the bulb slightly downwards. You get a longer-range light with the 10° bulb, but the wider one may be more suitable off the road.
- A charger. To correctly charge a sealed lead–acid battery, you need a voltage-regulated supply. Suitable ready-made chargers cost £20 upwards. Don’t use a car battery (or any other unregulated) charger, because this may ruin your battery. Other types of battery need their own special chargers.

My lights have been in use for six months now and the bulb has not failed yet. I have found that when I am riding fast with the bright light, cars seem less likely to emerge from side streets in front of me, possibly because they are not sure whether I am a cyclist or a motor-cyclist.

Of course, this light is not built to the British Standard, which specifies a tiny bulb powered by small batteries. I find it difficult to believe that a case could be brought that I was inadequately lit with my light. However, I am still an advocate of redundancy in lighting; it would probably be a good idea to have, say, a dynamo set in case the battery runs out, and to make sure your bike conforms to the letter of the law.

David Hembrow

The components for the light. Detailed construction notes can be obtained by asking nicely at the Campaign stall, or by writing to us – see page 2.
Cyclefest '98

July 1998 St. Martin’s College, Lancaster

I was going to write about this Festival of Bikes, but I must mention the train journey first. I don’t mind the train so much these days since I’ve discovered the timetable information available over the Internet on www.railtrack.co.uk. I roughed up several itineraries and took Friday afternoon off. Leaving at 14:05, I was due in Lancaster at 19:01 but I got there two hours late. I’d confirmed my train times before leaving and even got a price of £58.10, but at the station I had to pay £67.60. Still I persevered. The train from Cambridge kept time right up to Birmingham New Street where at rush hour the train was so crammed that our departure was delayed by 50 minutes. So we rolled into Stafford ten minutes after my connection was due to leave.

Anyway I didn’t need to worry, as my connection was about half an hour late due to technical problems at Banbury. I could catch another train that would get me to Preston in 60 minutes because it wasn’t making the usual stops at Wigan, Bolton etc. due to engineering works in the Manchester area. Good! but although this got it into Preston early it would then have to wait 50 minutes before leaving at its usual time.

When I got to Preston, there were scenes that I’d never seen before at a UK railway station. Platform 6 was packed, something like the black-and-white films of wartime evacuations. It was chaos! News was just coming in about trouble at Lockerbie, adverse weather conditions or something. We pondered. Midsummer, early evening, what could it be? Snow? Rain? Leaves? It turned out that serious flash floods had washed the line away.

During the next hour, I got on and off four stationary trains. On one, destined for Glasgow, I sat next to a group of Scotsmen around a table of empty drink cans. One was effing and blinding one, destined for Glasgow, I sat next to a group of Scotsmen around a table of empty drink cans. One was effing and blinding another, trying to ignore the strong language. I exchanged awkward glances with my fellow passengers opposite, and tried to hide the copy of the Transport White Paper I was reading. Ultimately I arrived in Lancaster on a coach, but I really must tell you about the bike festival.

I arrived in time to catch the end of Sir Alex Moulton’s talk in which he slammed tricycle recumbents as ‘a can of worms’ saying ‘I won’t touch them’. He seemed to think that electric power assistance is good, particularly as there is a finite amount of switching gears whether she’s moving or stationary. I boggle at what must have to go through your head if you want to switch from gear 43 to 42. I take it for a ride and it’s fine, a bit like my bike E but it felt bigger, more protected and I didn’t feel the need to go fast. I tried to chase a fully faired racer downhill but it cranked off at breathtaking speed. It looked like a big piece of white paper blowing away in the wind, and was an alarming sight for the motorists, who have to decide if there’s a human being inside. I fiercely tried to keep up but he was over the brow of the next hill in no time.

I returned defeated to try out some more bikes. The lightest bike I tried was also a folder. Cleverly designed, the back wheel pivots around the bottom bracket so the chain doesn’t slacken during folding. Obvious, but the designer had to have that part specially engineered. It was only a one-off experiment, but it felt sturdy and stout to ride. The hub is clever, from an old Moulton apparently, with two gears, changed by back-pedalling slightly. You can tell which gear you’re in because the clicking noise is different! To brake, pedal backwards, and so there are no cables whatsoever – neat!

A trade show filled a hall with an assortment of recumbents, trailers, and spares suppliers, but it was a boat bike that caught my imagination. From a back pack emerged some shiny metal supports, two bright yellow floats, a propeller shaft and power unit. The supports were bolted to brackets pre-mounted on a normal bike frame, and the power unit was like a dynamo set up to brush against the back wheel. An adaptor fitted to the propeller turned out to be a pump, and the demonstrator mounted the bike and started pedalling furiously. This inflated the floats after about 20 minutes. We took the boat/bike down to the Lancaster Canal early on Saturday evening. It was surprisingly stable and reasonably fast and agile on the water. Drinkers at a canal-side pub were so impressed that quite a few of them had a go, and none fell in.

Sunday was my last day at the show, and the day I most regretted not taking a bike. There was a ride down to Morecambe and a parade of bikes on the promenade. It was tremendous to see so many different sorts of bike mixed up with the promenaders. I ducked into the Art Deco Midland Hotel for a reprise, and found the best-value pot of tea in town. I left Morecambe with the memory of a group in recumbent tricycles watching a competition for street performers.

Back at Lancaster I had a chance to ride a high wheeler (penny farthing) and what a frightening experience it was. Made in the days when folk were used to riding horses, this is a challenge to get on and needs a leap of faith to get off. On board, don’t look down, don’t pull on the handlebars, and don’t brake unless you want to head-butt the ground. Despite these difficulties the queue to try the bike out remained all afternoon. The college filled with people on unusual bikes. There was a group learning to ride tall unicycles, and a constant stream of recumbents, tricycles and trailer bikes.

Cyclefest is unpublicised, and runs on the basis that ‘those who want to find out about it’. Delegates clearly knew each other well and there was a family feel to the event. The next ‘fest’ is in 2000. All my train connections back to Cambridge were on time.

Simon Nuttall
Taking it lying down in Norfolk

Ever since I first saw a picture of a recumbent bicycle I have wanted to own one. At least I thought I did. I wasn’t sure about the idea of lying down so low that cars would run me over, and I wasn’t too keen on the idea of steering by means of handlebars under my bottom.

So when I saw an article in the new magazine Bicycle, about a weekend trying out recumbents, I couldn’t resist.

I am now back and have the bruises to prove it. On the second-last weekend of May I got myself to Castle Acre, just north of Swaffham, and checked in to the Old Red Lion, a hostel on the Peddars Way. Should have cycled of course, but 50 miles is a bit over my limit, so I took the car. Or it took me.

There were about 15 of us for the weekend. Stuart, the owner of Bikefix, the London shop which organised the weekend, arrived with a van full of bikes. We spent the Saturday morning on the village green of Castle Acre, trying them all out – there were about 10 different sorts of recumbent, some with under-seat steering, some with high handlebars like those ’60s motorbikes one still sees. Some were a doddle to handle, others quite hard, and I fell off starting and stopping a number of times.

There was a low-slung three-wheeler, a Windcheetah, which holds the cycling Land’s End–John O’Groats cycle speed record and costs nearly £3000. One over-enthusiastic participant cornered so fast he rolled out, though the machine itself stayed upright.

In the afternoon we did a twenty-mile cruise round the country roads and villages. Ignominiously, I fell off in the middle of Swaffham market place. This was on something called a Pashley PDQ, a British bike which costs about £850, the second-cheapest of the lot. The nice thing about it is the comfort. Instead of putting most of your weight on a hard saddle, you are in a mesh seat, and a lot of the weight is taken on your back as you push forward on the pedals. These are on an adjustable boom out beyond the front wheel. Height above the ground proved not to be the problem in practice that it was assumed to be in theory. Most of the bikes kept your head about a foot below where it would be on a ‘normal’ bike and that seemed to be enough even on bendy country roads for cars to see us.

On Sunday we did 40 miles, some on rough bridleways, and again I felt I could have gone another 40, whereas on a normal bike I feel uncomfortable in the nether regions after ten miles. This day I was on the cheapest, a Dutch Flevo, which weighs in at only £400. Not quite as comfortable on the rear as the PDQ, but harder to fall off. This is billed as a town-bike rather than a touring machine, but the smallish wheels coped with gravel and sand and ate up the miles on the tar.

Having now tested the concept, my only question is not whether I should get a recumbent, but when. They are expensive, and probably will be for some time to come, but for me they are the future. I adore cycling, but up to now have been limited by what my arms and backside could stand in the way of prolonged pain. On a recumbent the only limit is how many times your legs can go round in a day.

— Philip Lund

Little Green Bicycles

When I saw that strange light I thought at first that I had been working too hard. I was on my way home from shopping, panniers filled, when my eye was caught by an unexpected green glow in front of me. What was happening? Were all those long evenings writing position papers and Cycling Campaign reports causing me to see bicycles where there were none? In fact I was so startled I had to go back and take another look to make sure I was not dreaming. But no, there it was. A lovely little green bicycle, shining ever so prettily! Why do they always face the same way? I wondered. And why always a ‘man’s’ bike, not a ‘woman’s’?

I realised with joy that I no longer needed to fear the watching eyes of the law. After all those long months inhabiting that shadowy region between darkness and righteousness, I had been made an honest man. No longer, when riding homewards along Newmarket Road, need I stop at the bus signals just before River Lane. I could glide fearlessly past, that little green filter light exempting me magnificently from the need to obey the red light. Why did they change their mind? We may never know. But the council has relented. They’ve put in a cycle filter. At last.

But not all such good news: still the lights at Ditton Lane don’t detect bikes, and still the cycle lane hasn’t been re-instated approaching the railway bridge westbound on Newmarket Road. This is despite four letters to the Council and promises that this would be done. Sigh.

— Nigel Deakin

Subgroup News

Maps

We have been invited to work with Cambridgeshire County Council and local company Adhoc Publishing to produce a cycle map of Cambridge for launch next spring. Nothing is definite yet, but a joint project such as this may be just what we have been looking for. It would allow us to contribute to the content and design of the map without the need to expend a great deal of effort on production and distribution. The next meeting of the Maps subgroup will discuss how to take things further.

— Nigel Deakin

Trailers

Thank you to those who filled in our questionnaire in the last issue. Since then, we have been seeking a suitable location to store trailers in the city centre. We hope to have more news in time for the December Newsletter.

— Clare Macrae
 Apparently the best that can be done for cyclists in Milton is absurdly narrow cycle lanes or cycling on the pavement.

Plans have now been developed for two options for cyclists in Milton, along Cambridge Road, High Street and Ely Road – three names for the old main road through the centre of the village. The County Council organised a small exhibition about them at the Milton Community Centre and is distributing publicity material locally. One option proposes narrow cycle lanes on the road – only a metre wide. The other option envisages allowing cyclists to ride on the eastern footway, which would be reconstructed to a width of two metres. As well as suffering from the usual failings of shared-use – driveways, pedestrians and cyclists mixing in a built-up area, and inadequate width – there are several side turnings and the path meanders around a lay-by or two.

The worst feature of both schemes – if you think that either has much to redeem it – is that just where it gets busy and complicated around the shops, both options just end, and restart the other side. In the case of on-road lanes, at least you are in the correct place on the road. But with the shared-use footway, in theory you would have to cross the road twice in a matter of a hundred metres or so if heading north. In practice, of course, people who feel compelled to cycle on the pavement will just ignore the signs and cycle illegally past the shops. Crossing the road must surely be less safe than cycling along it.

But just what is the £50 000 – £90 000 they expect to spend on the scheme trying to solve? The problem perceived by many Milton cyclists is the so-called traffic-calming installed last year. Three islands were installed in the middle of the street about two years ago. We reported on these in previous issues. The idea is to slow the traffic, but they are just the wrong width – too wide to prevent a car trying to overtake a bike in the gap, and too narrow to do so safely. Both of the visitors to the exhibition at the same time we were there made exactly this point. We told the County Council the same last year. As a result some red surfacing was installed, but that really only papered over the cracks. The fundamental problem of cyclists being squeezed did not go away.

Frankly, both options are very poor value for money. In our opinion they give a false illusion of safety, inconvenience cyclists and generally do cycling a disservice. A much better way to spend the money would be to install more effective and more cycle-friendly traffic calming. Or just take the islands out – Milton High Street isn’t a particularly awkward or difficult street to cycle in the first place.

David Earl
The mini-roundabout at the eastern end of Mill Road, where it is known as Brookfields, was at the top of this year’s casualty list. Of course, one reason for this is that it is heavily used by cyclists. Another is that the main flow of cyclists is east-west, while the main flow of motor vehicles is north-south.

We said previously that the roundabout was likely to be replaced with traffic lights. We have now received the detailed plans, and this is indeed what they show. In general, traffic signals, even without any special provision, are well known to be safer for cyclists, so criticisms of the plans made to the County Council are in the context and spirit of making a positive proposal better.

Advanced stop lines are proposed at the junction. However, a gradually widening left-turn-only lane out of Mill Road will make it hard for cyclists (in fact, much like getting into the correct lane is at present) to go straight on up Burnside and The Tins. The reduction from three lanes to two will, however, help right-turning bikes.

On Perne Road and Brooks Road, the advanced stop lines are fed from the existing cycle lanes. This is a plus point for the design.

Pedestrian crossings are also being built in to the lights. At present cyclists and pedestrians share a ‘toucan’ crossing on Perne Road about 50 m south of the junction. This crossing, one of the first of its kind in Cambridge, was installed when the Cambridge South East Cycle Route was opened about ten years ago. It provides one of the main links between Cherry Hinton and the City via the bike bridge at the station. It is also heavily used by Coleridge Community College students.

The new arrangement would replace this crossing with one much nearer the junction. The Council has made it clear that the cycle track will meet up with the new crossing on the western side of Perne Road. The existing crossing has always had a bizarre arrangement where the signal controller was planted right in the middle of the cycle track (typically thoughtless planning). While this will go, there will then be a phone box and post box in the way. The Council will ‘look into the re-positioning’ of these.

The ring of moving steel

The Brookfields roundabout is only one, and the smallest, of a series of busy roundabouts along the outer ring road. These roundabouts form a long-standing barrier for cyclists. There is only one purpose-built cycle crossing along the route – the one at Perne Road mentioned above that is to be replaced. All the other crossings are large roundabouts with the exception of the traffic lights at the Long Road–Hills Road junction.

The poor visibility at the roundabouts at Queen Edith’s Way and at Cherry Hinton Road make them difficult for cyclists. The sheer size and therefore speed at the roundabouts by Sainsbury’s at Coldham’s Lane and at Newmarket Road make these particularly intimidating. Yet all of these are on desirable radial routes for cyclists.

At present, roundabouts are only replaced as they start to show up with poor accident statistics (and not even then, as we know from experience of the Royal Cambridge Hotel junction). Despite the official line for many years having been one of encouraging cyclists, there is still no general policy or plan to replace or improve all the roundabouts on both ring roads or to provide alternatives to them. We continue to live with a ring of moving steel which confident or experienced cyclists tackle daily, but which is highly intimidating to others. This is a big problem in promoting cycling in the south and east of the city.

David Earl
We said in Newsletter 19 that there were proposals for a bus priority scheme in Hills Road and Babraham Road in connection with the new Park and Ride site that is to be built beyond Addenbrooke’s. Since then we have compiled a detailed response for the County Council.

We told them that we were generally in favour of the principle of the scheme but had reservations about the detail. The main points we made were that:

- There are numerous Advanced Stop Lines proposed to help cyclists. Many of these do not include approach lanes, though. We felt this was not helpful. In line with our recent document on the subject, we asked for approach lanes.

- Some new left-turn-only lanes were being proposed as part of the scheme. As we have highlighted, these pose particular difficulties for cyclists. In our opinion, they need to be re-thought, either to omit them, or to provide suitable protection for cyclists. One reason these are popular with planners is that they allow left turns and straight-on movements to be signalled independently.

- We felt that the proposal for a shared-use path on the Homerton College section of Hills Road was a misdirection of funds. The accident problem on this section is with cars, especially those travelling south, turning left into the side roads across the path of cyclists. Providing a shared-use footway might take a few cyclists off the road, but conflict would remain at junctions, and the plans do nothing to improve their safety for the majority remaining on the road.

We thought the priority should be to reduce speeds on Hills Road and provide greater separation of the cycle lane from the traffic, by widening the cycle lanes and providing some ‘buffering’ in the form of a super-wide white line or lines or textured paving or some such. Further emphasis of the cycle lane is also required at junctions. Indeed, the existing red surfacing, some of the earliest done in the city, has decayed to the point where it has become almost invisible. Following comments from a number of regular users about its abysmal condition, we also said that the whole section of road needed re-surfacing.

- We asked for additional cycle lanes southbound between Station Road and the railway bridge to complete the missing section. We discussed the problems posed by restricting the short cut to the station past Camtax.

You may recall that there are two options for Babraham Road: widening to form a bus lane, or taking the buses round via Worts’ Causeway to avoid the queues. We offered no particular preference for either of these, but said that the associated cycle facilities need to be constructed appropriately whichever is chosen.

However, we did make a definite choice in favour of taking the road across the Addenbrooke’s roundabout, rather than adapting the existing traffic flow with new signals and lanes. We felt that this offered better opportunities for providing properly both for cyclists travelling across the route into Addenbrooke’s and for those heading to and from town and the Park and Ride site.

If anyone would like a copy of our full report, it is available on the web, or we can let you have a paper copy. Councillors will consider comments at the Area Committee meeting on 5 October, but we expect that we will be discussing the details of what we are saying with Council officers well beyond that.

David Earl
Regent Terrace is the little street that runs from the Pizza Hut on Regent Street alongside Parker’s Piece up to Gonville Place. It is significant for cyclists because it forms the first quarter mile of the ‘Cambridge South East Cycle Route.’ More cyclists probably cross Parker’s Piece diagonally than use Regent Terrace, but it is still a busy cycle route, with purpose-built cycle crossings at both ends.

At the ‘what’s on your mind’ session at our August monthly meeting, the condition of the surface on Regent Terrace was raised, and that prompted a sad enumeration of lots of other faults in this street. This in turn prompted a long letter of woe to the County Council, reflecting the anguish of members stored up for many years.

Mainly, we said it needed resurfacing. It’s not that it is badly pot-holed, though there are some holes. So it isn’t appropriate to just report it to the pothole phone line. No, it is more that it has been patched and dug up, and gouged and pitted so many times that it is one of the bumpiest streets in Cambridge. Only properly resurfacing the whole road could make it pleasant to cycle on.

Then there’s the question of the bollards at the Pizza Hut. In a desperate effort to stop cyclists going through the pedestrian bit, bollards were installed close together. This, of course, means that most pedestrians don’t use the pedestrian bit either, because there isn’t really room. It’s not just people with pushchairs and large bags. More unencumbered people use the bike path than the footpath. And as a result many pedestrians also cross the road mixed in with the bikes at the cycle crossing section.

Observing there with a camera for a few minutes, very common behaviour was for one of a pair of people walking side by side to use the bike gap while their neighbour squeezed though the pedestrian gap alongside. Let’s just remove most of the deliberately obstructive bollards, we said. Who cares if a few bikes go the wrong side – everyone’s going through a common gap as it stands at present anyway!

Other gripes are that pedestrians walk many abreast along the length of Regent Terrace and are often reluctant to move out of the way for a bike to pass. This is exacerbated by the parking, which is allowed along the whole length of the road (though it is restricted to residents during the day). At night the lighting is significantly inferior to adjacent streets.

Finally, where the cycle track across the south-west corner of Parker’s Piece joins Regent Terrace, it is common for cars to park at least right up to the gap, and often partially if not completely blocking it. There is only a single yellow line here, and enforcement is rare. Of course it’s only a cycle track, so obviously it is fair game for motorists to park on.

We haven’t had a reply from the County Council at the time of writing this. However, we do know that they have allocated a significant sum to resurfacing recently, but directed it at major roads. We’d like to see some small part of that put into what is a major road for cyclists.

David Earl
More from Cambridge Station

Since the last newsletter, we have had another positive meeting with WAGN. They have continued work on the expansion of cycle parking at the station, though we don’t have news of the opening date yet. However, we were stunned to learn that the British Transport Police had objected to the new stands, which they felt would increase cycle theft. Astonishing, since a sure-fire way to reduce theft is to provide a point to which bikes can be locked.

Last issue we published a photo of a rather unfortunately worded warning attached to bikes. Since then, WAGN have reworded the message, and apologised for any alarm caused.

We’ve mentioned before that we’d like to see a continental-style cycle centre at Cambridge station, with staffed secure parking, cycle hire and repair. WAGN and Cambridge Recycles have recently taken a step in that direction, with the opening of a well signposted cycle hire facility near the Transport Police office.

Coincidentally, we have just received a six-page ‘red top’ report (TAL 5/98) from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, with lots of information on cycle centres.

Clare Macrae

The greatly-improved wording – although the photograph was taken in September

We’ve mentioned before that we’d like to see a continental-style cycle centre at Cambridge station, with staffed secure parking, cycle hire and repair. WAGN and Cambridge Recycles have recently taken a step in that direction, with the opening of a well signposted cycle hire facility near the Transport Police office.

Clare Macrae

Mudguard stickers are still available at a cost of 25p from the Saturday stall in the market square. Or you can send a stamped self-addressed envelope to us with a first class stamp enclosed and we will post one to you.

Clean your mudguard with washing-up liquid before applying, so that the sticker sticks properly.

Clare presented last year’s Chocolate Chain award to WAGN’s Tom Joyner in the unfinished cycle parking area.

The University Cycles
9 Victoria Avenue
Cambridge
01223 — 355517

Brighten up your life with us.
Get ready for the winter nights now!

Join
Cambridge Cycling Campaign

(01223)
504095
www.cccdc.cam.ac.uk/camcycle
We’ve got a way through

The big leisure park being promoted between Clifton Road and Hills Road, which we’ve reported on in the past, is still deeply embedded in the planning bureaucracy. But you may remember that one of the points we made about it was that access for cyclists from the Romsey area and beyond would be rather difficult if it meant turning right from Rustat Road onto Cherry Hinton Road and right again almost straight away onto Clifton Road.

What is needed is a way through from Rustat Road into the Clifton Road area. Not that the leisure park alone needs this: Clifton Road has numerous small businesses which both employees and customers find really hard to reach at present by bike.

Cambridge Water Company has a headquarters building on Rustat Road and also owns the land previously used for the car pound when the tow-away scheme was operating. Now it has asked for planning permission to build houses there. We spotted this and asked that a condition of planning permission should be that a link be provided between Rustat Road and Clifton Road as part of the development. We understand that this is indeed what has been done, and I think we can give ourselves a pat on the back for achieving this.

David Earl

Cycling shorts, second leg

McDonald’s lost their planning permission appeal for a drive-through burger bar on Coldham’s Lane. A government inspector agreed with us and others that this would generate more traffic.

Two local businesses run by cyclists have new Web pages. Ben Hayward’s – www.uksuperweb.co.uk/benhayward/ and Hobbs’ Pavilion – www.touristnetuk.com/em/hobbs/index.htm

The CTC Cambridge District Association has a new Web site carrying its current ‘runs list’ of cycle rides. www.cam.net.uk/home/irving/ctcinfo.html

The third annual Women on Wheels Festival will take place on 10–11 October, at Seven Sisters Country Park. This is the biggest opportunity for women off-roaders to get together for a weekend on two wheels. For details, send an S.A.E. to WOW, Bodies Under Pressure, PO Box 51, Tunbridge Wells North, Kent TN2 5WZ

The next phase of the city’s Park and Ride network will be a site in the Trumpington area. The County Council has an exhibition of plans and proposals. This is on show in the Guildhall, 28–30 September, in South Cambs Hall (9–11 Hills Road) on 1–2 October and in Shire Hall on 5–7 October.

Clare Macrae and Mark Irving

Campanier’s directory

☎ Telephone number ☎ fax ☎ e-mail address
Addenbrooke’s Bicycle User Group
Colin Carr ☎ 216726 ☎ cc232@hermes.cam.ac.uk
Cambridge City Council (including Highways Department for potholes in the City) ☎ 457000
Cambridge Friends of the Earth
St Michael’s Church Hall, Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 1SU. ☎ 517509 ☎ camfoe@home.cam.net.
Cambridgeshire County Council ☎ 717111 (Road Safety ☎ 717385; potholes south of Cambridge ☎ 833717; potholes north of Cambridge ☎ (01353) 667826)
Cycle-Friendly Employers scheme
Teresa Broadstock, Travel For Work Advisor
Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority
Hillview, Fulbourn Hospital
Cambridge CB1 5EF ☎ 475131 ☎ Teresa.Broadstock@chh.anglox.nhs.uk
CTC (Cyclists’ Touring Club), Cambridge District Association
Sue Taylor, Secretary ☎ 563414
The Slower Speeds Initiative
PO Box 746, Norwich NR2 3LJ
South Cambridgeshire District Council ☎ 443000
Sustrans – Nigel Brigham
The Environment & Energy Centre, 33a Westgate
Peterborough PE1 1PZ ☎ (01733) 319981 ☎ (01733) 346902
Traffic wardens, Parkside police station ☎ 358966
Transport 2000 Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk
Simon Norton, Co-ordinator ☎ 312654 ☎ simon@emu.pmms.cam.ac.uk

Small Ads

Free to members of the Campaign, on cycling subjects. 10p per word for non-members or for non-cycling subjects. For free ads, please be as brief as if you were paying for them.

For Sale

Holdsworth 22” blue ‘Special Edition’ 15-speed touring bike – drop handlebars, rear rack, mudguards – needs some attention. £95 or nearest offer. Miranda ☎ 357035

Wanted

Baby seat or trailer suitable for a baby under 6 months (too small to hold up his head yet). Mark or Lorraine Irving ☎ 882378
Campaign Diary

September

Sun 27 2 pm Leisurely Ride, meeting at Brookside, near Lensfield Road. A countryside ride, using bridleways and quiet roads, at a gentle pace, and always including a stop at a tea shop or café. We’re usually back in Cambridge by 6 pm. Please bring lights.

Tue 29 7.30 pm Maps subgroup meeting, 35 Ainsworth Street – see article on page 17.

October

Tue 6 7.30 pm Annual General Meeting, Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Special guest speaker: Shona Johnstone, chair of Cambridgeshire County Council’s Environment and Transport Committee will talk about The Politics of Cycling and Transport at the County Council. (Tea and coffee, a chance to chat, and for us to introduce ourselves to new members for the first half-hour. The meeting itself starts at 8.)


Sun 11 1.50 pm Leisurely Ride meet at Cambridge station to catch the 13:50 to Audley End, and cycle back to Cambridge. Distance up to 27 miles. (see Letters for description)

Mon 19 8.30 pm Pub social. We’ll be at the Zebra on Maid’s Causeway

Wed 21 8.30 am Newsletter 20 Editorial review meeting, at Tatties

23–25 Fact-finding trip to York see article on page 3 for more details

Sun 25 2 am British Summer Time ends. Move your clocks back an hour. Don’t forget your lights! It gets dark much earlier now.

November

Tue 3 7.30 pm Open Meeting, Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Special guest speaker: Don Mathew, founder of the Slower Speeds Initiative

Fri 6 Newsletter 21 deadline

Sun 8 2 pm Leisurely Ride. Meet at Brookside; visit Barton, Haslingfield, the Eversdens, Kingston, Toft and Hardwick, Madingley and Coton. About 20 miles; bring lights (see 27 September or Letters for description)

Mon 16 8.30 pm Pub social. We’ll be at the Zebra on Maid’s Causeway

Fri 20 7.30 pm Newsletter 21 stuffing at 8 Thirleby Close – volunteers welcomed!

Sun 22 12.30 pm City Centre cycling ban applies, until 6 pm, for a Christmas special

December

Tue 1 7.30 pm Open Meeting, Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Special topic is the Core Traffic Scheme (see page 6)

Wed 9 8.30 am Newsletter 21 Editorial Review meeting, at Tatties

Sun 13 2 pm Leisurely Ride. Meet at Brookside; visit Fen Ditton, Quy, Lode, Little Wilbraham, Great Wilbraham, tea in Fulbourn. About 20 miles; bring lights (see September 27 or Letters for description)

Fri 18 7.30 pm Christmas party at 8 Thirleby Close. All members very welcome

Mon 21 8.30 pm Pub social. We’ll be at the Zebra on Maid’s Causeway

Cycling Campaign Subgroups

- Telephone number e-mail address
- Cycle Enumeration – Analysing cycle journeys in Cambridge. Dave Earl 504095 davide@harlequin.co.uk
- Cycle Parking – Working to improve cycle parking provision throughout Cambridge. Contact Clare 336024 macrae@ccdc.cam.ac.uk
- Hills Road Corridor – Studying the route to Addenbrooke’s. Dave Earl 504095 davide@harlequin.co.uk
- Maps – Should we produce a map for Cambridge cyclists? Nigel Deakin 311073 npd@dial.pipex.com
- Newsletter – Co-ordinating this, the Campaign’s newsletter. Editor, Mark Irving 882378 Mark-Irving@home.cam.net.uk
- Science Park Access – looking at plans to widen Milton Road. Contact Clare 336024 macrae@ccdc.cam.ac.uk
- Shared-Use Paths – drafting our policy. Contact Dave Earl 504095 davide@harlequin.co.uk
- Trailer Loan Scheme – Contact Clare 336024 macrae@ccdc.cam.ac.uk
- West Cambridge – Studying the University’s plans for development. Contact Dave Earl 504095 davide@harlequin.co.uk

Newsletter

Sun 27 2 pm Leisurely Ride, meeting at Brookside, near Lensfield Road. A countryside ride, using bridleways and quiet roads, at a gentle pace, and always including a stop at a tea shop or café. We’re usually back in Cambridge by 6 pm. Please bring lights.

Tue 29 7.30 pm Maps subgroup meeting, 35 Ainsworth Street – see article on page 17.

October

Tue 6 7.30 pm Annual General Meeting, Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Special guest speaker: Shona Johnstone, chair of Cambridgeshire County Council’s Environment and Transport Committee will talk about The Politics of Cycling and Transport at the County Council. (Tea and coffee, a chance to chat, and for us to introduce ourselves to new members for the first half-hour. The meeting itself starts at 8.)


Sun 11 1.50 pm Leisurely Ride meet at Cambridge station to catch the 13:50 to Audley End, and cycle back to Cambridge. Distance up to 27 miles. (see Letters for description)

Mon 19 8.30 pm Pub social. We’ll be at the Zebra on Maid’s Causeway

Wed 21 8.30 am Newsletter 20 Editorial review meeting, at Tatties

23–25 Fact-finding trip to York see article on page 3 for more details

Sun 25 2 am British Summer Time ends. Move your clocks back an hour. Don’t forget your lights! It gets dark much earlier now.

November

Tue 3 7.30 pm Open Meeting, Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Special guest speaker: Don Mathew, founder of the Slower Speeds Initiative

Fri 6 Newsletter 21 deadline

Sun 8 2 pm Leisurely Ride. Meet at Brookside; visit Barton, Haslingfield, the Eversdens, Kingston, Toft and Hardwick, Madingley and Coton. About 20 miles; bring lights (see 27 September or Letters for description)

Mon 16 8.30 pm Pub social. We’ll be at the Zebra on Maid’s Causeway

Fri 20 7.30 pm Newsletter 21 stuffing at 8 Thirleby Close – volunteers welcomed!

Sun 22 12.30 pm City Centre cycling ban applies, until 6 pm, for a Christmas special

December

Tue 1 7.30 pm Open Meeting, Friends’ Meeting House, Jesus Lane. Special topic is the Core Traffic Scheme (see page 6)

Wed 9 8.30 am Newsletter 21 Editorial Review meeting, at Tatties

Sun 13 2 pm Leisurely Ride. Meet at Brookside; visit Fen Ditton, Quy, Lode, Little Wilbraham, Great Wilbraham, tea in Fulbourn. About 20 miles; bring lights (see September 27 or Letters for description)

Fri 18 7.30 pm Christmas party at 8 Thirleby Close. All members very welcome

Mon 21 8.30 pm Pub social. We’ll be at the Zebra on Maid’s Causeway