



Spring 2001

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LACK OF PROSECUTION ZEAL MEANS CYCLISTS LOSE OUT

While the Leckhampton Police are putting some zeal into curbing errant cyclists, innocent cyclists could do with a bit more police zeal when motorists collide with them. Cheltenham's Courts have been imposing paltry penalties on motorists who kill cyclists. A Cheltenham Campaign member has written to the Minister Charles Clark, as a part of the consultation on Road Traffic Penalties, warning of the message that is being given to motorists 'you don't have to care about your standard of driving, even if it kills someone, because you'll just have your wrists slapped and told not to do it again! But what is the message received by drivers who hit cyclist but who are not even prosecuted? Cheltenham Cyclist has been talking with the Accident Investigation Unit, based at Gloucester, about their reluctance to forward cases for prosecution unless they are convinced that they will get a conviction.. This means having witnesses to the collision even when there is other evidence. It seems that the magistrates are the ultimate problem with the police having little confidence that lay magistrates in particular will take a robust line in judging drivers versus cyclists. This is not hard to believe when we recall the modest fine but no 'ban' which was handed out last year as the penalty for killing cyclist Peter Williams on Hyde Lane. And now we have the death of young Stuart Bell who was knocked off his bike close to Princess Elizabeth Way. Cheltenham Cyclist adds its voice to the condolences. Twenty year old Ryan Ashton, has been arrested in connection with the crash.



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A 40 Golden Valley By-pass



There was a temporary ban on cyclists on this route for a period of 18 months whilst bridge strengthening work was carried out. There has been a move recently to make this ban permanent.

The Cheltenham Cycle Campaign objects to the proposal on several grounds.

First, although the proposed ban is no doubt intended to avoid casualties, the alternative route via Churchdown is far from being free of hazards. In particular there is inadequate policing of speed limits along sections where there is scant separation between cyclists and motor vehicles. The off-road cycle tracks are often obstructed and are poorly surfaced. The route is also substantially longer. We were consulted on the Churchdown route, but so far we are unimpressed and doubt whether the next phase of work will make it ideal.

Secondly, it is generally unsound to solve problems by marginalizing the victims. Instead measures should be put in place to mitigate the underlying causes of the problems.

Finally, as stated in "Cycle Friendly Infrastructure, Planning and Design Guidelines" the policy is, in general, not to ban cyclists from A class roads.

In the opinion of several experienced cyclists, the Golden Valley By-pass, unpleasant as it is, is preferable to the Churchdown route provided the roads are crossed 'jug handle' fashion and the hard verge is ridden unwaveringly. Maybe the Golden Valley By-pass is not many cyclists' favoured route, especially for those engaged in leisurely touring, but the choice should not be eliminated.

STREETS FOR PEOPLE CAMPAIGN AND NATIONAL BIKE WEEK

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign is, as in previous years, on the Streets for People Committee, which the Council runs to promote environmental awareness and sustainability during June. Previous years have seen separate weeks devoted to Walking, Cycling, Air Quality, Pollution and Green Transport. But a tighter budget this year has concentrate most of the activities into the week of 11th to 17th June. Although the National Bike week starts on 17th June, Cheltenham Cycle Campaign has decided its activities should coincide with the main Streets for People week.

The Campaign will join the Council in a shop display, in Regent Arcade, on green issues throughout the week. There will be a Councillors' Invitation ride at 6 p.m. on Tuesday 12th June. The Cheltenham Cycle Campaign will run the Spa Challenge family cycle ride and treasure hunt from Pittville Pump Room starting at 2.30 p.m. on Sunday 17th June. Other events will include craft fairs, discounted Park & Ride, Employer's Green Travel Contests, car sharing, bike coding, a charity walk around the racecourse and, Foot and Mouth permitting, Farmers' markets. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign members willing to help should contact John Mallows on 235072 or Andre Curtis on 582985



Adrian Clarke leaves Council and Project Nexus

Adrian Clarke was the Council Officer with responsibility for cycling until he left Cheltenham to work with Gloucester City Council last year. Adrian is a chartered civil engineer who cut his teeth working with Councils in Yorkshire and Cornwall. Before joining Cheltenham Council in 1995 he had worked on the second Severn crossing. In the Borough's transport unit his brief included the development of the town's cycle network. Not having done much cycling previously Adrian took to a bike for many forays around town. He was soon convinced of the great potential for more cycling in Cheltenham and set to with enthusiasm. The network was based to a large extent on routes which the Cycle Campaign had been pushing for several years. However, the right time had arrived with local authorities as well as national bodies beginning to see cycling as a solution rather than a problem and recognising that cyclists have as many rights as other road users.

A constructive relationship followed between Adrian and the Cycle Campaign, spurred on by nation-wide initiatives like the National Cycling Strategy and Sustrans' National Cycle Network with many advances made in the recognition of cyclist and provision for them. To ensure the plans were well aired, Adrian instigated the Borough's Cycle Forum which was chaired by Councillor Jeremy Worth, a keen cyclist and the then Chair of the Environment Committee. The forum had representatives from many clubs, schools and organisations as well as the Cycle Campaign. When the Council's 'Project Nexus' team was formed Adrian joined it as the transport specialist. Nexus provides an overarch for all the Borough's strategic plans, helping ensure environmentally sound aims and keeping the various departments in step. Its covers the 'Our Town, Our Future' exercise, the Streets for People campaign in June and Cheltenham's Transport Plan. Drafting and consulting on the Transport Plan was Adrian's last task before moving to Gloucester.

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign wishes Adrian well in building on Gloucester's 'Safer City' project to further improve the cycling and other transport provisions. He is already liaising with Alastair Goldie of the Bicycle Action Group of Gloucester (BAGG). Adrian told Cheltenham Cyclist that he will also be working on a promising new initiative devised by behavioural psychologists and already used by Sustrans, called 'individual marketing' in which a pro-cycling or sustainable transport messages will be tailored to particularly intransigent individuals or groups.

New Council Postings

Kathryn Finch, a traffic engineer from Exeter, has replaced Martin Morley in the Transportation Unit in the Borough Council, and Phil Williams has taken over Adrian Clarke's transport brief in the Project Nexus team.



CCN/CTC Spring Conference

The CCN/CTC Spring Conference is to be held at Ryde, Isle of Wight on **Saturday May 5th 2001**, the May Bank Holiday weekend. This is the first time that the conference has crossed The Solent, and it's sure to be a great location. Contact Andre or John Mallows for details see bottom of page 2

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Safer Cities Project Coming to Cheltenham

The Safer Cities project has made Gloucester's citizens safer in many ways, including better provisions for cyclists. However with fewer cyclists and a later start on catering for cyclists, it's not surprising that Cheltenham Cycle Campaign and Bicycle action Group of Gloucester reckon that Cheltenham is one step (should that be one wheel?) ahead. They agreed that some of the provisions in Gloucester could have been better designed had there not been an apparent rush to meet a deadline for spending the Safer City funds. Building on Cheltenham's greater experience the Cycle Campaign hopes for a constructive involvement with the Council to ensure that funds earmarked for cycling are well spent. A Safer City (town?) team will be formed in Cheltenham, but it will not include Mr. Belloti who headed up the Gloucester team. Now that the Gloucester project is over he has been poached by a Canadian authority. Let's hope the Canadians appreciate his commitment to traffic calming in the face of opposition from some self centred motorists.

SPEEDING STARS

After Spice girl Geri Halliwell was fined £400 and banned for six weeks in March for speeding at 60 mph in a 30 limit the Daily Mirror ran a who's who of high profile speedsters: They listed Ann Widdecombe, Shadow Home Secretary, £40 and 3 points for 50 mph in a 40 limit; Ross Kemp, East Ender, £500 and five week ban for 112 mph on a motorway. Denise Van Outen, paid extrovert, £575 and 6 points for 73 mph in a 40 limit; David Beckham, ball boy, £800 and 8 month ban for 76 mph in a 50 limit; Anne nee Windsor, unemployed, £400 and 5 points for 93 mph in a 70 limit, Damon Hill, professional boy racer, £30 and 7 day ban for 102 mph on a motorway; John Prescott, zoo keeper (just 3 jaguars, one of which is a Raleigh bike), £40 and 3 points for 80 mph in a 30 limit; Jay Kay, minstrel, £540 and 42 day ban for 111 mph on a motorway; Gary Glitter, patron saint of rhyming slang, £40 and 3 points for 92 mph in a 60 limit, Micheal Flatley, dancer, £1000 and 3 month ban for 129 mph on a motorway.

Geri wanted to be treated like a normal person, probably not realising that this could mean a stiffer penalty. At least she proffered no excuses, unlike some of the others. See if you can match the excuses of these speedsters. All entries to the editor please. 'I was worried a crazed female stalker would burn down my mansion', 'I thought the flashing blue lights were my escort', 'I was late for a meeting and in somewhat of a rush', 'I was trying to shake off a photographer', 'I wanted to save my constituents from waiting in the cold', 'I'd had an extremely hectic and tiring time promoting a book'.

New NCF leaflets

Three new leaflets are available from the National Cycling Forum:

- *Cycling Works!* How employers can benefit from increased cycling
- *Cycling Matters!* Advice for cyclists and cycling groups on cycling policy
- *Cycling Gains!* How local authorities can benefit from increased cycling

There's also a new DETR leaflet on professional training for the promotion of cycling and walking. See www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk.

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Boost cycling to tackle obesity



According to a report by the National Audit Office, two-thirds of men and over half of women in England are now overweight or obese, mainly due to inactive lifestyles. By 2010 on current trends, one in four adults will be clinically obese.

To tackle this threat to health, the report urges that the DETR work with other Government departments to develop targets to increase the number of school journeys taken by bicycle, on foot or by public transport. The DETR should centrally monitor local authority targets for cycling and walking.

Sustrans records 10% rise in cycling along National Cycle Network

Data collected by Sustrans Route Usage Monitoring Project from 57 auto cycle counter sites around the country, indicates an average increase in cycling of 8.5 per cent between 1998 and 1999.

Along the National Cycle Network itself, the recorded rate of increase was even higher at 10 per cent and on traffic-free routes it rose to 10.2 per cent.

During the recent fuel crisis, monitoring saw a marked rise in the levels of cycling. For example in Hampshire and Kent on 13th and 14th September, use was double the seasonal norm and in Northumberland it almost trebled.

Dr Andy Cope, Sustrans cycle monitoring expert said: The magnitude of the transition to cycling has taken us by surprise. The increase in cycle use may be due to the fact that there were fewer cars on the road during the fuel crisis. All our evidence suggests that people are much more willing to make the modal shift from cars to bicycles when safety is improved.

RoadPeace Welcomes Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act 1998, which came in to force in the UK on 2nd October, could have a significant impact on road safety and on the way road victims will be treated in the future, the national charity RoadPeace claims. The Act will represent a fundamental change in our law by creating a rights based system so that if Government, Local Authorities, Highway Authorities and the Police fail to take reasonable measures to prevent injuries on the roads, they could be leaving themselves open to legal challenge.

Article 2 of the Act states: Everyones right to life shall be protected by law.

Atomic Cycling Conference

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign member Graham Ricketts and John Mallows attended a March conference in Bristol, organised by the Atomic Energy Authority on behalf of the National Cycling Strategy. The bizarre connection with the Harwell based AEA is explained by their latest remit which takes a broad look at energy issues, including sustainable transport and hence cycling!



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Cheltenham Cycle Network - The Next Stage



While we believe that the strategy for removing the barriers to cycling should focus on improving the conditions on the general road network for cyclists, there are a number of specific facilities which we believe would address some particular problems for cyclists in Cheltenham. The top ten are listed in a rough order of priority. A few of them are addressed in the proposals for the town centre. The list does not end at 10 and the rest of the list may be published in a future Newsletter. If you know of other locations that require improving contact one of the committee.

1. Albion Street - North Street - Clarence Street

This is an issue we have been pressing for some time. The problem is crossing the town centre from East to West. It can be done relatively easily in the opposite direction.

Solution - Traffic management measures to allow two way cycling in Albion Street, North Street and Clarence Street.

2. Charlton Kings Cycle Route junction with Moorend Road.

The exit/entry point onto Moorend Road is very tricky with poor visibility.

Solution - Improve the entrance, implement measures to slow traffic and improve visibility

3. Back Montpelier Terrace

This is a very useful route for access to the hospital from the western side of Cheltenham. At present not all of the route is two way, with sections one-way to prevent 'rat running'. The route avoids the tricky junction at Montpelier Terrace and enables the crossing at Gordon's Lamp to be used.

Solution - Improve the crossing of Suffolk Square and traffic management measures to enable cycling two way in Back Montpelier Terrace.

4. Village Road - Princess Elizabeth Way

Next to the pelican crossing there is a lane which is heavily used by the pupils of Hesters Way Junior School and Kingsmead Comprehensive. Kingsmead is actively encouraging cycling and numbers of pupils using bikes is rising. However the surface is very uneven and there is no lighting.

Solution - Surface lane and install street lighting.

5. Imperial Lane

This is a one-way street which could form a useful cross-town link, particularly now Ormond Place is closed.

Solution - Traffic management measures to enable two-way cycling.

6. Railway Station link to Honeybourne Line

The link under Queens Road is still missing. Crossing Queens Road is not very easy. We also understand that plans have been drawn up to extend the track to the Lansdown Road. This would improve links for walking and cycling to the station, by reducing the distance from a number of destinations. There is already extreme pressure on car parking at the station and the rail operator is looking to extend the car park. Even a small switch from car to walking and cycling to the station would give major benefits.

Solution - Remove the spoil under the Queens Road Bridge and con

struct a short length of track. Pursue the construction of the new route to Lansdown Road.

7. Shurdington Road - Woodlands Road

At present this route is closed.

Solution - Open a gap for cyclists. This would enable cyclists to take a short cut more easily, it would also tend to discourage pavement cycling.

8. Queens Hotel

Originally the road layout here was such that cyclists could proceed straight across from Fauconberg/Queens Circus to Imperial Square. The road was altered to enable the road train to turn but entailed a new layout which means cyclists have to perform a right turn with a central refuge. This was a layout we objected to.

Solution - Reinstate the original road layout.

9. Coronation Square

Gyratory systems are always a problem for cyclists and Coronation Square is no exception. What makes matters worse is that the largest housing estate is on one side of the square and the shops are on the other.

Solution - Remove the gyratory system and make the main through route two-way along one side of the square. Any cycle route would only have to make one crossing of the route. A solution which is solely based on the pavement route would not work because of the conflict with pedestrians on the south side.

10. Lansdown Road cycle track

Although there is still some debate within the cycling community about how useful this route really is, it is used by a large number of cyclists. However, there are still some serious problems with it particularly at junctions.

Solution - Improve junction with Lansdown Parade, and close the Lansdown Walk road at its junction with Lansdown Road.

Web sites worth a look

www.cyclewest.org.uk Mainly Bristol Bath and surrounding area.

www.ecoplan.org/wtpp/ This is the site of the quarterly journal "World Transport Policy and Practice". The journal is free to individuals and can be down loaded in pdf format from the above site.

www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/321/7276/1582

"Three lessons for a better cycling future" Article in Christmas British Medical Journal by Malcolm Wardlaw in which he challenges helmet promotion and other road safety campaigns as destroying faith in cycling as a safe means of transport.

www.superscript.co.uk/ukna/index.html

Web site of the UK Noise Association, which includes campaigning against traffic noise.

www.cyclists.org.uk a good article on helmet use plus many other bits and pieces of information for cyclists.

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Helmet Compulsion in Ireland?



The report below comes from the Galway Cycling Campaign. The AGM referred to started on 19th April and is ongoing as this is written. "A motion has been proposed in favour of compulsory cycle helmets at the AGM of the Irish Medical Organisation. The IMO calls on the Government to introduce legislation to make it mandatory for all cyclists to wear protective headgear. The IMO also calls on the Government to introduce a maximum speed limit of 20 mph (32 kph) in built up areas and housing estates. The 20mph proposal is most welcome and is an extremely positive development. Ireland does not have speed limits lower than 30mph. This limit is routinely flouted in urban areas, average free speed of cars on main roads is 45 mph. We have the highest child pedestrian death rate in Western Europe. However, as soon as one door opens another seems to be closing. The proposal for compulsory helmets represents an extremely negative development and is a serious threat to our efforts to promote cycling in this country. My perception of the IMO is that they will view lower speed limits as "radical" and controversial". Conversely they are likely to view compulsory helmets as a nice "safe" and "uncontroversial" issue. Consequently the presence of both on the same agenda will bias towards the adoption of compulsory helmets at the expense of speed limits".

BACK MONTPELLIER TERRACE

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign and the Cyclists' Touring Club objected to the Council's proposal to close off cyclists' access to and from Back Montpellier Terrace at the Bath Road end. Peter Godwin from the Council has agreed to modify the closure so that cyclists will be able to make the left turn from Bath Road and the straight on from Sandford Road and also the right turn from Bath Road. But the current absence of a traffic light phase for cyclists leaving Back Montpellier Terrace will remain.

TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS



Whoops of amazed approval were heard at the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign Meeting in April when members heard of the Council's proposal to impose 30 mph speed limit along the Evesham Road. The Racecourse roundabout would be within the restricted area which will not, members were disappointed to hear, extend down New Barn Lane.

Rail safety in perspective

From 1995-9, 54 people died on trains compared with 17,662 in road crashes.

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YOU'RE STILL BETTER OFF CYCLING

Don't let the news of crashes, casualites, speeding and careless drivers (*see page 13*) and the imbalance of the courts put you off cycling (*OK, OK I'm back on the bike again Ed.*). Remember, the British Medical Association reckons that the exercise from cycling more than offsets the risks. You can tip the scales even further in your favour by adopting a careful but assertive style of cycling. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign member John Franklin is an acknowledged expert; try to get hold of his book 'CycleCraft -skilled cycling techniques for Adults' published by Unwin Paperbacks. Continental experience shows that the more of us who cycle, the better it gets. Which is why the Council is right to make up front provisions for potential cyclists and why the objectors in the Echo's letter page are wrong.

PEW CYCLE TRACK

Following Stuart Bell's death the Princess Elizabeth Way cycle track could be in for some criticism. Although the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign originally argued for setting aside part of the carriageway for cyclists, the Council did not agree. But at least they designed the track so that cyclists retain their right of way at junctions. Cyclist have to remember to take the junctions assertively but cautiously, but there can be no doubt that this is the right design for such tracks. Cyclists need to be ready to defend this.



Wrong-way Bill in Montana

One of the oddest, and potentially most lethal, bills yet relating to cycling has been introduced in Montana, USA, that would require cyclists outside towns to always ride against the direction of traffic. It has been introduced at the request of a lady whose husband was killed cycling on a country road, but it could so easily turn one tragedy into a series.

In the 1950s, school children in the USA were often taught to ride against traffic even though the law stipulated otherwise. This is considered to be one of the harbingeres of the practice seen so often in that country to this day and which is one of the commonest cause of serious injury.



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ROAD TRAFFIC PENALTIES

Earlier this year the Home Office issued a much delayed consultation paper for a review of the penalties applying to traffic offences. The paper proposes increases in the penalties handed out to errant drivers who cause 3,500 deaths and 350,000 serious injuries a year. However, Road Safety and Cycling Groups were alarmed at the bizarre reasoning that whilst the paper acknowledged that 70 percent of motorists regularly break the speed limit, because, each year, out of 30 million drivers there are only 1.8 million endorsements this shows that the average motorist has a responsible attitude towards road safety! As a result the proposed changes to the penalty structure are biased towards the grossly reckless drivers. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign is amongst those who have strongly criticised this flawed reasoning. We know only too well that there is a large proportion of drivers who are threats to pedestrians and cyclists and it is these drivers who need to be tackled by the implementation of stiffer penalties. More encouraging is the proposal to expand the range of penalties, e.g. more use of driver re-training, and of a points system which would build up to earlier disqualification for repeat offences. The Paper makes clear that traffic offences are crime and it has a theme about 'Changing Perceptions of Seriousness'. 'Hear, hear' says Cheltenham Cyclists'. And where better to start than the Courts and magistrates.

Critical as we and others have been of the Paper, we suspect that our views will be welcomed by the Home Office and help them in rebutting the Treasury, (who appear to be concerned about increased Court cost, but not of the 'savings' of any resultant decrease in casualties) and some motorists' groups who are expected to whinge about curtailment of personal freedom.

CTC launches Cyclists Legal Defence Fund

Cyclists have had enough. In the member consultation for Vision 2000, Cyclist Touring Club's 5 year strategic plan there was a strong case made by many respondents for the CTC to take a much higher profile in support of the cyclists' case. Organisations like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth were seen as important role models.

Kevin Mayne says "The Coombs case reminds us that despite the success CTC has had inside government in recent years there is still a battle to be won elsewhere. Police and courts do not use powers available to them and insurance companies are often taking highly damaging positions in court to protect their clients' interest. We are going to see serious damage done to cycling by a court over helmets, supervision or riding on a busy road, and we need to be ready. Members want our profile to match the Ramblers, the AA or RAC, all bodies that have generated a powerful profile for their membership's interests.

It is clear that this legal work needs a special treatment, because it is often highly expensive and anyone fighting test cases has to be prepared to lose as well as win, so its not just a ques



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tion of expanding our legal advice service."

CTC Council has decided to launch a ring-fenced Cyclists Legal Defence Fund and to set up a legal defence network just for such cases. An immediate contribution of £6000 from reserves has been made, and CTC calls on all cyclists to consider a contribution. Conditions attached to the fund will be that it is only available for cases with precedent-setting implications for the whole of cycling. CTC is also looking for those professionals who can offer pro-bono time to sign up as part of a cycling defence network, which will keep costs for cases and research down. Kevin Mayne again "If you are a barrister, legal researcher or expert witness maybe you could contribute something on even an informal or confidential basis, but cycling needs to pull together. For example isn't it about time cycling took out a private prosecution against a motorist who kills."

There are 200 cyclists' deaths on the roads each year, 3,000 serious injuries and 19,000 minor injuries reported. In 1999 CTC launched CycleSafe, a promotional programme for safer conditions for cycling which is making some impact at local authority level.

But when it comes to the courts it is an entirely different story, not just in the case of the Coombs family.

22-year-old cyclist Peter Williams who was killed in January after a driver hit him and he fell under the wheels of another car. The driver admitted driving without due care and attention but was fined just £200. She was not barred from driving despite reaching the 12 penalty point limit. Chairman of the Bench in Cheltenham, Phillip Judge, said a driving ban would prevent her from taking her children the two miles to school and therefore cause too much hardship.

Bruce Bursford, from Dereham, Norfolk, died when hit by a lorry. The driver admitted being distracted by his mobile phone and is to be prosecuted for driving without due care and attention. The coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death.

Carl Fox from Doncaster died when he was hit by a car travelling at 46mph in a 30mph zone. The driver was fined £100 and received three points on his licence after being prosecuted for speeding. Carl was 25.

In 1998 international racing cyclist Pete Longbottom was said by a coroner to have contributed to his own death by relying on an "illegal" flashing light.

To register an interest with the CTC Cyclists' Defence Network write to CTC, or email defence@ctc.org.uk. To make a donation send a cheque payable to Cyclists Defence Fund to CTC HQ, or register a direct debit to send monthly or annual donations.

To find out more about the CTC go to www.ctc.org.uk. Telephone: 01483 417217

TAXIS

Despite objections from Cheltenham Cycle Campaign, the Council's has decide to allow taxis and private hire vehicles to use the Portland Street bus and cycle lane. Cheltenham Cyclist has spotted a number of taxi drivers abusing cycling lanes and advanced stop lines and is concerned about the extra hazard they will bring to Portland Street. Peter Godwin, Transportation Unit Manager, has added to his previous comments that we must wait to see whether there are extra casualties, by re-assuring the Cycle Campaign that all taxi and private hire drivers have been informed of the concerns and have been specifically requested to beware of cyclists when using the lanes. Cheltenham Cyclist is not convinced and misuse of other provisions continues. Supporters are asked to report, to Cheltenham Cyclist and the Council, instances of bad taxi driving. The licence numbers are now clearly displayed, so it's easy to note down number, time and place. Equally prominent are the yellow bumper stickers declaring, "Bus Lane approved".

Twenty Years of Campaigning

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign celebrated its 20th anniversary during the summer of 2000. It also marked the year by hosting the spring cycle planning conference.

The Cycle Campaign Group in Cheltenham is one of the groups in Britain that has been in existence continuously the longest. There are a few other groups that have been around longer such as Derby and London. Although it has only been a relatively small group it has always played an active part in the Cycle Campaign Network right from its earliest days as part of Friends of the Earth.

The focus of the campaign has shifted over the years. In the early days the group focused on a few routes which were thought to have the most impact. In particular the campaign joined up with a group in Stratford to press for a route along the Honeybourne railway line, the line only having finally been shut two years previously. Gradually the group became involved in the wider transport campaign, campaigning on issues such as speed, and planning campaigns such as St. James site development.

Another focus in the mid eighties was the campaign for a county cycle forum, along with proper recognition and regular consultation by the various local authorities and other organisations, such as the railways. Now it is difficult to remember what a struggle it was to gain recognition. However, the work is far from over and may we look forward to a further twenty years of transport campaigning in Cheltenham in order to make it a truly cycle friendly town.



Dates for Your Diary

Wednesday 2nd May 19:30 Cycle campaign meeting

Saturday 5th May The CCN/CTC Spring Conference is to be held at Ryde, Isle of Wight.

9th to 17th June Green Transport Week

12th June Councillors Invitation Ride

17th June Spa Cycle Challenge (Marshals wanted, please contact the secretary if you can help for a couple of hours).

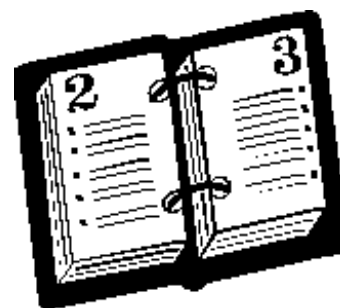
18th to 24th June National Bike Week

Wednesday 6th June 19:30 Cycle campaign meeting

Wednesday 4th July 19:30 Cycle campaign meeting

Sunday 23rd September Cotswolds Bike Ride (sponsored ride for The British Heart Foundation)

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign meetings are held in the council offices on the Promenade.



Cheltenham Cycles

OPEN : TUESDAY- SATURDAY 9am-6pm

61, Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NE

TEL: 01242 255414

As I went Home one Wednesday Evening

My route home that Wednesday was not one I would normally choose, but my wife and I were going to London the following day so I detoured in order to pick up some cash from the ATM outside Safeway's.

It was dark and the roads were quiet, just me and the whir of my dynamo as I pedalled along towards a T junction. I was not far from the junction when a car appeared. It had turned right off the road I was approaching, but the driver had cut the corner and I suspect over-steered as he was on my side of the road and heading for me. There was sufficient time to realise that unless the driver changed direction promptly the car would hit me. The bang as we collided was quite loud. As I sailed over my handlebars, in uncontrolled ballistic flight, I could see my front wheel buckled and wrapped around the car's bumper. The next bang was even louder, to me at least, as my helmet impacted upon his windscreen, followed by the right side of my face being pushed hard against the glass. Eleven stones flying through the air at even relatively modest speed is a lot of energy to stop. I rolled right, though still uncontrolled, and ended up half sitting on the right hand side of the road partly supported by my back pack. My bike was a couple of yards away. I cursed the driver as he appeared to drive on, I thought to leave me there, but he did pull in to the kerb a little way down the road. He walked back to me and said "Are you alright?". I was by this time bleeding profusely from a badly lacerated ear and facial injuries. My response was simple and direct "No, call an ambulance".

The ambulance and police arrived quickly and so it seemed did half the neighbourhood. After some preliminary patching up by the Para-medics I was taken to hospital. The rest of that night was spent being cleaned up, having bits of windscreen and cycle helmet removed from my face and having my right ear stitched back in place. X-rays were taken of my neck, though these were to prove unsatisfactory. I was finally taken to the ward at about 7 am. where I joined another cyclist who had arrived there about a week before. During that same day a third cyclist joined us on the ward. Whilst my injuries were very visible, theirs were worse as both had broken bones – something I had miraculously avoided. During the night talking to the medical staff I had been asked what I was doing. One doctor found it difficult to believe I cycled regularly at night. I just don't think he thought of a bicycle as transport. To another who asked where I had been that evening I had to confess "I was on my way home from a Cheltenham Cycle Campaign Meeting". The irony was not lost on her.

Apart from a few aches and pains I am now OK.

To all those who phoned or sent get well cards I send my thanks.

David Breeze.

I had sufficient time to realise that unless he changed direction promptly he would hit me.



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Town Centre Transport Management Implementation Working Group

The inaugural meeting of the above group took place in the Council Offices on 21st February.

The purpose of the group is to look at implementing extended pedestrianisation and the integration of public transport in the town centre.

The council envisage the group meeting every 2 months, for a period of about two years.

Wide range of representation : Chamber of Commerce, disabled, taxis, buses, AA, Freight Transport assn, CTC, Cycle Campaign as well as councillors and council officials.

Discussions covered:

- Where should be considered next for pedestrianisation
Promenade in front of Municipal Offices ?
Pittville St & WH Smith area ?
High St beyond Boots Corner ?
each would involve a degree of alteration to parking etc.
- How can we still organise access into the town centre for users such as taxis, buses and cyclists.
- Could we amend the use of Royal Well for buses, e.g. by organising quick turnarounds for service buses, but having stops/parking just out of the centre for National Express and Excursions.

The general point was that the council are keen for traffic to be routed away from Boots Corner, thus encouraging shoppers (of the tourist variety) to venture further west along the high street. They feel that the new Waitrose Development will help to move the emphasis of the town centre further that way. The new link road (funded completely by Waitrose) from the southern end of Gt. Western Rd to the northern end of Market St, construction of which has just begun, is intended to form a new part of the inner ring road. It should certainly succeed in taking traffic off the top end of St George's Rd and part of Gloucester Rd, but council officials accept that it wouldn't be feasible to make radical changes at Boots Corner until the 'missing links' either side of Poole Way (by the sorting office) are upgraded. Work near St. Georges Street (where Homebase & the Brewery were) is due to begin late in 2001, but no funding is in prospect at all for the area under the Honeybourne line.

These delays have some benefits to cyclists – one of the Police Representatives pointed out that there are advantages in having more two-way traffic in terms of reducing speeding (and reducing danger to cyclists), even to the extent of amending existing one-way roads to two-way if necessary. The police spoke up more than once in favour of cycling.

This theme has been encouraged by a consultant who has produced a report encouraging the council to think long-term and to consider all alternatives, including options such as car-free zones extending beyond the present inner ring in 20 years' time.

The next meeting will be called once the council has digested points made at the meeting and tackled the responses to their draft Transportation Policy

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PLANNING APPLICATION BREACH OF HIGHWAYS GUIDELINES

A sharp eyed Cheltenham cyclist spotted that a developer's proposals for the College sites in The Park gave the presence of cycle lanes and cyclists as a reason for the well calmed traffic which he (the developer) saw as a plus point for his plans. Cheltenham Cyclist told the Planning Committee that the Institute of Highways and Transportation guidelines state that 'Cyclists should not be "used" as traffic calming devices'. We hope that the Planning Committee will be on its guard in future over such exploitation of cyclists.

Tax concessions for cyclists

From 1st April, the tax-free mileage allowance that cyclists may claim for work-related journeys is increased from 12p to 20p per mile.

From the same date, VAT on cycle helmets was also to be abolished.

Bike register

Bikeregister.com was launched last August as a log book for bikes, to assist the police in recovering stolen machines. For a single-owner one-time fee of £5.95, cyclists can register a bicycle and receive a log book containing the cycle's identification details to act as proof of ownership if the cycle is sold.

Anyone can enter a frame number on the web site to check if a cycle has been stolen, and the police have access to the full database.

Bikeregister.com says that the concept was developed in response to National Cycling Strategy targets and in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Halfords, Cycle King and independent dealers are promoting the scheme. It is being run through IT company Pericom at Cosgrove, Northants.

Web: www.bikeregister.com. E-mail: sales@bikeregister.com.

Tel: 01908 265533.

Did You Know?

The US Department of Energy says that it's more economical to cut the engine if waiting longer than 30 seconds. Re-starting a car engine again after that time uses less petrol as well as saving on emissions.

Many people don't realise that a car engine idling produces 80 per cent more pollution than one in motion. Check out your traffic jams!



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