



Cheltenham Cyclist

Summer 2001

New Venue for Monthly Meetings

Due to the meeting rooms in the council offices no longer being available to groups which are not councillor led, we have had to find a new venue for our meetings. Thanks to the generosity of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, the next meeting on Wednesday 5th September will be held at Francis Close Hall starting at the usual time of 19:30 Hrs. You should use the entrance to the



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College on St. Paul's Road. Please meet at the entrance to the main building by 19:30 Hrs. when we will be shown to our allotted room, which at the time of going to press is FC TC 106.

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On the face of it the police are taking the easy option when enforcing the law. In a recent article in the Gloucestershire Echo a cyclist was reported as

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having been stopped for travelling at 23 miles an hour. The speed limit on that section of road is 40 mph and yet in the same article there is the comment that "Speed restrictions for cyclists are the same as those for cars". As one respondent to the article put it "While cyclists can be prosecuted for reckless riding, (*at less than the speed limit,*) this statement is simply incorrect". The article is reproduced on the next page. In the editorial which is not reproduced here, the writer wondered if the police may have better things to do.

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Nicked - for doing 23 mph on his bike

Adam Bevan was pulled up by police - for doing 23 mph on his push bike.

Officers said he was going too fast on Tewkesbury Road in Cheltenham, which has a 40 mph limit.

The 29-year-old was shocked when the patrol car, complete with blue flashing lights, stopped him on the dual carriageway by the Tesco superstore.

"I was coming home from my mum's house, along the Lower High Street, towards Tewkesbury Road," Mr Bevan said.

"The wind was behind me and the lights were green so I went straight over the lights at Tesco. I was going quite fast.

"The policeman called me over, took my name and asked me if I knew how fast I was going.

"I said 'not 40' but he said I was going a bit too fast for a cycle on a dual carriageway.

"His speedo said 22 to 23 mph and he gave me a ticking off for going too fast."

Mr Bevan who works as a quality technician at engineering firm Formflo, in Lansdown, uses his bike every day to cycle from his home in Swindon Village.

He said he was riding safely and was surprised to be pulled over.

"I wasn't flying up the inside of cars or being reckless and the lights were all green," he said. "I think it's a bit unfair because if it's a nice stretch of road and all the lights are green, then you do tend to go a bit faster."

The keen cyclist said 23 mph is not the fastest speed he has reached on his 21-gear Claude Butler mountain bike.

He said: "I haven't got a speedo on my bike, but I used to have one on my old bike. "Going down the hill on Evesham Road, by the Racecourse, I got up to 28 mph once."

Speed restrictions for cyclists are the same as those for cars.

A Gloucestershire Police spokesman said: "The stretch of road where he was stopped has a record of road traffic incidents. "He may have been stopped and warned for his safety because 22 mph is quite fast for a cyclist.

"Depending on the conditions, that speed could be construed as dangerous or reckless."

Garry Handley, Road Safety Team Leader at Gloucestershire County Council said: "We are extremely concerned about speed and inappropriate use of speed. "There are times when even within the speed limit you present a danger. "It's not always about excessive speed. It depends on whether a vehicle can stop safely. "Cyclists also need to think very carefully about their braking systems and pedestrians don't expect a cyclist to approach at 22 mph."

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My wife and myself are both members of Cheltenham (*section of*) Cyclists Touring Club and along with many others frequently exceed 23 mph. On a tandem 45 mph is easily attained downhill, when I read the story I thought I had been asleep and woken up on April 1st!

To put the story in context, on Sunday whilst out on our club ride we were riding through Temple Grafton (nr Stratford) when a speeding car coming towards us in a narrow street deliberately knocked one of our lady members off her cycle, Marie was left shocked and bleeding at the roadside, the car sped off without stopping, the

police were called and Marie was taken away in an ambulance, the police arrived very quickly. Both a lady from the village who saw the whole incident and I passed the car's registration number to them, after a phone call to the police today they say that the driver has not been in touch (big surprise there then) and that the case is not a priority, I suppose like Cheltenham Police they are busy looking for speeding cycles!

Cheltenham Cyclists Response

You were right (*author of a leader article in the Echo. ED.*) to sympathise with cyclist Adam Bevan who was stopped by police for doing 23 mph along Tewkesbury Road. (Echo 26 July). In listing ways in which the police time could be better spent you could have added more control of the 75% of drivers who regularly break speed limits and are the major factor in 3,500 deaths a year, including many cyclists and pedestrians. Much as we admire the work of Garry Handley, the County Council Road Safety Officer, we cannot support his reported view that that Mr Bevan's speed might be excessive and therefore pose a threat to pedestrians. The real risk to pedestrians is the speeding motorist as Garry well knows.

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign is an active supporter of the police and Garry's 'speed reducer' campaigns, in which speeding motorists are offered training instead of a fine. So far the police have not taken up our suggestion that errant cyclists get a similar option. But we agree with you, Mr Bevan is not an errant cyclist. Cycling at 23 mph might seem fast to the sedentary majority, but it's quite easily attained speed for a fit cyclist and only rarely would it be inappropriate or excessive on Tewkesbury Road.

cyclists would benefit from better policing of speeding and dangerous driving

However, cyclists should keep to appropriate speeds, not just speed limits - a rule which applies even more acutely to motorists. Cyclists are often on the receiving end of this kind of odd reasoning. In your columns two weeks ago a contributor used the tragic death of a cyclist in Hyde Lane last year to support the proposal for a NW by-pass. This overlooked the fact that the cyclist was killed by a driver ferrying her children a couple of miles to school - not the

kind of journey for which a by pass is intended. The proposed by pass would bring no direct benefit to cyclists. But cyclists would benefit from better policing of speeding and dangerous driving backed up by resolute support from local magistrates who received nation-wide criticism for the paltry penalty which they handed down to the Hyde Lane driver.

Bournside pupils, in their analysis of the Council's 'Green Transport Week' (Echo last week), concluded that many people do not cycle because they are fearful of traffic. There is also evidence that potential cyclists are put off by attitudes of colleagues and employers - and in Cheltenham it seems they should not expect fair and balanced encouragement from police and magistrates.

But on the safety and health issues cyclists can take heart; according to medical research the health benefits of even a modest amount of cycling outweigh the risks twenty fold and can give cyclists a 10 year health advantage over non cyclists.

Velo-city Conference

The Velo-city Conference which this year is jointly held in Glasgow and Edinburgh between the 16th and 22nd of September is to be addressed by Transport Minister Lord Macdonald. This is the minister who is credited with doing a U-turn on road building and reinstating many previously shelved road building programs. Other plans to encourage reduced car usage and boost an integrated transport system, instigated by John Prescott, were also dropped by him.

We await with interest what he has to say, will there be a conversion, I fear not. Keith Bingham writing in *Cycling Weekly* recently, said, "MacDonald needs to have his ears bent. He needs to be told that without coordinated action from government, across the departments of transport, health, education and planning, most of the brilliant transport solutions dreamt up by Velo-city academics will, in Britain at least, remain dormant." He may well be right.

Other speakers at the conference include:

- **Ms Sarah Boyack**, *Minister of Transport, Scottish Executive*
 - **Alderman Frank Köhler**, *City of Amsterdam, The Netherlands*
 - **Ms Margot Wallström**, *European Union Commissioner for the Environment*
 - **Mr Abdulah M Omar**, *Minister of Transport, Republic of South Africa*
 - **Dr. Richard Killingsworth**, *Advisor to US Government on Health & Transport matters*
 - **Dr. Harry Burns**, *Director of Greater Glasgow Health Board*
 - **Ms Francesca Racioppi**, *Transport Programme WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, Rome*
 - **Mrs Isabelle Durant**, *Belgian Minister of Transport, and President of the European Union Council of Transport Ministers*
 - **Prof. David Begg**, *Chair of the UK Commission for Integrated Transport (CIT)*
- Further details can be found on their web site, <http://www.velo-city2001.org/>



CCN/CTC Cycle Planning Conference

The next CCN/CTC Cycle Planning Conference will take place on Saturday 13th October 2001 in Chesterfield.

It will be held at the Winding Wheel, in the town centre a short walk or ride from the rail station.

Presentations will include Green Transport Plans and promoting cycling to health Authorities, CTC's objectives regarding Off Road Cycling. Business Analyst Malcolm Wardlow will be challenging the notion that cycling is inherently dangerous, and 'Wheel Alternatives' a York based company will be demonstrating how they have converted over 70 businesses to their cycle haulage services.

Queries to Tim Moran in Chesterfield (01246 211961 evenings/weekends) or Julia Samson at CTC (01483 520735). Booking forms may be downloaded from the CCN website.

Unlike the Velo-City conference, above, the CCN/CTC conference fee is a very reasonable £12.

Outline Proposal For Secure Cycle Parking at Equals

The proposal below is just that, a proposal. To take it further we need input from our members, and any other interested parties. To comment on this proposal please email or write to David Breeze (I am not very good at taking notes from conversations). You will find contact details on the back page of the newsletter.

Equals is an internet café in 287 High Street. There are also a number of community based projects based there. The café has an entrance like a shop – cycles would

At the back of the "shop" there is a covered, secure, paved area

enter and exit via the car-park at the rear. At the back of the "shop" there is a covered, secure, paved

area – which is used as an outside sitting area in summer. Andy Rickell, (*The Co-Ordinator*) and I (*Chris' Meehan*) have discussed using a corner for a pilot project, for cycle racks. The hours are approximately 08:00 to 17:30. The cycle park will not be attended but the area has constant "traffic" and we discussed the possibility of C.C.T.V. Cyclists would enter via the back gate – at present the lock is on the inside. We need to discuss locks and keys. A cyclist would lock their bike to the rack using their own lock. It is unlikely that the insurance held

by Equals would cover theft or damage, so this would have to be covered by the cyclist. (*Third party insurance will, usually, only cover the second-hand value of a bicycle, whereas most cycle policies are now new for old, so the cyclist is likely to have better cover on his/her policy. ED*).

A commuter would leave their cycle there all day but they must collect by 17:30. We need to consider what to do in the event of a cycle being locked in and its owner locked out. Andy says the area is busy in the summer and quiet in the winter. They could provide lighting. We need to consider the cost and benefit and draw up an agreement to avoid confusion. Andy thinks that "Equals" and Cheltenham Borough Council will be keen to promote a transport facility which promotes all our principles. Chris Meehan.

The article above has been split into columns to aid readability. If you find it easier to read than the standard full page width as in other articles please let me know. I shall take a lack of response to mean that you are happy with the standard format. Ed.

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STREETS FOR PEOPLE CAMPAIGN AND NATIONAL BIKE WEEK

During the streets for people week Cheltenham Cycle Campaign again held another Councilors Bike Ride. Whilst few councillors turned up to take part a number of the officers of the council took part. The result was that members of the committee had a good dialogue with the officers and the evening was judged to be very productive, with a good exchange of ideas. It



really is a pity that more councillors did not take part, perhaps it shows that their commitment to improving conditions for cyclists extends only as far as press releases! When next asked to support a councillor it might be relevant to ask whether he supports the strategy to improve conditions for cyclists and increase cycle use.

Less successful was the display stand in the Regent Arcade. Those members who spent some time there said that people generally did not stop to look at the display and more interest had been generated in past years, when we had a stand on the High Street.

On the 17th June The Spa Cycle Challenge was run. This took place over a new route and was generally thought to be a great success, with over 60 riders taking part in the cycle ride and treasure hunt. The bikes ranged from an ordinary (penny farthing) to a recumbent. The Mayor gave out the prizes for those who had the correct answers and were lucky enough to have their names drawn out of the hat. Our thanks go to all the organisations who provided the prizes.

Conferences and Meetings

A transport and Health conference held on June 15th was so successful that a new Gloucestershire Health & Transport Forum has been set up. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign will be participating in the Forum. Elizabeth Dunning, conference organiser has invited Cheltenham Cycle Campaign to contribute a Cycling and Health paper to the conference proceedings.

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign was joined in another meeting with Kathryn Finch, Peter Godwin and Philip Williams, from the council Environment Department and Project Nexus. Various improvements were discussed, including the urgent need of cycle racks in the Bath Road shopping area. Then, surprisingly, Councillor Jackie Fletcher (Environment Committee Chair) was quoted in the Echo saying that cycle racks were part of the Bath Road enhancements currently in progress. This is news to Cheltenham Cyclist, as far as we can see nothing is happening. Yet...

Cheltenham Cycles

OPEN : TUESDAY- SATURDAY 9am-6pm
61, Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NE
TEL: 01242 255414

Current Issues

The following are extracts from our response to two Traffic Order proposals, and are just a sample of many responses we (Cheltenham Cycle Campaign) make throughout the year.

Arle Road & Alstone Lane

We believe strongly that traffic calming should be retained. Despite the gripes about damaged shock absorbers, and the much exaggerated comments on spinal damage, this is far outweighed by the protection given to potentially innocent casualties.

We are concerned that some of the narrower cushions are being straddled at speed by many drivers, they seem to allow fast passage to more than just the intended emergency vehicles etc. And of course, the gaps at the side are often blocked so that cyclists cannot benefit from them. Ideally we would like to see these practical defects addressed; We find the humps in Caernarvon Road particularly effective, although they have no central gap.

So, in conclusion we would opt for 'introduce larger speed cushions'



Queens Road Crossing Point

This crossing in principle is very welcome, certainly as far as pedestrians are concerned. The proximity of the 'hump back' bridge as well as the width of the road make this a difficult place for pedestrians, and we suspect you might also have to take measures to slow traffic over the bridge if you want to fully safeguard pedestrians. However the difficulties for cyclists are just as bad, and we would like complementary measures to be made for cyclists, especially for the right turns into and out of the station forecourt. At our last Campaign meeting we recalled our previous proposals to the Council when we suggested that the junction should have traffic lights with transponders for activation by buses. Maybe this is worth consideration, along with lights to assist pedestrian and cyclists.

Developers are doing it their way

There is considerable concern that developers may be putting in traffic management systems, under what is known as a 106 agreement with the authorisation of council officials. Thus they are bypassing the usual scrutiny given to such schemes. This has led to a number of schemes being implemented in a way which does not even conform to the councils stated development plan. In the case of the Marlborough Stirling development in St. James Square this has meant that pedestrians and cyclists are likely to be seriously inconvenienced. The council might have to make expensive alterations at a later date to bring this in line with their town strategy. Nearby, at the Waitrose Development there are doubts about the quality of the new cycle routes being built by the developer. Cheltenham Cyclist is in touch with the developer to find out more. The Century Court Development, opposite the Boys College, had the Cheltenham Cyclist not intervened a cycle friendly gap at the end of Back-Montpellier Terrace would have been closed.

We intend keeping a close watch on developer led schemes, so please let us know of other places where the developers are apparently not conforming to the Cheltenham development plan.

Criteria for High Standards set at CCN/CTC Spring Conference

John Franklin, a member of the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign, outlined the requirements for high quality cycle provision at this years spring conference.

These included:

Cyclists need 2m unencroached space for safety and comfort. Without cycle facilities, this is what an astute cyclist will normally get on most roads. Cycle-only space, such as cycle lanes, must encompass this whole requirement in their width for a cyclist can expect nothing outside.

You should not have to look through more than 90° for conflicting traffic, except when overtaking or changing lanes. New cyclists and children find it difficult to survey traffic behind them; don't expect them to look backwards confidently or force them to change lanes frequently (e.g. in and out of a cycle lane, perhaps because it's obstructed) just to go ahead.

Visibility should be sufficient to see the fastest approaching vehicle in sufficient time to assess its progress and react accordingly. If you cannot see a hazard approaching, you cannot react to it in the way that maximises safety and comfort. It should not be assumed that cyclists will stop wherever visibility is substandard – many will take the risk instead.

6m is the minimum radius a cycle should have to negotiate. Cycles don't turn on the spot, and sharp bends are invariably accompanied by difficult visibility.

Two-way cycle paths need centre lines even more than roads. Keeping left is probably the most important rule of the road, but on an undelineated path cyclists frequently wander over its width, which can lead to serious cyclist injuries. On a cycle path, a cyclist is closer to oncoming vehicles than on most roads and has less escape room – good riding discipline is essential.

Surfaces must be level and even. More casualties happen due to poor surfaces than motor vehicles. Don't accept cycle paths that cross joins between surfaces at anything other than 90°. Even flush joins – which all should be – erode over time. Even surfaces are important not just for comfort, but so that a cyclist is not distracted from traffic

Any route for cyclists must be 100% compatible with the Highway Code. If cyclists have to follow two sets of rules there'll be confusion and conflict. The Highway Code sets out the established rules for cyclists and all cycle routes should assist these rules to be obeyed.



School Pupil Analyses Speed Reducer Campaign

In an analysis of feedback from participants in the recent Speed Reducer Campaign, Severn Vale Pupil Mark Slade found that over 90% of those attending said they had thought about their speed whilst driving, since attending the evening lectures.

Cycling in Pedestrianised Areas

There is a real fear amongst some pedestrians that they are likely to be knocked flying by a cyclist riding on the pavement. This is brought up frequently when discussing the provision of cycle routes and cannot be ignored, even though the reality is that few pedestrians are injured by cyclists. The following paragraphs illustrate our position on this and related issues. "We do not condone or, at the present time, expect, cyclists to be able to ride in the pedestrianised areas. However, it is important (if the Councillors recognise the health, inclusion, mobility, congestion, pollution and effective transport benefits of cycling), to provide good ways around and, where appropriate, through the central area. This is sadly missing at present. (Experience elsewhere shows there are limits to the length of detours which cyclists can be expected to heed.)

Neither do we condone cycling on pavements, but whilst we sympathise with their concerns, fears and frights, pedestrians can be re-assured that in practice very few significant injuries are caused in this way. Their real hazard is the (speeding) motorists, who are also major cause of cyclists using pavements in the first place - there is a shared underlying problem.



Shared cyclist/pedestrian tracks are not ideal for similar reasons, but are useful as a last resort provision where dedicated cycle tracks cannot be provided. Such tracks - dedicated and shared - are needed for the less experience or nervous cyclists, but are not favoured by the experienced cyclist looking for a reasonably rapid means of transport, typically to work etc. For them the roads ARE the cycle network and it is important that a comprehensive network of the town's roads are made conducive for cycling. Other road users need to be educated that there is a valid need for this apparent 'double provision' for cyclists'."

Web sites worth a look

<http://www.slower-speeds.surf3.net/index.htm>

This site gives a thorough debunking to the misused statistics on the web site of the Association of British Drivers

<http://www.ethical-junction.org>

Ethical Junction, an organisation promoting morally-conscious lifestyles, is running a transport campaign until September with a view to getting people to think about the ethical dimension of how they travel.

<http://www.velovision.co.uk>

All sorts of articles about cycling in all its forms.

<http://www.whatshouldiputontheence.com/>

A somewhat off the wall site. Well worth a visit.

You could advertise here for as little as £3 per issue for a non-member or just £1 for members.

What Persuades People to Cycle?

Statement by Jan Verschooren, President of the European Cyclists' Federation: 'As ECF members come from all over Europe, we have experience of the wide range in attitudes towards cycling in different countries. We know from research that policies have a much greater long-term effect on cycle use than topography, weather, land-use, availability of alternatives or cultural values.' *European Cyclist 2-2000*

Compare the above with the following statement in a letter from the DETR in response to a request for more funding for cycle schemes to be included in the Government's 10 year Transport Plan:

'Whilst we aim for levels of cycling similar to those in some other European nations, it is important to remember that comparisons between nations are not always relevant due to differences in geography and culture as well as human and vehicle populations.' *Simon Cousins, Charging & Local Transport, DETR*

Dates for Your Diary



17-21 September Velo-City 2001, Edinburgh and Glasgow, <http://www.velo-city2001.org/>

22nd September European Car-Free Day <http://www.ecoplan.org/carfreeday/>

Sunday 16th September Hell of the North Cotswolds, Reliability Bike Ride. Cheltenham and County CC or Winchcombe CC for details.

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

Saturday 13th October CCN/CTC Autumn Conference (see article on page 4 for details).

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month (except August). They are held at **Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, Francis Close Hall, St Paul's Road**, starting promptly at 19.30hrs.



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UN body call for 'Sustainable transport strategies'

The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) [and ex-German environment minister] Mr Töpfer has said that 'we must radically rethink our approach to road transportation'. He said this in response to growing greenhouse gas and other emissions, and the expectation that both the growth of vehicle ownership and kilometres driven will rise. An amazing 25% of all the world's energy is used for transport, and 80% of this represents vehicular transport. This vehicular transport also accounts for a massive 30% of total carbon dioxide emissions, and unlike CO2 emissions in the industrial sector which are coming down, transport sector emissions continue to rise. It's a crazy picture and UNEP has always been very firm on this. The implication of the positive strategies that Mr Töpfer calls for are very good news for cycling, but more work is needed to make the connection clear in the minds of national politicians and policy-makers

The value of Life

The 1999 values attached to a fatal accident was £1,089,130, a serious accident £146,890, and a slight accident was valued at £14,544. These costs include medical costs, lost production, human costs, police and court costs, insurance and property damage.

Uninsured drivers.

A Parliamentary Question in the Lords revealed that there are about 300,000 convictions and 29,000 disqualifications every year for driving without insurance. As vulnerable road users, cyclists should be concerned that between 5-10% of drivers have no insurance. The average fine for those caught was £210 although the maximum is £5000. Uninsured drivers add between £20-30 to every law-abiding motorist's annual premium.

Cycling and cyclist casualties fall in 2000

According to DTLR statistics, cycle traffic dropped by 2% in 2000, after a rise of 5% in the previous year. The extended periods of wet weather in 2000 are thought to be partly to blame, but the fall in cycling was not confined to the wet months and was despite a pronounced increase in the activity during the September fuel protest.

The number of cyclists injured in reported road crashes fell by 10 per cent in 2000 compared with the previous year, a fall much greater than the fall in cycling. Better still, the number of cyclists killed fell by 26% to 127.

Overall traffic levels rose by 0.4% in 2000 and casualties remained about the same. The number of children killed and seriously injured fell by 9% and pedestrian casualties dropped by 2%.

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You can make a difference by joining Cheltenham Cycle Campaign. We aim to improve conditions for cyclists, and to make the Cycle Campaign a more effective organisation. The more supporters we have the better. Individuals can join and local organisations are welcome to affiliate as associate members.

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email: _____

Telephone No. _____

Annual Membership

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Mr A Halls, 14 Durham Close, Warden Hill, Cheltenham, GL51 5DF

For General enquiries contact the Secretary at:

63 Shurdington Road, Cheltenham, GL53 0JG

We're on the web
[http://freespace.virgin.net/
cheltenham.
cyclecampaign/](http://freespace.virgin.net/cheltenham.cyclecampaign/)

Recent Publications

Killing Speed a guide to speed management

This leaflet is produced by the Slower Speeds Initiative who can be contacted at PO Box 19, Hereford HR1 1XJ

Email: info@slower-speeds.org.uk



Editor: David Breeze. 42 Long Mynd Avenue, Up Hatherley,
Cheltenham GL51 3QN. Email: d_breeze@lineone.net
Cheltenham Cycle Campaign is part of the Cycle Campaign Network.

The federation of cycle campaign groups