



Cheltenham Cyclist

Spring 2002

Cheltenham Cyclists are Too Nice

At least according to the Echo we are. In an editorial which strongly backed the provision of cycle routes in Cheltenham the commentator said "... it's about time the cyclists of Cheltenham took off the kid gloves and spoke out". As those of you who have followed our campaign over the years will be aware, we have generally taken the view that consistent gentle pressure applied in the right place will pay dividends, as indeed it has. However, maybe the Echo are right, perhaps we should shout more.

If we do raise our profile in this way then it is important that we target the possible, certainly the cross town routes mentioned in the article would be high on the agenda, but right now the pedestrianisation of the centre and the consequent changes in traffic flow are still under discussion and we are making our point of view felt within the groups who are considering the changes. What do you think? Should we make more noise and if so what do you believe would be effective action. If there is

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Put Bikes First	2	pedestrianisation of the centre and the consequent changes in traffic flow are still under discussion and we are making our point of view felt within the groups who are considering the changes. What do you think? Should we make more noise and if so what do you believe would be effective action. If there is
National Bike Week	4	no provision for safe cross-town routes in the new road scheme what should Cheltenham Cycle Campaign and its members be expected to do? Should we organise a mass ride of "nice cyclists" around the revised traffic routes, causing major hold ups, in order to draw attention to the problems? This has been effective in some towns and cities. But in Cheltenham would it be counter-productive serving just to annoy motorists and demonstrate, wrongly, that cyclists cause congestion. What else could be done? Let us know what you think, come along to our meetings or email either: secretary@cyclecheltenham.org.uk or the editor d_breeze@lineone.net.
CTC/CCN Conference report	4	
Wrong Type of Passenger	7	
Mobile Phones Worse Than Drinking	8	
European Car Free Day	10	
Dates For Your Diary	10	
20 mph zones and speed calming required	11	



From Gloucestershire Echo, 'Tuesday April 2nd 2002

John Mallows is too nice. That's the trouble with cyclists. Most of them don't bike because they can't afford a car. They take to two wheels, first, because it's healthier And second, because they have a social conscience and are doing their bit for our grid locked, car-obsessed society by helping to cut the number of cars on the road.

But when it comes to speaking out about cycle lanes. Mr Mallows, head of the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign, is very politely non-committal.

We admire his restraint. But it's about time the cyclists of Cheltenham took off the kid gloves and spoke out.

The whole country is bleating on about traffic overload, urban gridlock and pollution from petrol fumes.

Politicians rant on about park-and-ride, ditching cars, taking the bus and walking.

But what do they do for cyclists? Next to nothing. And why not? Because you'd

no more get a politician on a bike than a monkey to work out the theory of relativity.

In Cheltenham our councillors are merrily forging ahead with plans to block off Boots corner.

No one will be able to cut through from Habitat to Matalan. The only way across town will be to take a huge three-mile loop around the town centre.

Try telling that to cyclists. How many people will pedal one mile west towards Tesco when they really want to go east to Charlton Kings?

Unless there are meaningful cycle routes that don't finish in dead ends, cyclists will just zoom through the pedestrian precinct.

We are missing a golden opportunity in Cheltenham. This could be the cycling capital of the Cotswolds. But it's a biker's nightmare: dangerous, hostile and bereft of practical bicycle routes.

A cyclists' town is not one splattered with white signs on red tarmac. It's about putting bikes first, not last.

John Mallows Responds for the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign

Apart from calling me 'too nice', you seem surprised that I am non committal over cycle paths. But the explanation is there in your own words, which closely match our views.

Thank you for stating the case so well and I hope, as far as your readers and the Council are concerned, so convincingly.

When driving we tolerate one way streets and detours because we realise that, over-

all, they reduce congestion and help keep the traffic moving.

But cycling does not cause any appreciable congestion and for this reason, and a lack of motor assistance to ease the detours, cycling deserves direct routes into town, around town and across town. The routes should avoid pedestrian areas and fast flowing one way ring roads wherever possible. Even drivers who are briefly held up by a cyclist must realise that, on balance, the cyclist is easing congestion not contributing to it—and try asking any

cyclist how often they are held up by stationary or slow moving motor traffic. Many cyclists leave their cars behind because they know that the bike gives them the easiest and often quickest way of getting around. Some, as you suggest, might even have the less selfish reason of 'doing their bit', especially now that motor pollution is confidently indicated as a factor in the rocketing rates of childhood asthma.

Your crucial observation is that encouraging cycling is about putting bikes first (although we'd reserve the top spot for pedestrians). However it is impractical to do this solely with bike lanes and cycle paths, especially the paths which are often rather unsuccessfully shared with pedestrians.

Whilst we recognise that dedicated cycle lanes and paths can be appropriate in some situations, for example near schools, or where less experienced cyclist need a little extra encouragement, they can be counter productive in other situations. They are often of little help to the experienced cyclists. The strategy has to be making as many roads as possible conducive to cycling.

I am pleased to note that the Borough Council has reached this view and is trying, but not always succeeding, to provide for cyclists in these varied ways. Their task can be made difficult by adverse public re-action to apparently inconsistent measures (e.g. sometimes cycle paths, sometimes cycle lane, sometimes nothing at all). So I hope your editorial will spur them into a firmer resolve to give higher priority to cycling, but not necessarily by splashing white signs on red tarmac in all situations.

Having agreed with you on so much it must be obvious why we need to see

full details of options for a re-jigged town centre before we can say whether we think particular cycle lanes, for example along St. George's Place, are desirable. With a Council intent on encouraging cycling and a local newspaper urging them to get on with the job, Cheltenham's cyclists could soon be the envy of cyclists in most other towns. But how do we then achieve the increase in cycling anticipated in the National Cycling Strategy when it was launched in 1996?. We are convinced there is a substantial number of people who would like to cycle but who see 'danger' as the main deterrent. Fortunately I can assure them that cycling is much safer than people believe - you'd need to be cycling regularly for 15,000 years before, statistically, your number comes up. In the meantime you would be gaining enormous health benefits - ask any doctor; and cycling is enjoyable - ask any cyclist. We suspect the real reasons more people do not cycle are (i) the status parade of the company car park (ii) lack of parking facilities when working, relaxing or shopping and (iii) a lack of skills and confidence after many years of not regularly cycling. The former needs long overdue changes in culture and attitude before we catch up with our continental cousins. Meanwhile I shall try my best to continue being nice by giving sound opinions to the Council, balanced interviews to your reporters and, with my colleagues from the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign, by looking after the interests of Cheltenham's cyclists and would-be cyclists.

Conference on Cycling Infrastructure Design

Even before formal advertising had taken place, all 90 places had been booked for the one-day conference on cycle-friendly infrastructure, which was held at the University of Nottingham on 16th April.

This excellent response has encouraged organiser Hugh McClintock to repeat the conference (with the same speakers and

presentations) on Thursday 27th June.

Groups and cycle campaigners are urged to enquire whether their Highway Authority is attending the conference, and if not, to encourage that they book now for June.

Full details and a booking form are on the CCN web site at <http://www.cyclenetwork.org.uk/latest/cfi.pdf>.

National Bike Week

The Cheltenham section of the Cyclist Touring Club (CTC) invite you to join them on an evening ride on Thursday 20th June. Starting from Central Cross Drive, Pittville at 19:15 and finishing at The Plough Inn Prestbury at approximately 21:00.

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign will be organising a councillors and officers evening ride, probably the Wednesday of either bike week or the week before in green transport week, we will also have a display stand with prize quiz in the pedestrianised area on the Saturday preceding bike week and possibly the Saturday ending bike week

Steven Norris Addresses the CTC/CCN Conference

The CTC/CCN conference, held in Dorchester, was attended by a number of delegates from Cheltenham cycle campaign

John Peake, Chairman of Dorset county council, delivered the opening address. He quickly attempted to establish his cycling credentials, but with a bit more than the customary anecdotes of boyhood cycling, so we'll forgive the excuse of advancing years for having given up on two wheels. But he enthused over the aims of the conference. Despite Dorset being criss-crossed with cycling friendly roads, John Peake's pride focussed on the county's Heritage Coastline and coastal paths. Was there a clue here that cycle tourism, as promoted by Les Lumsdon later in the day, is not a key part of Dorset's development strategy? Certainly Alan Jowsey, a

traffic and road safety manager in Dorset, gave a description of the county's cycling provisions which was hardly impressive to many of the hard bitten campaigners at the conference.

Les Lumsdon is principle lecturer in tourism at Manchester Municipal University, and spoke convincingly of the benefits of tourism without traffic. He is currently formulating a strategy for the Northumbria Tourist Board. His views are founded on market research which shows that many people could be persuaded out of their cars, especially as their main aims include getting away from traffic,



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relaxing and enjoying scenery. But the conditions and support need to be right. Apparently cycle tourism attracts visitors who think 'activities first' and this is a new market which continues to grow. It is now widely acknowledged that cycle tourism generates sustainable economic activity at least on a par with other modes of tourism, but with little or no environmental degradation. The need now, according to Les, is for tourism authorities to make the necessary and justifiable investments.

No doubt cycle tourism will continue to attract off road cyclists and road cyclists who like to take the occasional less well beaten track. The CTC is well aware of this and is at the forefront in preserving rights of way, mainly bridleways but also other types of importance to cyclists. Joanna Redgwell from the Countryside Agency based in Cheltenham, gave a thorough description of the work which must be done to secure these rights of way. The recent Countryside and Rights of Way Act will extinguish any which have not been formally designated by 2026. Estimates indicate tens of thousands of miles of rights of way not recorded on definitive maps are vulnerable. Much on the ground and in the archives work is needed. It's already clear that many county archives are in poor order and that the current manpower is not sufficient. Fortunately the government has allocated a sizeable sum which the Countryside Agency will manage and allocate to groups and individuals who engage in the work. Joanna explained that the approach to the task is being developed with help from the University of Gloucestershire; so this national exercise has a Cheltenham focus.

Stuart Reid gave perhaps the most challenging talk of the day. He now works at the Transport Research Laboratory after several years as the CTC's Campaigns and Policies Manager. Stuart is re-

searching drivers' perceptions of cyclists. He gave a taster of the findings pending publication of the final results and conclusions. It seems tribal forces are at work, with drivers offering support and sympathy to each other, but not to cyclists, who they see as alien and not fellow road users. Drivers struggle to cope with unpredictable situations, so the inexperienced wobbling cyclist can get more cautions treatment than the more predictable cyclist riding in a cycle lane.

Dave Simper, CTC's current campaigns & policy manager, gave an update on a range of issues including a £2M cycling projects fund from the National Cycling Strategy Board. Next he echoed the objections to the government's proposals for streamlining the national and local planning processes, Cheltenham Cycle Campaign were amongst many who objected to this 'developer's charter'. David went on to express concerns, shared by many organisations, over the Home Office's delay in publishing revised proposals on Road Traffic Penalties. Maybe the delay is due to the onslaught of criticism to the public consultation paper which was issued in late 2000.

This hot topic update has traditionally been given by Don Mathew. Don has stepped down from this role and his sustainable transport consultancy work. Retirement, or so he claims, is the reason; in any event the conference gave him a resounding thank you for his years of hard work.

Local Transport Plans are also due for statutory progress appraisal, and in his session Colin Langdon, an experienced campaigner and CTC leader from Merseyside, explained how campaign groups can go about checking the adherence to sustainable transport objectives, which were more or less mandatory in

Cheltenham Cycles

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LTPs.

Late afternoon sessions, when delegates' energy falls away, are daunting for any speaker, but there were no such problems for Iain Colquhoun, cycling paramedic from Norwich. His animated and enthusiastic account held the audience in rapt attention and genuine admiration. Iain had persuaded the city's ambulance managers, against their better judgement, to support his idea of a mountain bike based rapid response service in the central areas of Norwich. Within a week their doubts had turned to wholehearted support. Iain went on to save at least 14 lives, with a maximum response time of 90 seconds, which often finds the caller still on the 999 call when he arrives. Iain had previously worked on ambulance, paramedic cars and motorcycles, where the response targets are a full 8 minutes. His bike is equipped with defibrillator, oxygen, dressings and drugs, plus, of course, an array of flashing blue lights. With a mixture of embarrassment and pride Iain recounted how the citizens of Norwich, when consulted on who should be commemorated with a new statue, voted for him. In reporting this conference we have left the first till last. The keynote address was given by Steve Norris, the Conservative transport minister who launched the National Cycling Strategy in 1996.

The strategic target of quadrupling cycling by 2012 is off track at present, and so Steve Byers appointed Steve Norris to head up the NCS Board and boost the strategy. Steve's speech was a robust account of cycling's problems, solutions and benefits - well worn arguments as far as campaigners are concerned, but it was refreshing to hear them from a key establishment figure. A questioner revealed that he is not a strong supporter of space for bikes on trains; he prefers the continental approach where commuters have a bike secured at each end

of their train journey. It seems that the CTC's bikes on trains lobby will have to tackle him, at least on behalf of tourists if not commuters. Steve has a strong bias towards no-fuss utility cycling - his idea is just getting on a bike, in everyday clothes, to cover the enormous high proportion of journeys which are less than a couple of miles. He repeated, allegedly for the last time, but we doubt it, his catch phrase of not ever being seen in Lycra. Also, in line with many campaigners' thinking, he's not keen on being cajoled or forced into a helmet either. So that's one piece of misplaced thinking which we can rely on him to resist. But there is a worry that with Sustrans founder John Grimshaw the only apparently committed cyclist on the NCS board, Steve Norris will be steered towards off road leisure tracks and urban cycle lanes which, while suiting some inexperienced cyclists, are of limited use to the purposeful urban cyclists who needs to have a substantial proportion of the ordinary roads conducive to cycling. In the breaks several delegates voiced fears that the influence of the Grimshaw agenda could inadvertently lead to cycling bans on many urban roads during the next decade. The well honed opinions of grass roots cycle campaigners are needed to redress the balance; Norris's needs to know this now. Finally our thanks to Dorset WI for the Catering, to Dorset Cycling's John Pritchard for his superb organisation and to Michael Evans, chairman of Dorset Cycle Network, for his gentle but punctilious chairing of the conference.

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'Wrong type of passenger' for south coast trains

The interior design of new carriages being ordered by South Central Trains does not cater for the needs of existing customers and will leave passengers stranded on the platform.

The new trains will run from London to Brighton from the summer and on south coastal routes from Brighton and Hove from the end of this month. There will be just two bike spaces per three car unit to be shared with wheelchair users and luggage, compared to the 12 or more cycles that can currently fit into guards vans. A study two years ago by CTC found that on average each train surveyed carried 11 bikes. Cyclists used trains to reach work, school and the town's two universities, to reach ferry ports and Gatwick airport and to start leisure rides and holidays. Better cycle parking, while welcome, is no substitute when cyclists need their bikes at both ends of their journey.

Liz Yeats, CTC representative for Brighton & Hove said: "Everyone agrees that cycles should be carried to fulfil integrated transport policy but no-one will take responsibility for making that happen. Trains should be designed with adequate space for push-chairs, bulky luggage and cycles as well as space for wheelchair users. The proposed cycle/wheelchair space is bound to fill up with suitcases, especially on the Gatwick line, making it useless to both wheelchair users and cyclists".

Sue Hall, CTC's Public Transport Officer said:


"Instead of the wrong type of snow, the railways are now saying they have the wrong type of passengers. The government's integrated transport policy has a target of increasing train passenger numbers by 50% by 2010 as part of a socially inclusive and sustainable transport policy.

"But passengers with bikes, prams, push-chairs, bulky baggage and possibly even wheelchair users will be turned away from the new South Central services. Trains must be designed to meet the needs of all passengers".

CTC wants carriages modified to carry at least ten cycles as well as luggage. Additional space should be provided for wheelchair users.

Yeats said: "The Strategic Rail Authority must start using its authority to regulate train provision which means insisting on locally appropriate levels of cycle carriage on all trains."



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Talking on a mobile phone while driving is more dangerous than being over the legal alcohol limit, according to research. Tests by scientists at the Transport Research Laboratory said drivers on mobiles had slower reaction times and stopping times than those under the influence of alcohol. And it said hands-free kits were almost as dangerous as hand-held phones. Using a hand-held mobile while driving is illegal in more than 30 countries, but in the UK drivers are usually prosecuted for dangerous or careless driving.

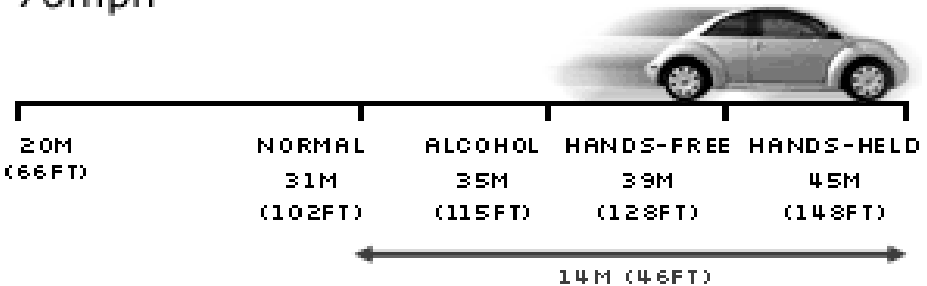
Roger Vincent of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents called for a specific offence of using a mobile while driving for the UK - even with a hands-free kit. "The problem is you actually get sucked into the telephone conversation, and the conversation starts to take precedence over the driving task," he told BBC News. "The person on the end of the phone doesn't know the driving conditions around you. If someone's in the car talking to you they can stop talking if

a dangerous situation arises. "People just don't seem to understand how distracting these telephone conversations are."

The research said reaction times were, on average, 30% slower when talking on a mobile than when just over the legal limit, and nearly 50% slower than when driving normally. Drivers were also less able to maintain a constant speed and found it more difficult to keep a safe distance from the car in front. At 70 miles per hour, normal thinking distance was 102 ft (31m), which increased to 115 ft (35m) with alcohol; 128 ft (39m) with a hands-free phone and 148 ft (45m) with a hand-held mobile.

The study, which was sponsored by insurer Direct Line, involved a panel of 20 volunteers using a driving simulator. Janet Anderson, MP for Rosendale and Darwen, is currently trying to push a bill through which would ban the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving

Distance travelled before response at 70mph



Source: Transport Research Laboratory/ Direct Line

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

Some of this act looks well ahead, for instance in 25 years' time the definitive map will be closed to modifications. This means that any unrecorded bridleways or bridleways wrongly shown as footpaths on the definitive map in 2026, will be lost to cycle and equestrian use. Any unrecorded byways will not be lost — but instead will become invisible! The effect of this is that user groups will have to work together to conduct the painstaking research necessary to initiate the thousands of map modification orders (MMO's) which will take 20 to 30 years to process, so the resource implications of this are mind boggling.

Another change which comes about as part of the CROW Act are that Roads used as Public Paths, RUPPs, are to become Restricted Bridleways. It is generally accepted that cyclists can use RUPPs, so this change will have little effect on cycle use.

Removal of Obstructions

The rather odd situation that currently exists has meant that local authorities can prosecute and get an offender fined for having an obstruction to a right of way but cannot require him to remove it. This has now changed, and magistrates can order an obstruction to be removed

RoW Diversions and Closures

There are now provisions to make it much easier for landowners to make claims to

divert, close temporarily or extinguish rights of way -particularly to assist landowning operations.

Setting up of Local Access Forums

These will largely replace Rights of Way Liaison Groups which are active in most counties and will undoubtedly require considerable time commitment from countryside users. The benefits to local cyclists will be very much determined by the effectiveness of our cycling representatives and the commitment of the local authority to initiatives which will assist cycling.

For more information on Offroad and Countryside cycle campaign news, contact the CTC Right to Ride support desk on 01483 520735

(Abstracted from CTC *Cycle Digest*)



Do you have an email address?

If you would like to receive information via email from the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign, please send an email to secretary@cyclecheltenham.org.uk

Sending you information by email means you get information sooner than is possible by post and it helps to keep our costs, and hence membership fees to a minimum. It can also help keep track of members if they move house as the email address usually moves with the member.

Syreford Gallery

- 41 Great Norwood Street

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In town without my car

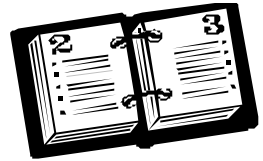
Regional workshops have been arranged for people who wish to assist with the above event (also known as European Car Free Day and backed for the first time this year by the UK Government). The workshops will give a national and European overview, results and round-up from UK events on 22nd September 2001, and planning for 22nd September 2002. They are aimed at local authority and NGO

representatives, and are free of charge.

Locations are: London, 22nd March; Stoke-on-Trent, 9th April; Gateshead, 11th April; Cardiff, 18th April; Edinburgh, 23rd April.

There is also an e-group for on-going discussion about the event. For more information contact Richard Evans (020 8946 0912, or e-mail

Dates for Your Diary



Sunday 19th May Cotswolds Bike Ride, charity ride for the British Heart Foundation. Has a number of hills!

Sunday 26th May Sue Ryder Ride, charity ride for the Sue Ryder Foundation. A mainly flat ride in the Severn Valley.

Saturday 15th to Sunday 23rd June National Bike Week.

Thursday 20th June CTC invitation ride. See page 4 for details.

Cheltenham Cycle Campaign meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month (except August). They are held at the University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall, St Paul's Road. starting promptly at 19.30Hrs. Usually in room TC 108.

Web sites worth a look

www.thebikezone.org.uk/thebikezone/bike1.html

An interesting site with various bits 'n' pieces on cycling including a good section on campaigning

sheldonbrown.com/carrababy.html If you missed April 1st then visit this site!

www.roadpeace.org/

New web site for this charity for road traffic victims (Note no ".uk")

www.bikeweek.org.uk/ The Bike Week Liaison Group

www.americawalks.org/epamd/index.htm

For a discussion of an electric vehicle on pavements!

www.kenkifer.com/

A general interest site on cycling

www.cyclecheltenham.org.uk

The web site for the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign.

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Both 20mph zones AND traffic calming required to reduce accidents

Page 11

In 20 mph zones enforced only by road signs, speed drops by an average of just 1 mph and accidents are not reduced at all. By contrast, in 20 mph zones enforced by traffic calming measures, speeds drop by, on average, 10 mph producing a 70% reduction in child pedestrian accidents and a 48% reduction in child cyclist accidents.

New Women's Hour Record

On 20th April Ellen van der Horst (31) from Nijmegen in the Netherlands set a new women's world one hour recumbent cycling record, at the Opel testing track at Frankfurt. She rode 68.325 km in one hour. Van der Horst rode a fully faired recumbent cycle, specifically built for speed, known as "White Hawk". The Whitehawk streamliner weighs 23 Kg (51 pounds), stands 90 cm (35.5") tall and is 46 cm (18") wide. Ellen Van der Horst is a member of the Challenge-Elan racing team.

Speed limiters

The UK currently obliges vehicles above 7.5 tonnes to have a speed limiter. A European proposal seeks to extend this to all vehicles over 3.5 tonnes. The UK believes that this is not beneficial and voted against it at the Council of Ministers meeting. It is, however, likely to be adopted later this year.

TravelSmart

Sustrans reports a 9% reduction in car trips in Quedgeley, Gloucester and a 6% reduction in Frome from pilots of the TravelSmart personalised marketing campaign that has proved successful in Western Australia. Most journeys switched to foot, but in Quedgeley a quarter were undertaken by cycle.

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Recent Publications

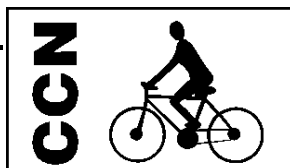
You really do need these latest Traffic Advisory Leaflets:

4/01. Cycling Bibliography. This glossy 6-pager highlights main reports from the National Cycle Forum, TRL, Cycle Challenge, Conferences and other TALs and Local Transport Notes. A shame that it does not cite CTC, Sustrans or European Cyclist Federation publications, but at least you are told how to access them.

5/01. Traffic Calming Bibliography. Again, another succinct round-up. There is a lot of material out there.

Both are free, and can be ordered by ringing : 020 7944 2478

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The federation of cycle campaign groups