

Cheltenham Cyclist

Autumn 2002

Proposed Permanent Ban for cyclists on the A40 Golden Valley Bypass

As many of you are aware a ban on cyclists using the Golden Valley Bypass was put in place after structural defects were found in the bridges spanning the roundabout above the M5. This ban was subsequently renewed on a temporary basis. This summer it was discovered that the highways agency intended to make this a permanent

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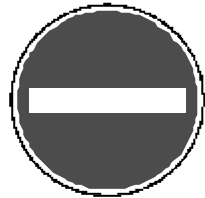
A ride to the office

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ban. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign have lodged formal objections to this and also instigated a petition against the ban.

Whilst few would argue that this is a pleasant route to cycle and many are well aware of the main danger points, the access and exit slip roads to the M5, the alternative which we are to be forced to use is not much better. From 1985 to 2000 ; there were 12 cyclist casualties, including 3 fatalities on the A40, all concentrated at the M5 interchange; whereas on the B4063, there were 46 casualties including 1 fatality spread out along the whole length of the route . Not only does this support our view that the B4063 is unsatisfactory, but it indicates that, with a concentrated provision at the M5 the A40 would be an even more appropriate choice for cyclists.

The B4063 is in places poorly surfaced. The majority of the cycle provision is shared with pedestrians on an uneven footpath, which has no right of way at any of the junctions. In many cases the cycle way does not follow the guidelines of the Institute of Highways and Transportation to which it should have been built and in the usual fashion the cycle track disappears just where it is needed most.



(Continued on page 2)

Reports we have received from cyclists who use the B4063 bear out the assertion that it is far from satisfactory or acceptable.

It is regrettable that, during the eighteen months of temporary ban, there have been no apparent efforts by the Highways Agency to remedy the problems of the Golden Valley or to ensure that the alternative route is patently preferable in all respects.

It is understood that the Police are instrumental in this proposed ban. It seems that they have not fully assessed the facts and instead of attempting to make laws, we contend they should be enforcing traffic laws on the B4063 in favour of

cyclists.

Further efforts are also being made by the CTC. They have written to Transport Secretary Alistair Darling, Steve Norris, Chair of the Government's National Cycling Strategy (NCS) Board and the Highways Agency's Chris Pope in protest at the exclusion from this stretch of road.

But the fundamental issue remains 'A' roads should be open to any class of user. Furthermore if this proposed ban is implemented there will surely be further instances, across the country, where rather than solving problems the Highways agency will resort to bans.

St George's Road Closure

After nearly nine months of road works on the bridge in St George's Road, it looks like an end may be in sight. For those who drive their cars past this site it will come as a welcome relief to see the traffic lights removed and have free two way traffic once more. "Serves them right" we hear you all say? Sadly though, many cyclists feel the same way because since January 8th 2002 the cyclists' journey past these works have been equally disrupted, and throughout there has not been much real consideration for cyclists' needs.

For months cyclists were obliged to dismount onto the footway, when for several weeks the passage for cyclists on the road would have been quite feasible. Responsible cyclist reluctantly did indeed dismount; many others who remained on their bikes took care when cycling past

pedestrians, and a minority simply ignored

traffic lights and pedestrians to ride at break neck speed on and off the road, increasing the resentment of non-cyclists towards us. Many car drivers too showed their anger and frustration by ignoring warning signs and signals, but sadly it is the behaviour of the "selfish" cyclists that people remember most. Thank goodness this is nearly over then.

"No pain, no gain" is what they say. So what have we gained? It is too early to reach firm conclusions yet, but we'll have red painted cycle lanes as approaches to advance stop lines on the new junctions. Let's just hope that someone somewhere sees fit to police this a little more vigorously than ASLs elsewhere in the town. We have an elegant new bridge to link together the temporarily bisected Honeybourne cycle track. We'll have a large new store to shop within (not sure we needed one though), but this store has a reputation as an environmentally aware



The New Cycle/Footpath Bridge, close to the new Waitrose Store

organisation and may be introducing an interesting scheme to promote cycling to their store - watch this space. The St James Street site also has included some new bits of cycle lane too.

Clearly then, the needs of us cyclists have not gone un-noticed, or have they? CCC fear the reality will not match the expectation. The quiet and convenient route from the west towards the town centre via Millbrook street seems to have been lost forever. The cycle tracks that are being provided on the new site will be OK for the kids on Sunday afternoon, perhaps OK for that leisurely bike ride to the shops. Yet CCC are far from convinced that these new facilities will serve

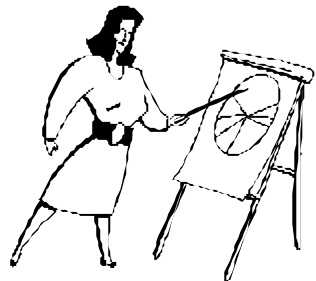
any useful purpose for the commuting cyclist as they don't appear to lead anywhere in particular and seem to include very sharp turns, some steep gradients, even steps in places too. Those of you with trailer bikes, trikes or tandems are in for a fun time then. So in general it seems that commuting cyclists will be out there with the other traffic in the rush of the ring road, jostling for our right to ride on the roads that we all have to pay for. Only time will tell how it all will work, but at the present time CCC believe that this new development is an opportunity missed. Missed by how much remains to be seen.

Alison Parfitt to talk after Cycle Campaign AGM

Alison is a consultant who has worked with a Multi-Modal Study and will be talking about her work and experiences.

She has been involved, for some time, with the Cheltenham Environment Forum and Centre for Change.

The talk is expected to last about half an hour and will follow the A.G.M. on Wednesday 6th November 2002 in room TC108 Francis Hall Campus. The A.G.M. will start promptly at 7.30 p.m.



Are the Insurance Companies trying to make the Law?

In yet another case an insurance company has attempted to reduce the damages it was supposed to pay because the cyclist was not wearing a helmet.

It would seem that they are trying to do what the government could not and force cyclists to wear a helmet.

The National Insurance and Guarantee Corporation (NIG), part of the Credit Suisse Group, reduced its out of court damages offer despite admitting their drivers liability for the collision.

NIG is claiming contributory negligence because the cyclist was not wearing a helmet. There is no legal requirement for cyclists to wear helmets but cyclists fear that if NIG is successful, they will be forced to bear some of the responsibility for reckless driving.

CTC Director Kevin Mayne said: "This is a case of the big man bullying the little man. NIG is trying it on not because it believes its stance is right but because it knows cyclists don't have the money to fight this type of case in court."

"Cases like this are crucial to the future of cycling in the UK. Insurers regularly make spurious claims of contributory negligence and, if we allow NIG to succeed, insurers will continue to duck responsibility for clients' incompetence. NIG's claim is scandalous and must be dropped. Otherwise, clients will withdraw custom from a business whose practices are unjust and morally reprehensible."

Alan Millet, from Walsall was struck by a car entering a roundabout on the

A41 in Walsall in March 1999. He suffered serious head injuries, a broken collar bone and severe bruising in the crash. NIG has reduced its out of court offer of £100,000 by 15 per cent claiming contributory negligence because Millett, 63, was not wearing a helmet. The company claims that failure to wear a cycle helmet is as irresponsible as ignoring seatbelt, motorbike helmet and drink driving laws.

The case is not the first in which an insurer has attempted to shift some of responsibility for injuries onto a cyclist when the cyclist has not been at fault. CTC has called on cyclists and others concerned with road safety to write, call and email NIG to condemn the company's move. In a case last year, Provident Insurance lost money as outraged clients cancelled their policies in protest. In countries where helmets are mandatory (the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada), the numbers of cyclists have dropped by up to 40 per cent. CTC says that it is driving standards, not the effect on the victim that should be addressed. In countries such as Holland where there are far more cyclists, very few wear helmets because motorists drive more safely.



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More Cash For Cycling Projects

Transport Minister John Spellar announced, recently, funding for 138 new cycling projects across the country as part of Government efforts to encourage cycling.

Announcing the winners of the Department for Transport's Cycling Projects Fund today on European Cycling Day, John Spellar said these projects would receive more than double the initial funding provided, to a total of £2.18 million.

He said: "We have quite simply been overwhelmed by the response. The Fund attracted over 550 bids and the quality of these projects was so good that I have decided to provide more than double my original intention.

"Projects came from all over England and from organisations in both the private and public sectors. Many involved innovative partnerships. The whole scheme clearly captured the imagination of organisations working to increase cycling and in turn reduce car use. I am delighted I can assist them.

"The success of this scheme should demonstrate to local authorities just how much unmet demand there currently is at local level for improved cycling facilities. We have been particularly impressed by the extent to which scheme promoters have taken on the responsibility of developing and managing their own projects. I now expect local authorities to rise to the challenge that has been set. Much more funding has been made

available for small schemes through the Local Transport Plan process. I expect to see this deliver a marked improvement in conditions for cyclists across the country.

"I wish all the winning projects every success and look forward to hearing about their progress in the future."

Hundreds of organisations throughout England were invited in mid March this year to bid for a share of a £1million Government windfall for projects that could be completed quickly. The first ten winning projects were announced in June and the remaining winners were announced in September.

The winning schemes are diverse. There are over 30 projects to provide better cycle parking and access to schools. Park and ride schemes at the University of York and the University of Gloucestershire are included and valuable cycle routes such as the North Wilts Rivers route and the Eskdale Trail in Cumbria win funds.

The funding for the University of Gloucestershire was the only successful bid in the county, the grant amounting to £5,405. Bristol clearly got its act together on this funding as no less than seven projects were successful three projects being awarded £145,000 between them. The smallest grant £460 was for Cycle parking at a Bristol city centre church to meet a demand from the congregation.

Global bike sales soar

According to the Earth Policy Institute, in the year 2000 world bicycle production climbed to 101 million, more than double the 41 million cars produced. Sales of bikes are soaring because they provide affordable mobility for billions of people, increase physical fitness, alleviate traffic congestion, and do not pollute the air or emit climate disrupting carbon dioxide.

"A half century ago, it was widely expected that automobile production would quickly exceed that of bicycles. Indeed by 1965, car production, which had been growing rapidly since World War II, was poised to overtake bicycle produc-

tion. But it never did.

Mounting environmental concerns

slowed the growth in car output and accelerated that of bikes. Between 1969 and 1970, the year of the first Earth Day, bike sales jumped from 25 million to 36 million. Shortly after the first Earth Day, the two oil price shocks of the 1970s underlined the risks of oil dependent mobility. Car sales stalled near 30 million from 1973 to 1983. Bicycle sales, meanwhile, jumped from 52 million to 74 million!"

* <http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/>



Transport Professors Press for Road Charging

Twenty eight transport professors have signed a letter to Transport Secretary Alistair Darling urging him to embrace traffic restraint if real improvements to road travel conditions are to be delivered. In response, Mr Darling has agreed to consider the merits of introducing network-wide road user charging.

[Http://environment.uwe.ac.uk/tps/activities/policy/policy.htm](http://environment.uwe.ac.uk/tps/activities/policy/policy.htm)



Road Tax Evasion

Last year almost 800,000 car owners were prosecuted for not having a road tax licence. The figure has gone up by 31% in 4 years, partly as a result of better detection.

Drink Driving

Six hundred and sixty five people in England and Wales in the year 2000 were ordered to retake the driving test following a conviction for drink driving.

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CCN/CTC Cycle Planning Conference

The Autumn 2002 CCN/CTC Cycle Planning Conference will take place on Saturday 2nd November 2002 at Blackburne House, Liverpool.

Speakers include:

A member of the National Cycling Strategy Board
 Marcus Jones of AEA Technology, who is contracted to manage the English Regional Cycling Development Team

Steve Essex, ERCDT appointee for the North West

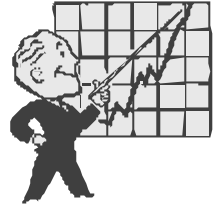
Paige Mitchell, of the Slower Speeds Initiative

John Cocker, Chair of the Merseyside Strategic Planning & Transport Committee

Sarah Dewar, of Travelwise

Cathy McNulty, Liverpool Cycling Officer

Roger Geffen, the new CTC Campaigns & Policy Manager



Call for Velo City papers

The 'Call for Papers' has been issued for Velo City 2003 which will take place in Paris from 23rd to 26th September 2003.

The conference will comprise five topics:

Established facts: bicycle use today

The future, the vision, the aim: a more friendly city

Integrating the bicycle in comprehensive politics

Strategies: methods and alliances

Conditions for efficient implementation


Overall the theme of the conference is 'Le vélo, outil indispensable pour la reconquête de la ville' (The bicycle as an essential tool for winning the city back).

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 15th November 2002. For a submission form contact velocity2003@mairie-paris.fr.

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Cycle stands

The cycle stands within the town centre are generally well used, indeed it is sometimes difficult to find a free stand against which to park ones bike and there is a probable requirement for more stands. However, there are other areas of town which have little or no provision for cycle parking. If you know of somewhere that could do with some, or more, cycle stands, please contact the secretary so that can add the requirement to our wish list when we next meet with the borough officers. The cycle campaign is also carrying out an audit of the use of cycle stands available to the public in Cheltenham. You can help by doing a count of cycles as you pass any one of the cycle stands. The information we need is: The number of bikes parked against the stands, the time and date when the count was taken, the location of the stands. Also please note the number of cycles nearby but not using the stands and any obstruction of the stands by motorcycles or cars. Please send your observations by email to secretary@cyclecheltenham.org.uk



This is a real street scene. Unfortunately, you have to go to the Netherlands to find it.

Transport 2000 launches new website

T2000 has launched a new website, described as a complete resource on sustainable transport. The site will help to show why we should challenge our over-dependence on the car and the lorry and look at alternatives, including cycling, more seriously.

Among people likely to find the new website useful are:

- Politicians at local, regional and national level and other decision-makers.
- Transport professionals in local authorities, transport operators and other companies.
- Journalists and media researchers.
- Transport and environmental campaigners and local activists.
- The general public, including students and school children.

The site provides commentary on a wide range of transport issues. It gives case studies of good practice in, for example, public transport, green commuting, street management and safe routes to school; it helps local communities tackle traffic problems; and it provides a full news service on issues that Transport 2000 has a view on. People can also use the site to order publications and join the organisation as a national supporter. www.transport2000.org.uk

From CTC Cycle Digest 32

Cheltenham Cycles

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

Local Issues

Sainsbury's Retail Park. We have been in what seems like regular correspondence with the owners of the Sainsbury's site over the inappropriate and potentially dangerous speed humps. We hope to see some action improve these traffic calming measures in the near future. The road through this site was already difficult for cyclists before these road humps were introduced. The main problems with them are the steep ramp, which is likely to seriously affect the control of a bike if the cyclist is not very careful and a lack of any cycle bypass at the edges.

Gloucester Road. The new road markings at the traffic lights to the Waitrose development show that traffic engineers and developers, apparently, do not think through the consequences of what they do. Where else would you put traffic, (in this case bicycles) which is likely to be going straight-on to the left of left turning traffic? This is exactly the situation at the new junction on Gloucester road where the cycle lane is to the left of left turning cars and lorries. This will be followed up by CCC, but don't be surprised when you hear of an accident at this location. (*I shall be ignoring the cycle lane if going straight on. ED*).

Bikes go Free on Midland Mainline and Virgin



At long last we can bring some good news from the last two inter-city train operators still making a charge for bikes on trains. Midland Mainline and Virgin Trains have both announced that they are dropping the £3.00 reservation charge for cycles. Advance reservations are still essential. It is strongly recommend that cyclists make reservations, which you can do right up to the time of departure of your train, not least because this enables the train operators to be able to monitor usage of their services by cyclists.

But it is not all good news First Great Western, Wessex Trains and Wales and Borders charge £3 for cyclists who have not booked a reservation at least two hours before travelling. The advance reservation charge is £1. Virgin also seem to have some contradictory policies. They have removed very popular cycle lockers from Wolverhampton station and have not provided replacements. Whilst it is now possible to take your bike on a Virgin Voyager train without charge, if you have a tandem you will have to find another way to get your bike to your destination. This despite talks

with the CTC and others last year on how it might be possible to accommodate tandems. Tandems are popular with families and are used by partially sighted people and people with disabilities.

Syreford Gallery

- 41 Great Norwood Street

Paintings | Sculpture | Ceramics
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24th September (Just Another Ride to the Office).

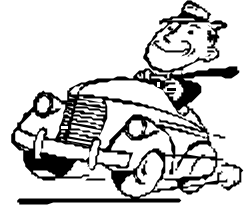
Graham Ricketts

Putting the family hacks outside this morning made me realise that autumn is really with us now. The warm sunny days we've been enjoying in recent weeks have let the autumn equinox slip past almost un-noticed. Yet today the sun had still not risen above the hillside as the family bikes were lined up ready for the morning rush to work and school. The shirt sleeves I have been used to all summer suddenly seemed inadequate against the morning chill. Great day for a day bike ride I thought - never mind, still pretty good for a pedal to work instead!

A short while later, donning jumper and jacket, I wobble off down to the end of the road, momentarily dazzled by the sun now gleaming through the trees. I turn left and down onto Hewlett Road with not another sign of life to be seen, but first impressions can be deceptive. The morning calm is suddenly shattered by the vroom of the wheeled tin boxes rushing towards town. Wannabe Schumachers find little to deter their testosterone fuelled (usually male!) egos on this road, and I've learnt to treat them with the respect they really don't deserve. Pedalling briskly now the chill in the morning air is confirmed - glad I took the gloves out the cupboard!

Approaching Hewlett Road roundabout I adopt the "primary riding position" (i.e. well out from the kerb), so avoid being boxed in against the LH kerbside by cars trying to squeeze past me in the last few yards before the roundabout.

Rarely does this strategy fail, but when it does the driver has usually made such a fool of them self they know they've done



wrong. Purposefully looking sharp right, ready to give way to fast moving traffic from All Saints Road, I head off south past the shops and over the pedestrian crossing. This crossing is an lively place indeed - it all happens here: lots of near misses, now made worse by persistent illegal parking on the crossing or it's approaches. It is a traffic warden's dream, but is there one in sight today - not likely, it's far too early!

I vary my exact route, depending on traffic at the time, and as I gaze down Hewlett Road I see some congestion forming ahead, so I check behind me, signal and turn right instead. The relative tranquillity of St Anne's Terrace poses its own perils: I spot that rare species - an early morning pedestrian - and I watch they don't step out in front of me, ringing the bell politely as I approach. I prepare for an emergency stop if required, pass them without incident and arrive at the junc-

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tion with the inner ring road. Now the fun begins: my strategy develops into true defensive cycling. With toast in one hand, coffee in the other, mobile on the earlobe and brain still in bed, some drivers are clearly not quite with it. Add to that the misty or frosted windows (that time of year again) and the fact they are running late, real live people on bicycles are the least of their worries this morning. Not many drivers are like this, but just one is one too many, so beware. I pedal quickly to maintain general traffic speed as best I can, swinging round onto London Road towards the Strand. Merging with often fast moving London Road traffic, much of which changes lanes left to right and vice-versa, I again

adopt the primary position to deter people (especially heavy goods vehicles) from cutting across me when turning right into St James Street. Clearing the junction I then notice a pedestrian stopping the traffic on the crossing, causing a car that just pulled in front of me to brake suddenly. I saw the pedestrian approach the crossing, so why the car overtakes and then pulls in is a mystery to me. I think that driving in traffic is a bit like chess - to be good you need to be able to plan ahead to see what might happen; many people are not good at chess either.

More from Grahams ride to the office in the next issue of Cheltenham Cyclist.

Web sites worth a look

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

Campaigning site for lower speeds on some of our roads.

www.transport2000.org.uk See article for details.

www.ukcycling.net News and views on all cycling matters. This is a new address for the former cyclists.org.uk

www.cyclecheltenham.org.uk

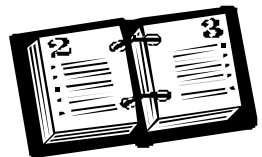
The web site for the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign.

Dates for Your Diary

Wednesday 6th November 7.30 p.m. Cheltenham Cycle Campaign

AGM followed by a talk given by Alison Parfitt

Saturday 2nd November 2002 CCN/CTC conference see page 7 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 campus, St Paul's Road. starting promptly at 19.30Hrs. Usually in room TC 108.



<http://www.cyclecheltenham.org.uk>



Join Cheltenham Cycle Campaign

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 and families can join and local organisations are welcome to affiliate as associate members.

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Annual Membership £3 Individual £5 Family
£10 Associate

I enclose £ _____ for Individual/Family/Associate* membership and a donation of £ _____
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I hereby give permission to the Cheltenham Cycle Campaign to hold the above details in its records.

signed _____

Date _____

If Joining as a family please list other family members.

* Delete as appropriate

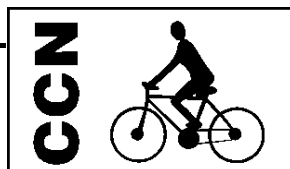
Recent Publications

Route Management Strategies - CPRE

Published in response to the development of 'Route Management Strategies' (RMSs).

RMSs are a new approach by the Highways Agency for trunk road improvements which look at the whole route as opposed to individual problem areas. CPRE fear that this could result in damaging proposals to widen or dual existing roads. The guide explains how you can influence RMSs to ensure they make better use of existing roads. Copies cost £3.50 and are available from CPRE Publications, Warwick House, 25 Buckingham Palace Rd. London SW1W 0PP, email publications@cpre.org.uk

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The federation of cycle campaign groups