

CycleReading WORKING FOR A CYCLE FRIENDLY READING

www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Autumn 2010 No. 110

RCC Events: Could You Help Out?



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Dear Reader,

Did you know that RCC attends around 30 public events a year? These are a chance for the public to speak to us about what we do, and a chance for people to join the campaign. Maybe you met us for the first time at one of these events?

They are often staffed solely by members of the committee, who as well as staffing events, do the important behind the scenes stuff like meetings with the Council, checking planning applications, writing the newsletter and other things which are what the campaign is all about.

Hopefully you are as enthusiastic as we are about improving cycling facilities in Reading. To that end we would ask all members to consider whether you could pledge just one weekend morning or afternoon a vear to help out with staffing events. Events and other campaign activities run throughout the year, so we could accommodate against your diary somewhere.

Give it a thought, that's the first step. If you think you can help, then get in touch with the events co-ordinator at events@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Many thanks, your Committee

Council News



Reading Borough Council (RBC)

It's TUF for Cyclists

In order to 'work for a cycle friendly Reading' we try to keep abreast of what transport changes and initiatives are going on in our town and make sure that cyclists are adequately taken into consideration. The Transport Users' Forum (TUF) is one of the arenas where this takes place. TUF meetings are held in the Civic Centre every three months and are chaired by the Lead Councillor for Transport. The meetings are open for anyone to attend.

The TUF meeting that took place in late September was attended by a member of Thames Valley Police. Superintendent Stuart Greenfield was there to answer questions on traffic issues and was duly assailed on the issue of cyclists on pavements - an issue that also featured heavily in the written questions submitted to the TUF Chair. A major part of the rest of the meeting was taken up by discussion of the Shinfield Road improvement scheme that has drawn heavy criticism over recent months.

For me there was a connection between these two points of dissatisfaction. Reading Cycle Campaign was consulted, as were many other groups, on the Shinfield Road scheme and we advised against creating narrow lanes and replacing mini-roundabouts with traffic lights. Our advice was heeded to the extent that the initially proposed narrowing of the carriageway to a 6m width was subsequently revised to a 7m width.

I do not usually cycle down Shinfield Road, but once the scheme had been completed I took a large detour returning from work one evening to experience the scheme from the saddle. On joining Shinfield Road I found a stationary queue of traffic heading towards Reading leading up to the newly installed traffic lights; however, since the cars were sitting idle close to the kerb I could not get past them. Frustrated, I mounted the pavement and jumped the queue, rejoining the road after the lights.

Now I get as annoyed as the next man (or woman) by cyclists riding illegally on pavements causing inconvenience and danger to pedestrians, so I admit to being guilty of double standards. Cycling has its down sides - it must do, otherwise why would so many people choose to make short trips by car every day? However, one of the

advantages of cycling is that you can beat the congestion, especially during the rush hour. The challenge that the Council faces is to help us cyclists do this whilst avoiding putting us into conflict with pedestrians.

Sometimes councils do choose to legally put cyclists on pavements by creating 'shared use' facilities. After all it is a very tempting method of creating a cycle facility with little capital expenditure. Occasionally we have to accept shared paths as inevitable in order to make cycling viable in a transport network created for motor vehicles. For example London Road by the Royal Berkshire Hospital is three lanes of one-way westbound traffic and the newly established Reading Cycle Route R20 directs cyclists onto the London Road pavement so that they can head south and eastwards.

The Reading Cycle Campaign sees the creation of shared use facilities as a last resort - this is also the view of the Department for Transport. Earlier this year RBC proposed creating a 'shared use' facility on the pavement of Bath Road as part of Reading Cycle Route R60. We objected to this proposal when it was discussed at the Cycle Liaison Group and it has been dropped. This was not an easy call - some people would have welcomed



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Council News

this facility, and so far we have got nothing else to help cyclists on this busy route, though the topic is to be revisited at the next Cycle Liaison Group. However, providing a shared use facility would, in effect, lock in a sub-standard solution for who knows how long - we are prepared to take the long view.

The Cycle Campaign stand was out on Broad Street in September as part of a cycle information day organised by the CTC Cycle Champion, Mark Tancock. One lady came to the stand to give me the sharp edge of her tongue, asking what we were "going to do about cyclists on pavements". Well, we are doing what we can.

The next scheduled TUF meetings are on Thursday 2 December 2010 and Wednesday 2 February 2011 at 6:30pm in the Kennet Room, Civic Centre.

Transport Strategy to 2025

RBC has carried out consultation on its draft Local Transport Plan Strategy for 2011-25. The Cycle Campaign has worked with Reading CTC, the Greater Reading Environmental Network (GREN) and the Reading Climate Change Partnership on the response to the consultation.

Our joint response with CTC should be available on our website by the time this newsletter is distributed. Our response expresses concern that the draft document is light on plans for cycling improvements. The 15-year Strategy will run alongside 3-year rolling Implementation Plans. RBC has informed us that the Implementation Plans will not be subject to public consultation but we will press for scrutiny of these through the Cycle Liaison Group.

Edge of Carriageway Gets Closer

Edge of carriageway markings, a broken white line close to the kerb, have been painted on a number of major roads including Oxford Road, Shinfield Road, Henley Road and Berkeley Avenue. These are not cycle lanes as such and are designed to encourage lower speeds by a

perceptual narrowing of the carriageways, but they do provide a limited benefit to cyclists in keeping other vehicles further from the kerb. RBC states that these have been placed where there is insufficient width to install a cycle lane, and that edge of carriageway markings and advisory cycle lanes will be considered when roads are due for resurfacing.

How to Profit from Cycle Theft

Which of us hasn't suffered from cycle theft? But there is a way to profit from cycle theft without going out with bolt-croppers yourself. Stolen bikes that are not recovered by their owners are sold by the police via internet auctions:

www.bumblebeeauctions.co.uk

A search of the site at the time of writing revealed that most bikes in the Thames Valley region were sold from Amersham or Milton Keynes train stations, though there were also a limited number at Pangbourne.

Napier Road Underpass Gets Further Away

The long planned and much procrastinated railway underpass linking Napier Road with Kenavon Drive (think: Toys 'R' Us to Tesco) has reportedly hit another delay. There are only three crossings of the Great Western Railway in Reading; two on the IDR and the other on Cow Lane. The Reading Cycle Campaign successfully lobbied against the closure of Cow Lane, but a much needed additional crossing for pedestrians and cyclists to the east of the town centre still remains a hope rather than a reality.

Oxford Road Improvements

The Reading Cycle Campaign is promoting a scheme to help cyclists heading to town on Oxford Road. At present this involves crossing two lanes of traffic by the Bedford Road junction. We have suggested extending the bus lane so that only one lane of traffic needs to be crossed. This scheme is being

considered by Abbey and Battle Ward Councillors at an Oxford Road meeting on 23 November.

Councillors respond to issues raised by residents. If you think Oxford Road would benefit from this scheme then help make it happen - let Councillors Bet Tickner (Abbey Ward) and Chris Maskell (Battle Ward) know that you support it. Either email rbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk and we will forward your message or contact the councillors direct via the RBC web site: www.reading.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/councillorinform ation/atoz/

Sustrans Skirts Around the 'Aggro'

Sustrans has now diverted signage for NCN 5 over Reading Bridge on to the north bank of the Thames to avoid the disputed stretch of Thames side path where certain residents who have rights over the Thame-side path have been in altercations with cyclists. Reading Bridge is less than ideal for cyclists and RBC has plans for a new pedestrian/cyclist bridge over the Thames in central Reading. However, this new bridge was to be funded as part of a wider bid to central government for transport improvements to decrease congestion. That particular pot of national funding disappeared with the last government and whether other central funding for the proposed bridge will be forthcoming has yet to be seen.

Transport Study in RBH/ University Area

RBC is undertaking a transport study in the RBH/UoR area that will concentrate on road safety and parking issues. The area to be studied is that bounded by London, Kendrick, Christchurch, Elmhurst and Alexandra Roads.

If you cycle in that area and have issues that you want addressed then contact us at:

rbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk or by phone (see back page).

Keith Elliott RBC Campaigner

Council News



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

WoBC have jointly developed publicity with RBC to promote cycling schemes that cross the Borough boundary in Woodley, Earley and Shinfield.

Through his associations on cycling matters with Woodley Town Council, Peter Glass was offered a copy of WoBC's notification of the routes and he replied to the Town Council with detailed comments on the 3 routes, R2, R20 and R3.

All that I could add was a concept from Cycle Training UK that real and perceived risk are often quite different for the novice cyclist (and perhaps often for the more experienced too who have not

benefited from Bikeability cycle training). In my view the real risks of cycling on the shared-use pavements of Route R20 (from the Three Tuns to Winnersh Triangle) are much higher than the risks taken in using the carriageway, though obtaining statistics would be a major undertaking. As many of us have said before in our newsletter, we would be better off without such 'facilities'.

Dougal Munro WoBC Campaigner

Other Cycle News

Cycling England "Thrown on the Bonfire Without Just Cause"

Members of the cycle trade have called on the industry to throw its weight behind Cycling England and tell the Coalition Government that axeing the body is a costly mistake.

Following the announced abolition of the body, prominent voices from the industry have expressed their misgivings at the news and concern

over the future of Bikeability cycle training.

Mark Bickerton, UK agent for Dahon and Bicycle Association Vice President said: "We know that Bikeability's future has been promised as secure, but Cycling England has done so much more to encourage more cycle use; the money the Government has given cycling through Cycling England has demonstrated just how good an investment it is. Every pound spent on Cycling infrastructure, training, and

safe routes has been rewarded by at least triple the amount in savings on congestion, safety, health and pollution.

"We all recognise that UK plc is in a parlous financial state, but I feel Cycling England has been thrown on the bonfire without just cause. Cycling is growing in popularity, yes, but with Cycling England behind the movement, we have seen a far quicker growth in cycling than otherwise would have been."



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EXPOSURE

Other Cycle News

An Evans spokesperson also mourned the passing of Cycling England, saying: "Evans Cycles has always advocated cycling throughout the UK and supported the initiatives of Cycling England. Getting more people out cycling safely is a great legacy it leaves behind."

http://www.bikebiz.com/news/read/c ycling-england-thrown-on-bonfirewithout-just-cause

Bicycles Second Fastest Growing Segment in UK Manufacturing (After Guns)

The EEF Manufacturers' Organisation has reported that UK bicycle and motorcycle manufacturing is the second fastest growing industry. The fastest growing segment is guns and weaponry.

The report says that these two sectors have "comfortably outperformed the rest of the UK economy over the past five years.

"The characteristics of these successful businesses means they should find it easier to avoid the worst of any problems if the global economy slows down," said Tom Lawton, head of manufacturing at BDO Stoy Hayward, a consultancy that assisted the EEF with the study.

http://www.bikebiz.com/news/read/guns-and-bicycles-are-fastest-growing-segments-of-uk-manufacturing

Walking and Cycle Conference Hails the Value of Getting People Out of Cars and Onto Bikes

The Welsh Assembly Government's third Walking and Cycling Conference found that companies saw business improve where cycling and walking levels were high. Businesses like hotels and cafes were found to thrive where high quality cycling facilities were in place.

The mountain bike trails at Afan Forest Park were cited as a prime example of cycling stimulating economic growth.

"The benefits of walking and cycling are not just restricted to health and wellbeing," explained Welsh Assembly Environment Minister Jane Davidson. "New and improved walking and cycling routes often act as a catalyst for new businesses and facilitate the growth of existing ones.

"We have seen numerous examples of bike hire enterprises, cafes, hotels and B&Bs flourishing as a result of improvements to walking and cycling provision. This in turn results in increased job opportunities within the local community and a more vibrant local economy."

http://www.bikebiz.com/news/read/ improved-cycle-facilities-boost-localbusinesses



We have been helping accident victims for well over 30 years and have developed a National reputation for our work in this field.

Specialising in a wide range of injury work for both adults and children, the firm has membership of all the relevant specialist panels including those of the Law Society, Headway and the Spinal Injuries Association and is closely involved with the Bicycle Helmet Initiative Trust (BHIT) based in Reading.

Once again my sincere thanks for your kind assistance and courtesy in dealing with this claim and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Jean Cross. Kent

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Chairman's Letter

I have been out on my bike a lot of late, not so much in Reading, but all over the country and abroad too. It is sobering to compare my home town with every other place I visited.

Here's a case: on a wet day in south west Scotland I was riding along with some friends on a brand new Sustrans cycle path. We hit a cattle grid in the rain, and because it was located on a bend two riders crashed, damaging themselves and their bikes. It was pouring with rain, and it wasn't funny. I reported it to the Highways people using the fill that hole website provided by the CTC. A week later I had a call from a Highways engineer, he was really concerned and although he used the same path he wanted to know what I thought caused the crash. We had an interesting discussion and the upshot of it was that he said he would get the cattle grid replaced with a better design as soon as possible. A month later I got an email telling me the grid had been replaced with a design that took into account my observations. I will check it out next year when I go back.

Here's another. In Reading the cycle route along the Oxford Road takes a right turn for some reason into Salisbury Road. I can't imagine why, but it does. The trouble is that a right turn is prohibited, and to stop naughty car drivers making an illegal

manoeuvre there is an island in the middle of the road. The Cycle Campaign pointed this out to the officers at Reading back in April, and so far nothing has happened.

In Bruges in Belgium I went to hire a bike. The hire shop was one of a dozen or so in a town smaller than Reading. The chap who gave me the bike also gave me a map of Bruges. Not a cycling map, a map. Basically he said in flawless English you can cycle two way on every road but for two, but all roads are one way for cars. It is normal to cycle in Bruges, and it is rare to see a cyclist in Lycra, but there are simply thousands of bikes in regular use. The scale of it has to be seen to be believed.

In Reading you can't hire a bike, and you can't cycle against the flow of traffic on any one way street, and you hardly ever see more than a few cyclists. The amount of cycle parking is tiny, and getting smaller (where have the bike racks on West Street gone?).

In fact most cyclists appear to be the hardcore confident types. In Bruges everybody cycles, young and old, boy and girl, and it is just normal.

The outskirts of Bruges and Ayr have cycle routes. Bruges has 900 kms of surfaced wide routes that follow the canals, the coast, little lanes, and

they have cafes and campsites, and signs and maps on signs. From Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to Inverness on the east coast there is now a cycle route. It is still new, and it is a bit remote, but the chief executive of Ayr council was really enthusiastic that such a facility had been built. She came out to greet us as we cycled in, and invited us into the Council chamber and proffered us food and a wee dram.

In Reading the towpath along the Kennet has been surfaced with tarmac after we asked and asked and asked, and the council proudly report it, but it is only surfaced so far, it stops and reverts to dirt again for the last few hundred metres to Rose Kiln Lane, let alone as far as Southcote. The Thames Towpath is still a muddy mess 400 metres from the town centre. In Belgium and Scotland the smooth ribbon of tarmac stretches as far as I pedalled and probably a lot more.

One new facility has been built, the new bridge over junction 11. A vast sum of money has been spent on this new facility, and it is impressive. I am not overly impressed, though. The signs announce the footbridge is open, not a cycle bridge, and it is shared with pedestrians right the way over the junction. So in 2010 we are still getting cycling on the pavement. Of course cyclists and pedestrians don't

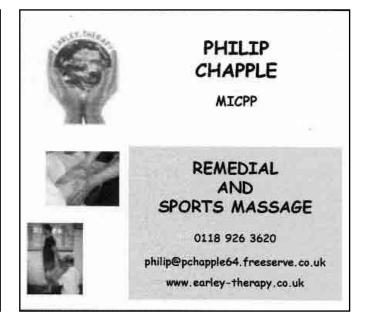
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Chairman's Letter

mix very well, but this facility is OK mainly because almost nobody is going to use it. How many people are going to cycle into Reading from Grazeley or Spencers Wood? Not many!

In Workington, in Cumbria, after the dreadful floods the army came in and built a bridge over the River Derwent, an emergency measure and twice as wide as the bridge over the motorway junction. It has special significance, and is named after PC Barker, who lost his life trying to get people off the road bridge when it was washed away by flood water. It is important, popular and happened quickly because there was the political will to make it happen.

Strangely the new bridge in Reading isn't finished yet, there are planks of wood across several parts which are quite tricky to ride over, as they are

loose. And the traffic lights at the end of the bridge as you head into Reading don't work for cyclists, although they do, of course, for motorists.



And what of the much vaunted bridge over the Thames for cyclists? It will never happen!

Well we know that Reading wants to make matters better. After all it has a new Cycling Strategy and a new administration. Their big project for this year is to resurface the path between Southcote and Coley. This is a handy route that will make life a lot easier for quite a few people. As

I understand it, Sustrans, the cycling charity, are helping out with the funding.

So what exactly is Reading doing for cyclists in Reading? And how long will it be before we have a cycle network to rival Bruges or Ayr?

So far all we have actually had from our own council coffers appears to be leaflets and signs, nothing that is actually going to help cyclists whilst on their bikes.

With the current public spending cuts and the attitude of the council to developing a cycling infrastructure we will never have one, ever. Which is such a shame; as we all have to get by with less money a bike is a great way of getting about, as all readers of this newsletter will no doubt realise.

Adrian Lawson, Chairman

Bikes 'n' Bits

For Sale: Scott USA Comp Racing Mountain Bike (2001), 27 Speed, 17" Frame Biaxial Ultralite STAGE 1 aluminium 7500 Alloy Double Butted (Disc ready), XT Front Derailleur, XT Rear Derailleur, Shimano LX V-Brakes, Shimano LX Crankset, ZAC 19 rims LX Hubs, RockShox Judy SL forks, mountain bike - functions fine but old, £180. Contact: Leon 0770 379 7725



Bike Spares and Parts: New Blackburn Expedition 1 Rear Rack-£10; One size fits all 'solid construction, airforce aluminium build' For use touring and off road cycling 'New Monaco Slick Mountainbike Tyres' 26 x 1.75 £15 pair; Tortec Ultralite Rear Rack £10: Crud Catcher & RaceGuard Mountain Bike Mud-guards Black £10; Kona Mountain Bike Seatpost, 27.2

diameter x 300mm long £10; Adjustable Alloy Bicycle Seatpost 30.4 x 400mm Black £10; WTB Saddle £10; Trek-Saddle £10; Selle Royal Moody Ladies' Saddle £10; Marin Handlebars Alloy 25.4 mm clamp diameter £5; Deore 9 Speed Rear Mech £5; Deore Front Mech £5; Offroad pedals £5; Contact Leon Spence 0770 379 7725; Leon.spence@gmail.com

For Sale/Hire: 2 hard cycle cases (supplied by Edinburgh cycles) takes full size bike. Went to Australia and back! £75 each or £100 the pair. Otherwise willing to hire out at £50 first week and subsequent weeks at £30 Contact Angela on 0118 9426802 (Calcot)

Tyres Wanted: Cheap pair of 650 x 20 or 23 (571) racing tyres in good condition. Not easy to find or afford these days! Email: dry@tesco.net

For Sale: Off-Road Mountain Bike Tyres absolutely and completely good condition, but not brand new: 1 x Continental Vertical (26 x 2.3), 2 x 'Schwalbe' Mountaineer II Puncture Protection Tyre (26 x 1.9), £7 each. Contact: Leon 07703 797725

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Please let the relevant campaign officer know of anything you've reported.

Reading Borough Council

General cycling queries: 0118 939 0900 x 4881; parking: parkingservices@reading.gov.uk; traffic lights: 0118 939 0611; potholes 0800 626540

Wokingham Borough Council

0118 974 6302

West Berkshire Council

01635 519080 or www.westberks.org.uk

Windsor and Maidenhead

www.rbwm.gov.uk

South Oxfordshire

01235 531331 or southernarea@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Campaign Diary

Help Out at the Farmers' Market

If you'd like to volunteer for the RCC stand please contact our Events Coordinator Jeanette Jeans (see above). Our stand at the Farmers' Market at Great Knollys Street will be on the first Saturday of each month from 8.45-11.30am:

Saturday 4 December 2010 • Saturday 5 February 2011 Saturday 5 March 2011 • Saturday 2 April 2011

Want to get more involved and meet more cyclists?

If you can spare an hour or two why not help us out with our local campaigning? Contact the Events Coordinator and she'll let you know when there are opportunities to help out. It's great fun and we won't commit you to anything.

You can now find RCC on facebook: http://www.facebook.com/ReadingCycleCampaign and Twitter: http://twitter.com/ReadingCycle

The newsletter is now available electronically, so if you'd prefer to go paperless contact the newsletter editor at newsletter@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk