

## Bike Week Hits Prospect Park



*Two young recumbent cyclists try out their bikes for size*

### Contents

- 1 Bike Week Hits Prospect Park
- 2 Council News
- 3 Other Cycling News
- 5 Reading Cycle Census 2009
- 6 Chairman's Letter
- 8 Friday Night Ride to the Coast
- 9 CTC / Cyclenation Conference
- 11 Bikes 'n' Bits
- 12 Contact Us  
Campaign Diary

Bike Week took place between 13 - 21 June and activities in Reading again benefited from the co-ordination of its Cycling Development Officer, Helen Biggerstaff. Helen took the reins (or should that be handlebars) in bringing the town's pro-cycling groups, businesses and Council departments together.

The week's events commenced with a Freewheel from Palmer Park to Reading's first ever Bike Festival in Prospect Park. A phalanx of around 40 cyclists occupied a full traffic lane along London Road and Bath Road on Saturday morning, the arrival at the festival being captured by BBC South.

The (very busy) highlight of the Bike Festival was a huge selection of bikes provided by Cycle Experience, available to try out for free in the basketball courts.

During the week Leon Spence of Pepsico organised a day of bike events at Arlington Business Park in Theale and Mike Brazell of Prupim got a big turn-out of Green Park employees for a led ride along country lanes followed by a BBQ. Other events organised included beginners' rides led by the CTC, taster sessions for the 'sporties' by the Reading Cycle Club and Cycling for Health events led by Helen and the Sport Reading team.

# Council News



## Reading Borough Council (RBC)

### National Cycling Route No 4 - Dismount Please!

Despite RBC's laudable policies for promoting cycling, developments on the town's streets are still being designed to get cyclists off their bikes.

After the unexplained (we asked but got no response) disappearance of part of the cycle lane on Bridge Street the Council is now attacking National Cycle Route No. 4 where it crosses London Street to the east of the Oracle. The route through the Oracle and along the Kennet and Avon towpath is the main east-west artery through Reading for cyclists. This route crosses London Street by the junction of Yield Hall Place (adjacent to the end of Brannigan's nightclub). Despite this being a badly designed junction there is at

least a toucan crossing here to help cyclists to get to the canal towpath on the other side.

The junction here is prone to collisions between bikes crossing the road and buses travelling north and the Cycle Campaign initially welcomed plans to simplify the junction with a raised table type crossing. However, without further consultation this has now been replaced by a zebra crossing and the message from the Council is that 'Cyclists will therefore be expected to dismount in order to cross using the Zebra'.

### Lockable Cycle Stores Under Threat

The lockable cabinets for cycle storage at the base of the Oracle car park recently came under threat from a planning application to turn this space into yet another bar. The Reading Cycle Campaign objected to the application and thankfully the Council refused permission; the stated reason for refusal being due to the inappropriate appearance of the new bar.

### Test Ride Your Local Cycle Route

As reported in our last newsletter, RBC is in the process of developing a network of designated cycle routes across the borough. These are marked out on the new Cycling in Reading map.

So far we have test ridden routes to the west of Reading and submitted comments to the Council, but we need local volunteers to audit the other routes in order to suggest the improvements that are needed to make these into cycle-friendly routes.

Now is the chance to have our say. If you need further information contact us on [rbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto:rbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

### Stop Press!

RBC are planning major revisions to town centre roads as part of the redevelopment of Reading Station and Station Hill - see RBC's website [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk) for further information.

**Keith Elliott**  
*RBC Campaigner*



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# Council News



## Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

### The WoBC Cycling Strategy has still to appear

WoBC has been active in encouraging cycling by reducing

speed limits on many roads over the last decade.

Of course, more enforcement would be welcome. But with few active policemen, many limits are policed by the sleeping variety, which is not environmentally friendly as we witness in drivers' quick moves between accelerator and brake pedal. Pity they don't favour our style of pedal. (Wokingham at least knows how to build speed humps for cyclists, try coming down Culver Lane from Woodley into Palmer Park

Avenue, Reading; smooth in WoBC and abrupt in RBC.)

The 'advisory' speed cameras favoured in the borough are now often well hidden by the subsequent tree growth, so the speedsters need to be quite vigilant to receive any message, though even when that message is clear, I would question the effectiveness.

Roll on speed averaging monitors.

**Dougal Munro**  
*WoBC Campaigner*

## Other Cycling News

### Showering Mayoress Leaps Out at Bike Thief

Former mayoress Lesley Dedman leapt into action when she looked out of her bathroom window after having a shower and saw a man riding her bike out of the driveway.

Still soaking wet and wrapped only in a bath towel, furious Lesley ran downstairs to confront the thief.

But he was already pedalling away down the road.

So grandmother Lesley threw on a pair of jeans and a sweater, jumped into her Jaguar and gave chase.

She forced the man off her bike nearly a mile from her house after overtaking the culprit and swerving in front of him. He crashed into the side of Lesley's car and fell into the road. The man was so angry he gave her a mouthful of abuse until she told him he had stolen her bike and then he ran off, limping.

Lesley, ex-mayor of Ferndown near Bournemouth, Dorset, said: "I looked out of the window and saw a cyclist wearing a baseball cap going across my drive.

"I thought it was a bit odd as the paper boy had already been and then I saw it was my bike.

"I rushed down in a towel and by that time he was down the road so I dashed upstairs and threw on a pair of jeans and a jumper.

"I drove in the direction he had gone and soon caught up with him.

He appeared very perky and jaunty so I swerved in front of him on the pavement, cutting off his path.

"He crashed into the side of my car and went under it.

"He was furious and started punching my wing mirror. So I got out and just said 'That's my bike'."

<http://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/posts/view/115275/Mayoress-who-leapt-from-her-shower-to-run-down-bike-thief->

### Youngster Loses Right to Cycle to School

A Portsmouth youngster has lost his year-long campaign to be allowed to cycle to school. Sam O'Shea, 11, has been told that the road outside

St Paul's Catholic Primary School is not safe enough to use.

Authorities are sticking by their October 2008 decision - despite the fact that Sam and his family persuaded the city council to bring forward a planned redesign of the road layout. They also arranged for a professional risk assessment, which found that the street was safe for children to cycle on.

The headteacher has offered to meet UK cyclists' organisation CTC to discuss the situation - but not until the beginning of next term, when Sam will have moved on to secondary school.

"The school said I needed to do cycle training, which I've done," said Sam. "Then they said the road layout was dangerous, so we got the council to change it, but they still said it was unsafe. I just want to ride my bike to school. It's good for the planet, and it's good fun."

School authorities continue to insist that cycling is too dangerous, and say Sam cannot bring his bike onto the premises. They have not taken up an offer from the council to provide cycle parking.

# Other Cycling News

CTC campaigns co-ordinator Debra Rolfe said: "At every turn the school has tried to stop Sam from cycling. They have delayed meetings and avoided CTC's offers of help. It appears they are simply waiting for Sam to leave so they do not have to deal with his request."

"It is unbelievable that a school would actively discourage children from taking regular exercise when obesity is such a problem. Research shows schoolchildren who cycle are healthier and happier than those who don't - it makes sense for schools to promote cycling, not ban it."

BikeRadar contacted the school and obtained the following statement from Janet Lynch, chair of governors: "The governors of St Paul's Primary School recognise the positive benefits of

cycling but do not encourage pupils to bring cycles to school for several reasons including safety, storage and access. The present situation is not ideal but the safety of pupils must come first. The situation is and will be constantly monitored."

While UK schools cannot ban pupils from cycling they can ban them from bringing bikes onto their property, as in this case. Some 49 percent of secondary school pupils say they want to cycle to school but only two percent of secondary school pupils and one percent of primary school pupils actually do.

Debra Rolfe wants to hear from anyone who has encountered resistance to cycling to school.

<http://www.bikeradar.com/news/article/pupil-loses-fight-to-cycle-to-school-22380>

## Schools Share £55,000 for Secure Bike Parking

Leicestershire County Council invited more than 100 schools to make a case for the cash in a bid to encourage more children to cycle to school.

Schools in central Leicestershire and Loughborough were chosen due to high levels of congestion in those areas.

School children will help design the parking bays as well as monitor their success at boosting cycling.

The authority also offers training so children will be safer on the roads.

Lesley Pendleton, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation at the County Council, said: "We have chosen to concentrate on areas that have high levels of congestion."



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

Jean Crown, Kent



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# Other Cycling News

"By installing secure cycle parking we hope that many more school children will be encouraged to ride their bikes to school.

"School children will have a chance to get involved with the design of the cycle parking, and they will help us with monitoring the success of the cycle parking after the installation."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/leicestershire/8157541.stm>

## Just Like Riding a Bicycle...

The mystery of how the brain is able to remember coordination skills has been solved by an international team of scientists. They discovered a key nerve cell in the cerebellum section of the brain that controls skills such as

riding a bicycle, skiing, or even eating with chopsticks. One particular nerve cell acts as a gatekeeper by monitoring electrical signals that leave the cerebellum. It transforms them for storage in other parts of the brain. The 'gatekeeper' cell engraves newly-formed skills as memory, explained Dr Peer Wulff, of the Institute of Medical Sciences at the University of Aberdeen.

<http://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/posts/view/114638/Why-we-can-always-ride-a-bike>



## Updating Our Records

Please let us know if any of your details have changed, such as when you change or get a new e-mail address.

Our newsletters are delivered to the street address we were last told about. Use the form in past newsletters to advise us of any changes to your details, such as your name, address and email. Please send these details to the Membership Secretary at 26 Barrington Way, Reading RG1 6EG.

**Data Protection Act:** RCC keeps membership records on computer. This information is not disclosed to third parties

# Reading Cycle Census 2009

On the sunny morning of 16 June, 28 keen volunteers counted a total 4336 cyclists around Reading. The busiest junctions were Reading Bridge with 337 cyclists crossing the Thames from the north, and the junction of Watlington Street and Kings Road on the eastern side of town with 280 cyclists.

Figure 1 (see right) shows how 2009 compares with previous years. The chart shows the numbers from 20 selected junctions which have been counted since 2001.

As shown in Figure 1, the cyclist numbers have been relatively stable over the past 6 years with a steady increase in the proportion of people wearing helmets. Weather does have a small observable effect, with dips in numbers in the overcast/rainy years of 2002 and 2005.

Thank you very much to all who took time out of their day to stand on a busy street corner for 1.5 hours.

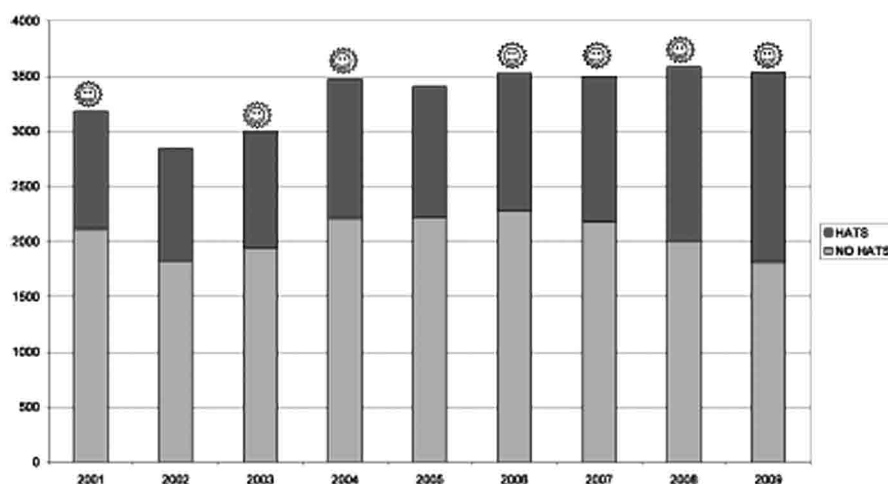


Figure 1: Total number of cyclists since 2001 counted from 20 junctions

This being my first year of organising the census, I am very appreciative of the quick responses from everyone concerned in the communication process and the returning of completed forms.

A special thanks for the help and encouragement from previous organiser Gemma, who is completing her PhD.

**Bruce Main**

# Chairman's Letter

Hello RCC members,

For me Bike Week was marred by one or two silly things. It all started so well: the mass bike ride wasn't exactly mass - 30-odd riders heading towards Prospect Park might seem notable in Reading, but in London it is just another day on a bike. But it got Bike Week off to a good start.

London really is remarkable. There are so many cyclists that to see 30 or more together on the road is quite normal. Added to which cycling isn't sport or transport, it is fashion too. In Reading 30 cyclists is a Bike Week event. Still, if it gets more people on bikes then I am right behind it. Next year it may be 10 times as many and the sight of 30 might be normal. It would be nice if it was going to be like that in the near future. But I doubt it will be so.

It needs a lot of things to happen first. Oil drying up might be one way. Oil crises have been known to get a lot of people out of cars in the past. Congestion charging might be another. A major problem with the bus network is another. The congestion charge and the 7 July bombs are jointly held accountable for a substantial switch to bikes in London. The creation of an amazing cycle network is another way of getting people on bikes. Not that

London has that just yet, but it does have a lot more cycle facilities than it did 10 years ago. Unlike Reading, which has seen precious few new facilities and indeed the loss of some.

We always hope that one day soon Reading Borough council will deliver some real change to the network, some really nice new facilities, that they might announce plans to spend even a reasonable proportion of their annual transport expenditure on high quality cycling facilities that will start to change the way we travel. Or that they might embark on some innovations now commonplace elsewhere. If they do we have at last succeeded, but I doubt we have, or that we will. Despite what they say (they being the councillors and the officers) nothing progressive ever seems to happen. In fact more often than not things get worse not better.

The case of the junction where the Kennet and Avon path crosses London Street to join up with Star Lane (see Council News on page 2) is a good example. Promised a modification to the junction that would give priority to pedestrians and cyclists we were so pleased we didn't object to the removal of the rather good toucan crossings\* or the north/south cycle lanes on London Street and Duke Street. Imagine our horror to find that

the proposals were subsequently diluted to include the replacement of the toucan crossings with a cyclist dismount sign.


This clearly shows that Council either do not have a clue when it comes to providing for a cyclist, or simply don't want to see cycling become a viable form of transport in Reading. Even though we were clamouring for a meeting with them at the design stage so we could find a way forward they simply failed to get back to us. They didn't even return emails or phone calls.

When work started on the junction in Bike Week itself (to remove the cycle parking at Yield Hall place) I gave up and resorted to the tried and tested means of protest, the media. The Evening Post ran a critical piece at the end of Bike Week. Now the councillors and the officers don't want to talk to us. I think we spoilt their bike week publicity. What they wanted was all the good news, all the quirky little bike rides and all the fancy little breakfasts.

What I think we want, from our feedback at the AGM and from talking to you on the Cycle Campaign stall, is practical solutions that will work all year round, not some slap on the back in the local press.



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# Chairman's Letter



What we want is high quality facilities and meaningful expenditure, not token sops to a network.

Recently a Cyclist Training scheme - Bikability - was launched in a few local schools. That is of course a good thing, but it took the Council 3 years since the national launch of Bikability before they got a scheme going in Reading. Better late than never, but we have a legacy of thousands of people who have either no training or the outdated Cycling Proficiency, which is not even delivered by people who can ride bikes! Why is the Council so reluctant about cycling?

As I write this I am in Barcelona, working for one of the cycling teams on the *Tour de France*, in itself an amazing experience. Outside my hotel I can pick up a hire bike and ride around the city. Everywhere I go there are countless people doing the same. There are also cars and buses and scooters and taxis. But cycling is part of the culture here. There are more hire bike locations in Barcelona than there are bike racks in Reading, and at each location there are several dozen bikes, in addition you see them being ridden everywhere. There must be thousands of them. There is a good network of cycle paths and the people treat cycling as normal, like they have done in London more recently, and thousands of people do it all the time.

The drivers of all the vehicles also treat cyclists as people not as aliens. In Reading just over a year ago I lost a friend to a carelessly driven van. The van ploughed into him and another friend at more than 60 mph; the driver's excuse was that he simply didn't see my friends. The driver wasn't even

taken to court. The culture in the UK is so skewed in favour of the driver that "Sorry mate I didn't see you" is a legitimate excuse to take a life and cause enormous trauma to many others. Reading Cycling Club, of which my friend was a member when he died, organised a protest ride on the anniversary of his death. This was extremely well attended by many local people, and indeed people from other towns who had lost friends and relatives, and looks set to happen time and time again, until cyclists get the justice they deserve.

It is no wonder drivers in the UK behave so recklessly. In Spain I witnessed several times police warning careless drivers or scooterists. If they cause an accident involving a cyclist or a pedestrian they are in big trouble automatically. So pedestrians and cyclists feel liberated from the threat of a careless driver ploughing into them, and bad driving is likely to get you a ticket from one of the numerous police patrolling the streets. Have an accident and you will end up in court and there is no excuse if you were not paying proper attention. In this country you have almost no chance of being prosecuted if you drive like a fool.

We have a long way to go in Reading, but nevertheless it still remains true that not cycling is actually far more dangerous. The exercise is so good for you that you live longer and are healthier. The fear of cars though leads us all to don reflective vests and crash helmets to protect us from the errant motorist. That in itself puts people off. I have given up both. I just get on my bike and go, like they do in Spain. I can't prove anything yet, but I do get the feeling the other people see me as a bloke on a bike, not a cyclist. There is a difference, and I think I get treated a bit better. Not much, but a bit. And that is some sort of progress.

**Adrian Lawson**  
Chairman

\* toucan crossings are those traffic lights that have a phase for pedestrians and cyclists.

## YES, I WANT TO JOIN RCC!

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (please delete)

Address

Postcode

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Email

- ☐ I would like details of how I can help with Campaign activities  
☐ I am a member of the Cyclists' Touring Club

Signed

Date

How did you hear about the Campaign?

- ☐ Individual membership (annual) £3  
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 (Two or more living at the same address)  
 No. of people under joint membership.....  
☐ Unwaged/unior membership (annual) £1  
☐ Life membership £35  
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I enclose a cheque for £..... covering my membership and a donation\* of £.....  
 \*An additional donation to help fund our activities would be very much appreciated

Please make cheques payable to **Reading Cycle Campaign** and send together with the completed form to:  
**Membership Secretary, Reading Cycle Campaign, 26 Barrington Way, Reading RG1 6EG**

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## Our Mission



- To campaign for better facilities for cyclists in Reading, in particular a network of safe cycleways linking residential, industrial and commercial areas, and giving access to the town centre.
- To work with Sustrans, the Cyclists' Touring Club (both locally and nationally) and others interested in promoting cycling and the well-being of cyclists.
- To identify the needs of cyclists in Reading, for example the location of safe and secure parking, and to campaign for their provision.
- To work with and advise local authorities and, where necessary, criticise and highlight their shortcomings.

# A Friday Night Ride to the Coast

"You're cycling overnight to Brighton! You must be crazy!"

That was the general reaction to my news that I'd registered for a Friday Night Ride to the Coast (FNRTtC) from London's Hyde Park Corner to Brighton, one of a series of cycle rides organised for the summer months by the CTC's Cheam and Morden membership group. Other rides in the series are to Whitstable, to Southend and to Bognor Regis, with alternative routes to some of the destinations.

I'd heard of the Brighton event only a few days beforehand and, having never done the well known British Heart Foundation (BHF) London to Brighton ride, decided I'd give it a go. Unlike the BHF event, FNRTtC rides are free to join and there's no sponsorship aspect - they're purely cycling events rather than charity fundraising with a cycling theme.

My ride to Brighton was on the night of Friday 3 - Saturday 4 July. The start is always at Hyde Park corner at midnight. Getting there from Reading is easy: up to Paddington by train, and then a simple cycle ride round Hyde Park to the start. The park was packed with pedestrians and I later found out a Blur reunion concert had just finished. Cyclists congregate at Hyde Park Corner from about 11:20, and there's a brief safety talk prior to

departing. Like me, a fair number in the group seemed to be first-timers.

Travelling through London's streets is both fast and easy. The organisers stop the traffic and you're away, a mass of around 60 cyclists launching on to the main road. The same happens at junctions, and London's motorists seem to be surprisingly genial about it all. The night time revellers also enter into the spirit of things, with shouts, waves and the occasional amusing but impertinent comment as we cruise by.

We were soon at Clapham Common, where we regrouped. This is the pattern of the ride: forward markers from among the organisers ride on ahead and stand at junctions to indicate turning points. They wait until 'tail-end Charlies' shepherding the slower riders have passed and then zoom through the pack to the front.

Every few miles gathering-up takes place, allowing the slower riders to catch up and any mechanical problems to be sorted out. This also allows the forward markers to dash off to position themselves for the next section. We had one quite long stop on the outskirts of London while someone had a repair after a rather major puncture had destroyed both tube and tyre.

In the early hours we found ourselves passing through stockbroker land. I wonder what the sleeping millionaires would have thought had they been aware of 60 cyclists passing through their neighbourhood at dead of night, with hardly a sound but the occasional bark of a dog.

By three in the morning we had reached Gatwick Airport. Some carried their bikes up steps, others took the lift to the airport concourse. Bikes were heaped around the Costa Coffee outlet - quite a surreal sight. What did the passengers arriving at the airport make of it all?

Then we were off again, some taking the opportunity to cycle on the concourse and travellers, down a ramp and out on to the road. Dawn was breaking, and in fields nearby bales of straw could be seen shrouded in the early morning mist. A fabulous sight, as indeed it was when the route dropped us into a hollow, and our lights marked out rings through the mist.

Several hours later we pulled into a side road and came to a stop. Ahead lay a great mound. Ditchling Beacon. I'd never seen it before, but had heard of it as the great challenge of the London to Brighton ride. Seeing it before me, I understood why. How anyone would be able to get up the

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# A Friday Night Ride to the Coast



slopes it presented, I could not imagine. Surely, we wouldn't be attempting that head-on? After some minutes of grim contemplation, the word was given: "OK, at your own pace" and people began to depart. Destiny awaited.

The first section led downwards, but then it began. Not incredibly steep, but steep enough. In no time I was in bottom gear and feeling every pedal stroke. It soon became clear that some sections, where there was a bend, were steeper than the norm. Somehow I kept pedalling, one thought telling me it was time to stop and get off, the next telling me to

just do a bit more - go to the next bend. And so it was I got to yet another 'next bend' to discover it was at the top. I had done it!

We spent a lot of time at the top, sitting on the grassy banks at the roadside, recovering from the ordeal, removing excess clothing no longer required in the bright sunshine in which we basked. One prophet of gloom and doom reminded us (for about the third time) that Ditchling Beacon isn't the last hill before Brighton. Maybe it's not, but what remained was of no consequence after that. It was now time for the final stretch, the ride of triumph into

Brighton for a well-deserved breakfast on the sea front, the glorious sunshine attesting to the lustre of the day.

I would like to thank fellow cyclists Titus and Juliet, also from the Reading area, for their companionship on this ride (and the journey home).

If you want to go on any of these rides, register with the organiser, Simon Legg (fnrttc@yahoo.co.uk) (it's free). I was sent a document about the rides. I can't find it on CTC Cheam and Morden's website, so here's my own link [www.taskforce9.plus.com/cycling/fnrttc\\_27feb09.pdf](http://www.taskforce9.plus.com/cycling/fnrttc_27feb09.pdf)

Stephen Muir

## CTC / Cyclenation Conference

The CTC conference was on 30 May and was ably hosted by the Greater Manchester Cycle Campaign. The conference was themed 'Cycling as the Solution' with a real emphasis on how we can improve cycling for everyone, not just keen cyclists, but also those who simply want an alternative route to work or something else to do at the weekend. There were two key things that I took away from the conference: Firstly, a big reminder that not everyone wants to be a cycling fanatic - they just want to use a bike, so it's important to remember that a strong campaigning front, if it's not carefully presented, can put people off as easily as it can attract them. Some groups have actually removed the

word 'campaign' from their organisation's title in a bid to encourage more 'normal people who use bikes' rather than hardcore campaigners. If someone walks up to a campaign stand then the chances are no matter how well you talk to them you'll be preaching to the converted. Secondly, though in a similar vein, many people can't find the bikes and equipment that they can see themselves using. They see people on £1,000 full-sus mountain bikes or lycra clad road racers whizzing by and they assume that cycling is only for people who are really into it - they assume that cycling is a lifestyle in itself and can't just be slotted into a 'normal' person's life. There were numerous stories of people shopping for a first

time bike for a little light occasional cycling and being offered nothing but expensive specialist bikes. One campaigner even mentioned hearing of a lady who went to a bike shop and asked simply for a ladies' bike to occasionally ride to work. She was offered a full suspension mountain bike for over £1,000 on the grounds that it had some pink on it. At Reading Cycle Festival one woman asked me "why can't you buy just a normal bike?" And it's true that in today's bike shop the choice in 'normal' bikes is much smaller than that of specialist road or mountain bikes. When the kind of bike these people want is available is marketed as 'retro' or 'bespoke' and often rather overpriced. This may also be

# CTC / Cyclenation Conference

where the shower myth (the idea that you can't go to work on a bike because you'd have to have a shower when you got there) comes from - cycling is seen as something for the dedicated enthusiasts you see sweating through their lycra, not for normal people nipping to the shops.

The keynote address from Koy Thomson (Chair of London Cycle Campaign) was truly inspirational - although he did break the golden rule by being openly 'anti-car', if only for one speech. He spoke about the dominance of cars in the 'public realm' and the way cycling has in a sense had to start making excuses for itself (Bromptons, helmets and day glow vests are all things designed to fit the cyclist into the system rather than the system round the cyclist) and how this has created low expectations - particularly in terms of justice after accidents. He spoke of a cycling city as a re-claimed and even more civilised city. In reality Koy's speech was aspirational rather than practical but it set a great tone for the day and got us all thoroughly woken up.

Joe Mellor of the NHS Cycling organisation Spokes gave us some very interesting pointers about health and cycling. I particularly noted the following: The percentage of obese people in the UK went from 7% to 20%

between 1970 and 2000, yet average calorie consumption actually went down 20%. I was also interested to learn that the World Health Organisation now ranks physical inactivity as the second biggest avoidable factor affecting health, after smoking.

There was a presentation from SQL Consulting, who have done some research on behalf of Cycling England on cycling and wealth. This involves cost benefit analysis and other forms of complex number crunching that cannot be completely accurate as they put a cash value on things like health and noise levels. However, they have calculated that over a 30 year period one cyclist justifies £10,000 of investment, and it only takes 109 cyclists to justify £1,000,000!

Richard George of the Campaign for Better Transport told us - as he put it - 'what we already know' about CO<sub>2</sub> and climate change, for instance that 20% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from car journeys of less than 5 miles which could easily be made by bike. He also made a very good point about working with local Councils and similar organisations: that they like big projects with huge budgets and lots of construction because the people involved want something to put their name to - politically it looks more impressive if you've spent millions on redevelopment

rather than spending a few grand on things like good signage or careful and considerate planning. It never occurred to me before that a lot of Councils would prefer to throw money at the problem than actually bother to understand the issue and be supportive but it I think it's a very important point.

The afternoon consisted of smaller workshops. My first was a session on campaign planning with Steve Connor of Manchester based advertising agency Creative Concern. Steve worked extensively with Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign on the 'love your bike' campaign which consisted mostly of bill boards, bus adverts and a website (do Google it and have a look at some of the adverts). The emphasis of the campaign wasn't on cycling as something for enthusiasts or militant campaigners, but grew from the fact that many people in Manchester had bikes that they simply weren't using. The idea was to normalise the idea of cycling, breaking down the idea that it was something specialised, expensive and exclusive and making cycling a normal thing that anyone could do. The clever adverts and trendy graphics also made cycling more fashionable. This keys in nicely with the work of Manchester's CTC Cycle Champions who told us about their work with

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# CTC / Cyclenation Conference

schools, women's groups and youth clubs to get more people cycling. They found offering a range of different bikes for people to have a go on particularly effective (including tricycles, recumbent and quadra-cycles) as this gave people the opportunity to build up their confidence. Work with the local school group involved not just training the children in the cycle skills to cope with the busier parts of their route to school but also helping them set up their own group to campaign for safer roads in the area. The final session I attended was from the Cambridge based [cyclostreets.net](http://cyclostreets.net). This website uses an open source street map and places cycle routes over the top. It considers how large and busy roads are and can offer routes that are easy, middling or hard, or routes avoiding certain types of road or traffic. There is also the

facility for users to add their own points, thoughts or pictures to any given point on the route. For example, if I've used the website to plan my route to work and I find something on the route like a nasty pot hole, blind junction, or even something nice like a really cycle friendly pub I can go back to the website and add a note to the route explaining what I've found. These notes can include pictures and the creators of the site are hoping to link to the CTC's 'fill that hole' site so that reports of road problems can be logged on both sites at the same time. Once your notes are added to the route anyone else planning a journey that passes that point will be able to see the notes logged for that particular piece of road, so that when you plan a journey you should not only get a route but a lot of local detail from people who actually use the route. The website is technically still in development but is up and running for the Reading area. At the moment it will only do journeys up to 40 miles but this restriction should be removed soon. The project was designed mostly with bigger towns and cities in mind and I think it will be really useful when visiting unfamiliar places: in the past I wouldn't bother to take a bike as I wouldn't know any of the useful routes, now I can plan the routes before I leave home and feel that I have some idea how to cycle round the place I'm visiting. Although still in its early stages there was a lot of excitement about this project. It has the potential to be very very helpful.

If you want to see it at its full potential take look at Cambridge on [Cyclostreets.net](http://Cyclostreets.net) where the project has been going a few years and see just how much it can do.

The Cyclenation AGM was incorporated into the conference (during the lunch break, slightly annoyingly!) and consisted mainly of formalities. There was some concern over adjustments to the fees that Cyclenation charges to local campaign groups. These have had to rise slightly as Cyclenation has lost money over the last few years but a good sliding scale was reached. A group the size of RCC will be paying £150 a year. It was slightly disappointing to find out that some smaller groups might have to give up their Cyclenation membership over a fee as small as £30 though.

The event closed with CTC explaining some of their 'coming attractions': the next conference is in Nottingham on 14 November which should roughly coincide with the launch of the CTC's new resource pack and a new cycle mapping guide. They are also hoping to launch several online tools later this year including one for reporting SMIDSY (sorry mate, I didn't see you) incidents as part of a wider 'Stop Smidsy' campaign launching later this year.

If you would like more information about the conference a more detailed version of this report should be on the website soon.

Toby Gibbons

## CTC Affiliated Membership

As a member of RCC, did you know you can apply for CTC affiliated membership? Listed below are the benefits:

- 3rd party insurance cover of £5,000,000 anywhere in the world except USA and Canada
- a CTC membership card and the CTC Member benefits giving access to a wide range of discounts and benefits, details available from the website.
- the weekly CTC email newsletter 'Newsnet'

*Please note that these benefits apply only as long as you remain a fully paid-up member of RCC.*

The cost of the CTC affiliated membership is £13 for a full year.

**For more details contact the Membership Secretary on 0118 939 4044**

## Bikes 'n' Bits

**For Sale/Hire:** 2 hard cycle cases (supplied by Edinburgh cycles) which takes a 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)

**For Sale:** Brompton folding pedal cycle L3 model. 3 speed, colour red, ideal for commuting. £110 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](mailto:dry@tesco.net)

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## Campaign Diary

### Help Out at the Farmers' Market

Our monthly stall at the Farmers' Market is a valuable chance to discuss cycling issues with members and non-members. If you'd like to volunteer to man the stall please contact our Events Coordinator Anne White (see above).

RCC hosts a stand at the Farmers' Market at Great Knollys Street on the first Saturday of each month from 8.45-11.30am; dates are listed below:

**Saturday 5 September • Saturday 3 October**  
**Saturday 7 November • Saturday 5 December**

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## Council Contacts

*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

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