

John 171 Upperton 20

On the 29th July 1998, 100m stretch replacement Great Central Way cycle route, was officially opened, despite part of it still cordoned off by builders. This is a far more pleasant route extending from Bede Island North to Westbridge Place. It replaces the old route over Bow Bridge, (now condemned), and avoids the tedious cycle ramp at Duns Lane.

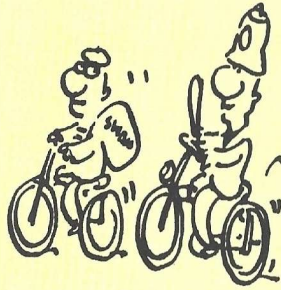
Throughout the day the average speed in central London is now only 10 miles an hour, a reduction of nearly nine per cent since 1994. In outer London speeds have also fallen and now average 17 miles an hour in the morning rush.

Traffic Speeds in Central and Outer London: 1996/7 (ISBN 1-85112-828-X). Published by DETR/GSS. It is FREE of charge. Copies are available from: DETR, Zone 1/31, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW 1P

On their bikes to combat crime

A POLICE force has turned to pedal power after it emerged officers could get to crime scenes quicker by bicycle than with high speed patrol cars. Strathclyde Police is to become the first force in Britain to rely on the strategic use of squads of officers on mountain bikes rather than motorised rapid response units in some areas. More than 100 policemen are to be drafted into the squads which will be used to patrol urban areas often clogged with traffic. Chief Constable John Orr said the force was attracted to the idea after a study showed using bicycles improved response times. Their research found delays in reaching crime scenes within time limits set by the Home Office were frequently caused by traffic jams in city and town centres.

Leicester Mercury 27/7/98



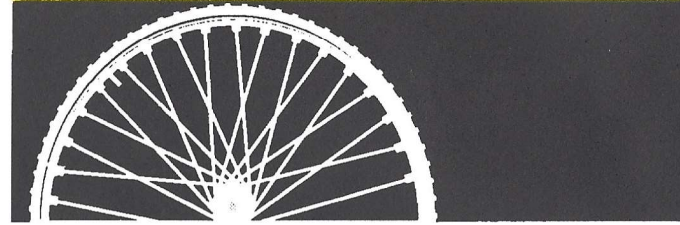
Time to Slow Down

Continued from front page

first traffic calmed area "Feet First" initiative, where child casualties have fallen by a staggering 87%! In Switzerland a national referendum looks likely in support of proposals to make 30 km/h (~20mph) the maximum in towns, except for the principal traffic arteries which would be limited to 50 km/h (~30mph). Leicester Spokes have contributed £100 to the Slower Speeds Initiative. When Spokes receives enough "Why reduce traffic speeds?" fact sheets, we will include them in newsletters for all Spokes members, local councillors, MPs, and influential Council officers.

Abbreviations used throughout newsletter:
DETR - Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions
CTC - Cycle Touring Club

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Issue No 52

Autumn 1998

Time to Slow Down

There is growing pressure for lower speeds on Britain's roads, and the Government is making favourable noises in this direction. Excessive speed is not just a safety issue (though cyclists will greatly benefit from calmer driving)- it is a quality of life problem. Hence the Slower Speeds Initiative, an alliance of 9 founding organisations, has been formed, including the CTC, Transport 2000, Sustrans and Childrens Play Council. The initiative is seeking widespread support. The Children's Play Council has already launched the 'Home Zones' initiative, a campaign for really slow speeds in order to return to children the play-space (i.e. roads) in residential areas that was a principal asset until as little as 30 years ago. According to children's organisations, nothing could do more to improve the health and safety of children than a reduction in vehicle speeds. 'Home Zones' is also the subject of a Private Members' Bill going through this Parliamentary session.

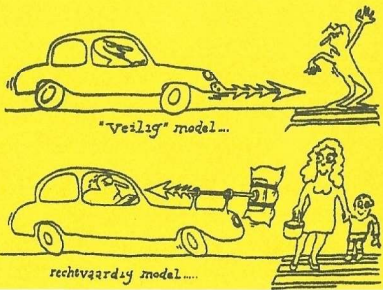
Roads Minister Gavin Strang has indicated that he would like to see more 20 mph zones, perhaps becoming the norm for residential areas. He notes that "in the 300 places across the country where 20 mph zones have been introduced along with traffic calming measures, pedestrian casualties have been reduced by 61% and child pedestrian and child cyclist casualties by 67%". The Government intends to make it easier for local authorities to introduce 20 mph zones, removing the need for approval by the Secretary of State. The Highfields district in Leicester has already taken advantage of this, with 20 mph signs up all around the perimeter of Leicester's

"The UK's record on child casualties on the roads is not as good as in other areas of road safety. That is why improving the safety of our children's journeys to school was one of the key promises this Government made when it was elected. It is a promise we will keep. Our policies on road safety must aim to encourage more parents to allow their children to walk or cycle to school."

Transport Minister,
Dr Gavin Strang,
21/5/98



Continued on back page



Leicester Spokes Aims are to encourage the safe use of the bicycle as an economical, healthy and efficient mode of personal transport, and to campaign for the introduction of favourable traffic planning measures and cycle routes within the city of Leicester and surrounding area. Leicester Spokes is independent of any political party.

Dutch law to protect cyclists

The Dutch Government is to introduce a new law that should lead to more care towards cyclists on all urban roads. In the event of cycle/car collision the car driver will be assumed to be at fault unless he/she can prove (in court) that the cyclist was behaving recklessly or had disobeyed some traffic law. The intention is to increase the amount of attention that drivers give towards cyclists at all times. A similar law has been in effect in France for several years, giving priority to cyclists and pedestrians, but the long-term effect is unreported.

CCN News Jan 98



Thanks to Cathy Balme, London Cycling Campaign

Newsletter Contributions

Articles for consideration for the Leicester Spokes Newsletter are welcome, including non-commercial leaflets for free distribution to members only. Next newsletter deadline is September 30th 1998.

The First Cycle Ride Of The Summer

Four riders turned up on a wet drizzly evening for the first of Spokes' summer rides out to Watermead Park. What should have been a balmy summer evening, with a refreshing outdoor pub stop was in fact a cool misty ride with a 'warm up in the pub' stop! However, a pleasant evening was had by all riders. Watermead Park has some good traffic free paths (although watch out for pedestrians!) and plenty of bird life around the lakes (so don't forget your binoculars). For the intrepid explorer there are even some off-path routes! So although the weather meant a poor turnout, for those that came the experience of being out in the fresh air in lovely surroundings, with good company and a pleasant drink was very worthwhile.

Caroline Hime

Secure Bike Parking "as a matter of course"

In the Transport White paper, the Government has decided not to tax parking spaces at supermarkets and other retail and leisure developments, because it has decided that their contribution to congestion was "not as concentrated in peak hours". Instead, large retailers will be required to consult with local councils on improving public transport access to stores, expanding home delivery services and providing secure bicycle parking "as a matter of course".

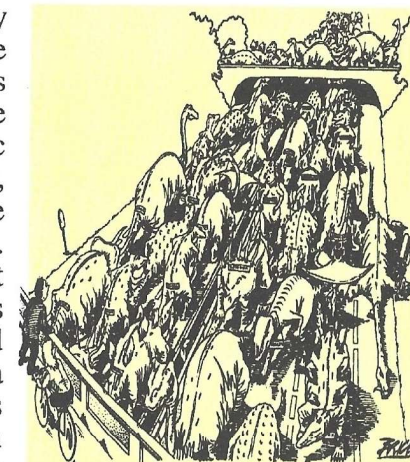


True or False? No 2

Building Roads reduces Traffic Congestion FALSE, even though government transport policy during the 70's and 80's was based on this assumption. In fact the opposite is true. A study by SACTRA in 1994 showed that building roads encouraged new journeys to be made, hence increasing traffic.

New Law to Cut Traffic Reaches Statue Book

A Private Members Bill aimed at cutting road traffic has become law after passing through the House of Lords on 1st July 1998. The Road Traffic Reduction (UK Targets) Act was drafted by Friends of the Earth, Plaid Cymru and the Green Party, and introduced by Cynog Dafis MP (Plaid Cymru). The new law seeks to reduce the adverse environmental, social and economic impacts of road traffic. This will be achieved by setting targets for road traffic reduction, or- if the Secretary of State believes that other measures would be more effective- by showing how these will cut traffic levels. The Act therefore puts traffic reduction at the heart of transport planning, requiring all Government transport policies to be designed within a traffic reduction framework. Roger Higman, Senior Transport Campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said "Friends of the Earth is delighted that Parliament has passed the Road Traffic Reduction (UK Targets) Act. This is a crucial piece of transport legislation as it commits the Government to reducing traffic rather than trying to accommodate it, bringing enormous benefits for society, the environment and the economy. We are extremely grateful to everyone who backed the Bill and in particular Cynog Dafis MP and Lord Elis-Thomas for guiding it through Parliament". Mike Woodin, Principal Speaker for the Green Party said "This new law is a crucial step forward in the battle to improve the environment we live in. The Government must now act swiftly to introduce measures for a sustainable transport system".



Cartoon reproduced by kind permission of the artist

Will the Road Traffic Reduction (UK Targets) Act avoid this Nightmare scenario?

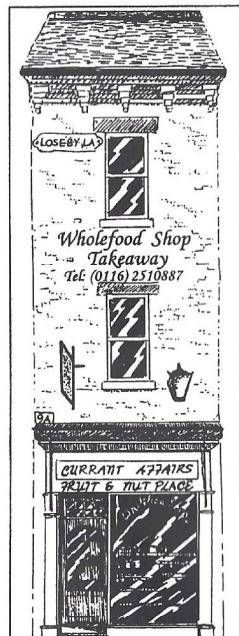
Cycling by Train Action

Spokes wrote to the two train operators that run from Leicester- Central Trains and Midland Mainline to find out what they were doing to comply with the Train Operators Code of Practice (put together and approved by a number of environmental and transport groups). Central Trains wrote back as follows: "Our present position is that we will accommodate bicycles on our services to the best or our ability to provide a sustainable and reliable system for daily usage appropriate to the nature of our service." They do, however, produce a useful leaflet, "Cycling by train", available from railway stations. Central Trains are currently reviewing their policy of cycle carriage. Here is an opportunity for cyclists to have their say! Complete the short cycling questionnaire on the leaflet and opt to take part in the decision making for their new policy.

The Road Lobby and You

Did you know that by being a member of the AA, the RAC or Green Flag you are supporting the road lobby? The AA and RAC were founder members of the British Road Federation and hold vice presidential positions on the BRF Board. National Car Parks Ltd (the major shareholder of Green Flag) is, according to latest available information, also a full member of the BRF. The British Road Federation is a powerful organisation which exists purely to represent the views of its members by vigorously lobbying government to build new roads. The membership of BRF consists of people who benefit from the whole road building programme from start to finish - including aggregate companies, construction companies, motor manufacturers, tyre companies, haulage and courier companies. Some of these members have now benefited from alternatives to road transportation, for example in the building of the Channel Tunnel, and there is arguably a move towards considering alternatives to road transportation. But this is slow and the over call for more roads and larger roads by the members of the BRF is still very clear.

So what's the alternative? The Environmental Transport Association (ETA) actively campaign for sustainable transport, and not roads. They would like to see the development of sustainable alternatives to the motor vehicle, and believe that not all road users want more roads. There is a £20 membership fee and you have the option to purchase a variety of breakdown and insurance services. They also provide a cycle breakdown service. Members also receive a quarterly magazine with a variety of articles about sustainable transport. The ETA can be contacted on 0193 282 8882.



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Cycling "The Golden Mile"

A presentation was given by the City Council to the Cyclists' Consultative Panel on the proposed major facelift along the Belgrave Corridor of Leicester. The road network, from the Belgrave Flyover, along Belgrave Road, Melton Road to Humberstone Lane, will be modified to basically discourage the private motor vehicle, reduce accidents, improve accessibility and priority for public transport, and provide better conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. Cyclists are expected to benefit from traffic calmed side streets to the west of Belgrave Road, more 24hr bus lanes, and dedicated cycle lanes. Belgrave Road is considered to be the finest Asian shopping area in the country, and is otherwise known as "The Golden Mile". It will be reduced to one lane of traffic. Unfortunately preliminary plans show that cycle lanes will not be provided along this road, as it is always very busy with shoppers, so widened pavements will be given priority. A Traffic "throttle" will be installed at each end, of the road. The cost of the project is around £2.5 million, start of works Spring 1999, with completion dependent on future government funding. Public consultation ends 28th Aug. 1998. For more information contact Andy Smart, City Council on 2526537.

Cyclist "brings home the bacon"

Leicester Spokes and Transport 2000 had teamed up to organise a "Shopper Challenge", on 16th June 1998 National Car Free Day. A bus user, motorist, and cyclist (with trailer) were each tasked collect a set amount of shopping from a supermarket to a home destination. The aim of this event was to dispel the common belief that a car is absolutely necessary to do the bulk family shopping. Even though the results show that the motorist was marginally quicker, both the cyclist and motorist each brought home £100 worth of goods. This being the average 2 adult with children household weekly supermarket shopping expenditure*. The bus passenger only managed a £25 shopping bill. Supermarket Safeways on Freeman's Park was chosen because the development of this kind, has the best integrated cycling network, as well as the usual few 1000 car parking spaces. The Supermarket manager had kindly agreed to allow goods to be collected together, and stored overnight for the start of the event. All items had been previously counted, weighed and packed into bags or boxes of each contestants choice. The starting point was the exit of the shop, and the shoppers were timed to pack their goods into the vehicle, if applicable, and transport to the same home destination. This was not a race to see how quickly someone could actually do their shopping. Safeways were pleased to donate the bus passengers shopping to charity- Loros. Greg. (the cyclist) said "I manage to use occasionally public transport, but rely mainly on a bicycle for both commuting and bulk family shopping. Rather than own and look after a car, which costs the average household £41.20* per week, it is actually cheaper for me to hire a car when absolutely necessary."

Detailed Results

Bus user: 3 shopping bags, 25 items, total weight 12.2Kg, value £25.05, Final time 35 minutes, including 19 minutes wait at bus stop and 5 minutes walk from bus stop.

Car Driver: 8 shopping bags, 51 items, total weight 42Kg, value £100.51, Final time 13.5 minutes, including 2.5 minutes packing into the boot.

Cyclist: 3 boxes, 51 items, total weight 42Kg, value £100.51. Final time 15 minutes, including 2.5 minutes packing into the trailer.

Journey distance 2.5 miles. Start of event 17:45.

Thanks also to Terry (Bus passenger) and Arthur (Car driver).

*Family Spending. A report on the 1996-97 Family Expenditure Survey. Government Statistical Service publication.

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Spokes Map Book Ref: Page 17,5 / H.

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**3rd party insurance is available to members only and costs £2.00 per person. It only covers you against claims from other people, not bike theft.

*Leicester Cycling Map is published by Leicester City Council, produced by CycleCity Guides.

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Postcode
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Membership	£	I can help with ...
Cycle touring tips	£ 3.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter mailouts
Leicester Cycling Map*	£ 2.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal work
3rd Party Insurance**	£ 2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying
Printer Fund donation	£	<input type="checkbox"/> Artwork
TOTAL	£	<input type="checkbox"/> Cycle counts
		<input type="checkbox"/> Photography
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Data Protection Act: Your membership details are held on computer.

Leicester Cycle Guinea Pigs

Leicester has been awarded funding of £24,000 from the DETR, Road Safety Division, to implement and assess the effectiveness of 3 low cost junction improvement schemes, specifically for pedestrians and pedal cyclists, otherwise known as Junction Improvements For Vulnerable Road Users (JIFVRU).

Sight Screens will be placed on the Troon Way, Barkby Road, Thurmaston Lane and Humberstone Lane roundabout in a location that makes circulating cyclists more visible to vehicle drivers entering the roundabout. **Danger Area Illumination** to be placed at the roundabout between Mayfield Road and Victoria Park Road. This involves street lights brighter than normal illuminating the area to the right of the driver's eye on entry to the roundabout. Both the Sight Screens and the Danger Area Illumination are designed to highlight two wheelers circulating the roundabout. **Reduced Exit Width Markings** at the signal junctions between:- Spencefield Lane and Downing Drive, Ethel Road and Goodwood Road, Ethel Road and Wakerley Road, Ethel Road and Evington Valley Road. These involve an area of white lining on the exits from the junctions making the road appear to be narrower, hence more likely that motorists will slow down, and providing a "safety zone" for pedestrians and pedal cyclists. It may also reduce vehicle/pedestrian conflicts especially pedestrians clearing the crossing areas. All these schemes will be closely monitored to assess the usefulness of these low cost approaches to danger reduction. They will also be assessed to determine techniques for measuring risk reduction and conflict reduction other than the traditional reliance on recorded injury accidents and percentile speed readings.

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Mixed response on Transport White Paper

The first Government Integrated Transport Policy White Paper in 20 years has received mixed reactions from the CTC and FoE. Whilst it has been strongly welcomed by the UK's largest cycling organisation, claiming it provides for the vast majority of measures that the CTC have campaigned for in recent months on behalf of all Britains cyclists, FoE has criticised the White Paper for failing to include specific road traffic reduction targets, as currently road traffic is projected to grow by 30% over the next 20 years, which will lead to an increase of 10% in CO2 emissions.

The CTC likes provisions for cyclists that include reallocation of road space, an updated policy on road speeds, new funding, and further endorsement of the National Cycling Strategy and its accompanying targets. The White Paper also provides strong support for preserving country lanes and for the Countryside Commission initiatives on quiet roads, making cycling and walking safer whilst increasing use. The CTC find the most interesting part of the White Paper, as far as cyclists are concerned, are the proposed mechanisms, rather than the intentions per se. Most importantly there are to be five-year local transport plans to include strategies and targets to promote cycling to be produced in consultation with local cyclists. These will be given as

a block grant with success reviewed annually.

FoE welcomed proposals for: new congestion and workplace parking charging rights for local councils, with income hypothecated for investment in local public transport; £700 million in new money set aside over the next three years for 150 local transport strategies; a National Minimum Concessionary Fare Scheme, guaranteeing a maximum half fare on public transport for all pensioners; a national public transport information system by year 2000; new powers to set exclusive quality contracts for bus routes; an independent Commission on Integrated Transport. However FoE accused "the termites of the No10 Policy Unit" of "eating away at the radical foundations" of Mr Prescott's original draft. It was particularly disappointed over reports that a draft White Paper chapter entitled "Reclaiming the Streets", which included proposals on taking back "road space" from cars and redistributing it to cyclists, buses and pedestrians, was eviscerated after interventions from the No10 Policy Unit, which described it as "anti-car".

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