

All it takes is a little prick...

For the past month or so I've had a pair of tyre liners from Kairfree fitted to my heavily abused hack bike. They claim to eliminate up to 95% of punctures and to test them I've ridden over every piece of glass I've seen without experiencing a single flat tyre.

There is a slight increase in rolling resistance but it's hardly noticeable. If you use a bike for commuting and want to be sure of arriving without oily hands, they're definitely worth a look. Kairfree also produce puncture proof inner tubes which are basically a loop of hard foam rubber and we'll be testing these throughout the summer.

Roger Lovell

Sssssssshhh! Quiet Please!

The Countryside Agency has an initiative called Quiet Lanes which is being piloted in Norfolk and Kent. The aim is to give priority to walking, cycling and horse riding on rural lanes and to reduce the speed of motor traffic.

Local Authorities will be able to designate lanes as Quiet Lanes which will have legal status (in a similar way to A and B roads) which will allow for measures to meet the aims above. In some schemes, for instance, the central white lines have been removed and hedges allowed to grow.

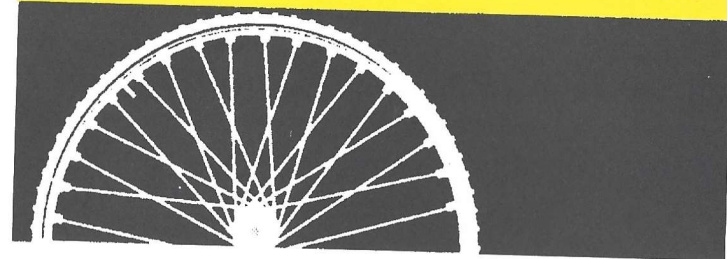
The result has been a marked decrease in speeds and collisions, an improvement to the quality of the local environment, and a reduction in costs both for maintenance and for clearing up after crashes (one of the major hidden costs of motor vehicle usage). The projects also seem to have local support.

Lets hope we can have similar measures for roads such as Gartree Road which has gone from being a quiet lane to a commuters race track in a few years.

Simon Thomas

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ARCHIVE LEICESTER SPOKES



Summer
2001

Summer of Cycling Hits Leicester

We've got all sorts of cycling fun in Leicester this summer. A new series of Spokes Easy Fun Rides kicks off in June with rides for all abilities - see the ride guide enclosed or at bike shops and libraries. There's a Picnic in the Park, a Special Needs Cycle Day, and of course the Spokesfest Human Powered Vehicle Festival, while the evening rides go from strength to strength. There's never been a better time to dust off that bike in the shed, get out in the summer sun, and get yourself a great pair of legs!

Simon Thomas

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www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

KettWiesel Recumbent Trike

I haven't had so much fun since I discovered rhubarb crumble and custard for the first time. The KettWiesel is a lightweight low-slung trike - one at the front and two at the back - with single wheel drive and a very tight turning circle. Independent rear brakes, a mesh seat and under seat steering complete the package.

Fitting - The front tube that holds the forks can be moved in and out of the main tube to adjust the length for different height riders, although this does alter the chain tension at extremes. At 6' 2" I'm very comfortable on it and it's also been ridden by quite young kids, so it's a very adjustable machine.

Comfort - The underseat steering is very relaxing for the arms. In particular, the trike tracks dead straight especially at high speed, so you don't have to do much with the steering except rest your arms. The seat gives good back support, although I felt a numb bum after about 20 miles. Although the tyres are very skinny there is no discomfort from them due to the relaxed seating and steering arrangement. A bit of additional padding would probably help. I guess I'll have to eat more rhubarb crumble and custard!

Climbing - This is a very light bike (16kg) so it goes up hills quite easily. The high pressure narrow tyres have low rolling resistance which helps. If you're not used to riding recumbents you might get a little aching on top of your thighs near the knees, but this will disappear with regular riding - I've done over 40 miles without any problems and without the tired shoulders that I usually get on an upright bike. On very steep hills when starting off there is a tendency for the front to skip to one side slightly due to the single (offset) wheel drive, but this is not really a problem once moving.

Manoeuvrability - This is a very manoeuvrable machine with a very tight turning circle. Use the brakes independently and you can do a nice sliding turn which is great fun (until you get the bill for the new tyres!). You have to lean into the turn but this seems quite natural after a short while. It's easy to walk the machine around by carrying the front end (which is very light) in one hand..



Speed - It just gets faster the more effort you put in. There doesn't seem to be the same wall of air resistance that you feel on an upright bike, so the acceleration goes on for longer. This is aided by the skinny tyres. The impression of speed may also be higher as you are closer to the ground which also means you can hear the tyre noise more at high speed. Rolling tests down a long straight hill had the KettWiesel way ahead of the linear recumbent and a long way ahead of an upright.

Luggage - We haven't got a rack fitted so luggage carrying is restricted, but there is a lot of space behind the seat and between the wheels, so a substantial volume could be carried, and a front rack would be no problem. There is also a trailer attachment fitted.

Lighting - We have a dynamo system fitted which includes a 'standlight' rear light. This is an LED system which remains on even when the trike is stationary, using a capacitor (I think) to hold charge gained while moving. The light is very bright and remains on for several minutes at a good level which is good for junctions.

Gearing - We've got 7 gears on this machine and we've not really felt the need for more except when going up the hill at Belvoir Castle which is very steep. It would be possible to fit a wider range or perhaps even a triple front chainset with a bit of ingenuity.

Adaptability - This trike can be adapted for disabled people to use their hands instead of pedals and it can trail another trike as an articulated tandem.

Fun Factor - I think this is the most fun I've had on a recumbent, and I've ridden quite a few now. It has the ability to be used as a very relaxing touring machine allowing you to stop anywhere and remain seated to eat your goose and gentleman's relish sandwiches, or you can use it as super sports machine to burn rubber and scare yourself silly as long as your bank manager will fund your addiction for new tyres!

Simon Thomas - May 2001.

The KettWiesel is made by the German company Hase Spezialrader and is available in this country from Bikefix in London.

Events for 2001

Picnic in the Park Sunday 17th June - get your bike out of the shed and potter down to Abbey Park with your picnic and meet up with fellow cyclists. Try out some recumbent bikes from the Spokesfest collection. Spokes will also have a ride going to Abbey Park starting at 10.30am London Rd/Ratcliffe Rd junction or make your own way there..

Spokesfest Special Needs Cycling Day Abbey Park Thursday 21st June - There will be a large collection of specially designed machines for people with disabilities. Disability groups and health professionals are being invited to come along and see what is available and discuss their requirements at this event which marks the launch of the Spokesfest Special Needs Cycling project. *See story below right.*

Spokesfest Human Powered Vehicle Festival 2001 27th - 30th July. Pedal car racing on the Saturday, free public come-and-try event on the Sunday both in Humberstone Gate, rides, social events.

For more information call Simon on 0116 2299598, Roger on 0116 2781360 or visit the Spokesfest website on www.spokesfest.freemove.co.uk

Pedalparamedic

An experimental project is taking place in York to trial the use of paramedics on bikes. The paramedic will be able to quickly reach people in the pedestrianized heart of the city to tend people while waiting for the ambulance to arrive. The bike is modified to have flashing blue lights and carry all the extra equipment needed including a defibrillator for heart attack victims.

from The Guardian

Trams - Endangering Cyclists

90 cyclists have been injured and two killed on Sheffield's new tram network. Poor design resulting in having to cross the rails almost parallel and insufficient passing space near the kerb have been blamed. In Croydon 16 cyclists have been injured on the tram network. One day we might have trams in Leicester...

Simon Thomas

Belvoir Bikers in Castle Capers

About 25 cyclists laid siege to Belvoir Castle one weekend in May in an attempt to get the best view of any campsite in Leicestershire. Early arrivals picked the best spot at the foot of the castle walls giving an excellent panorama over the valley and morning sunshine. The castle's peacocks obviously knew what they were up against as they kept remarkably quiet, possibly having heard that hungry cyclists will eat anything...

On the Saturday a posse of bikes of various designs both upright and recumbent had a make-it-up-as-you-go-along ride with an excellent pub meal. The RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight did their stuff for us although I was a little disappointed that they arrived 1 ½ minutes earlier than arranged. We also noticed that the Castle is used by every aviator in the area as a turn point for navigation. We did our own night sortie following the Friday night's recce and had successful target acquisition at the pub down the hill, with all crews returning safely.

On Sunday more cyclists turned up and had a go on all the bikes when they could persuade the Duke and Duchess's kids to let us have a go too, please.

The locally produced beer proved very popular. Good food was readily available at the local pubs, and we were served bacon breakfasts on the terrace by the Castle staff, which was nice.

Next year we hope to explore some more of the Estate roads which weave in and out of the woodland and lakes, and maybe do a beer and cheesemaking ride.

Simon Thomas



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 †Leicester Cycling Map is published by Leicester City Council, produced by CycleCity Guides.
Data Protection Act: Your membership details will be held on computer

Beware of the Trolls!

Leicester city council has a company of trolls working in it's employ. That is the only explanation I have for recent happenings on the Great Central Way

I regularly use this route in to town and it's straight enough to make any Roman proud. However, after dark the path is altered to include hairpin bends and in some places the tarmac is completely removed and replaced with grass and dense vegetation. They even install jumping lamp posts!

As a precaution I now carry a can of troll repellent.

Roger Lovell

Have you got a story to tell?

Been on a nice bike tour somewhere? Or maybe you want to air your views about cycling in Leicester? We welcome articles for inclusion in the newsletter. There's no guarantee, of course, but if you want to see something new in the newsletter - *write it!*

The Duchess of Rutland takes the kids for a spin on the Brox Compact.

Spokesfest Special Needs Cycling Day

To officially launch the Spokesfest Special Needs Cycle Project, we'll be hosting a free "Come and Try" event in Leicester's Abbey Park on Thursday June 21st.

Funding for the event is coming jointly from Spokesfest, Leicester Spokes and Leicester City Council. Further support and publicity will be via Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Health, the Leicester Mercury and Environ.

We will be joined on the day by our friends from two other projects, Bikeability in Ipswich and In-Tandem in Loughborough, both of whom will be bringing additional machines and experienced helpers.

For more information please visit our web site
www.spokesfest.freemove.co.uk or contact us via the details below.

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Summer Rides Are Here!

Your summer ride guide is out now! Free and easy fun rides in the countryside. Join in, make new friends, and eat chocolate.

IKEA has given 5000 bikes to its employees around the world to help them cycle to work. Simon has asked B+Q if they will give him a bike to encourage him to cycle to their store even more often.