



Greater Manchester Boroughs compete to become Cycling Demonstration Towns

for your next slogan as you cycle past:

i'm one less car in your next traffic jam

cycle to work - and you'll never commute again

The Great Manchester Cycling Campaign meets on the second Monday of each month, 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, Followed by appropriate beverages at the City Arms, Kennedy Street (parallel to Princess Street opposite Town Hall/Tourist Information Centre.)

ibikemcr festival

still to come:

Saturday 19th April

Yo Fixie III

2pm outside The Sandbar:
An event for fixed gear riders. With comps inc: Track Stand, Track Skid, Sprint and more.

Sunday 20th April

Bicycle Polo Tournament
1pm Platt Fields Park

Friday 25th April

Critical Mass Bike ride
6pm Central Library followed by

End of I Bike MCR Festival Party

(everyone invited!!!):
8pm - 4am Aqua Bar, Albion Street, MCR + Roller Race

for more details see page 4

Transport officers across the land worked late into the night to meet the 31 March deadline for bids to become new Cycling Demonstration Towns. In 2005 six towns were selected as the initial CDTs: Aylesbury, Brighton, Lancaster, Darlington, Derby and Exeter. Now Cycling England is recruiting 10 more plus one city promising £5 - £10 per head of population in a further three year trial. With matched funding it will secure levels of investment comparable to the best European towns - approximately £10 million over three years in the case of Manchester.

Locally Manchester, Stockport, Oldham and Tameside are believed to have entered the race. A Greater Manchester based bid was considered by the GM LTP Cycling officers sub group but was too cumbersome to arrange.

Oldham is looking to involve two local social enterprises, Gremlins and Try-Cycles; Cycle Club Oldham; Oldham CTC; the Trans Pennine Cycling Club and Oldham PCT in their bid. The details of the Tameside bid are unknown although GMCC support was sought for the principle. The Manchester bid has three elements. Infrastructure: development of radial routes into the city, long term secure parking in the centre and a possible cycle centre. Information: publications, maps, community campaigns, cycle signing and travel planning. Inclusion: a new BMX track, health referrals and disabled cycling. Dick Venes is disappointed, "There is nothing really fresh in the bid, it is mostly more of what Manchester is already doing. There is no big step forward to enthuse those judging the applications. A glaring omission is the modification of existing Metrolink rolling stock to provide good quality cycle carriage." Doug Briggs is also unimpressed, "This is absolutely hopeless. The radial routes just consist of more back

street routes having blue signs pointing to them."

Former CTC Councillor Karen Sutton supports Stockport proposals to develop off road routes encouraging cyclists who don't want to use very busy roads. "One under consideration for signing is Stuart Johnson's Halls Route. This links places around the outskirts of the centre. It is a circuit of about 22 miles and bits of it can be incorporated into lots of urban journeys. It is useful for cutting out the busier bits of a trip across town and I have introduced many people to parts of that route which they can use everyday."

Dynamo the Lancaster Cycle campaign disputes the benefits brought by its CDT status. In its January 2008 newsletter Dynamo condemns, "The squandering of resources on expensive consultants which have produced city centre plans that do nothing to improve conditions for cyclists and are way over budget. All the changes which have taken place under the CDT project are piecemeal and inadequate. We must recognize and advertise this sham in order to apply pressure (nationally) for real changes in transport policy that will enable people at local level to achieve substantial increases in levels of cycling."

Doug Briggs has his doubts about all the bids, "I want roads safe so that all cyclists, regardless of ability, can travel in a direct route to where they want to go. CDT funds should educate motorists in how easy it is to get about by walking, cycling and using buses. I want a long running campaign to broadcast the message that short car journeys (the majority) are socially unacceptable - like drink driving."

Over 60 local authorities have already expressed an interest in becoming new Demonstration Towns. Cycling England will announce the winning City in early June, along with five of the new towns. Those areas will begin delivering their programmes in September 2008. The other five towns will be announced in autumn 2008.

Last words to Rod King, "Forget segregation. Let's prioritise reducing and calming motor traffic with 20mph speed limits and improved enforcement of the law. I am fed up of demonstrations and pilots. It's like sitting down for a meal and finding that every course is a starter - something that whets the appetite but fails to curb the hunger. Can't we see that by embracing the concept of Cycle Town Idol we are perpetuating the under-funding of cycling?"

Text driver jailed for bike death

A motorist who was texting on her mobile phone when she hit and killed a cyclist has been sentenced to four years in prison for causing death by dangerous driving at Southampton Crown Court. Jordan Wickington, 19, died from head injuries when he went through a red light and was struck by Kiera Coultas's car in Southampton in February 2007. The 25-year-old from Hythe, Hampshire, was driving at 45mph in a 30mph zone.

"The serious part of your conduct was that you were sending a

text on your mobile phone having just received one," he said.

"It occurred at precisely the worst time because you failed to see the cyclist who was crossing the road, having gone through the red light. Travelling as you were at 45mph you hit him and he suffered injuries from which he later died."

Sgt Alyson West, of Hampshire Constabulary, said the ruling would hopefully discourage others from using their mobile phones while driving from the BBC's website

Signs from above?

The 'give cyclists room' signs that have confused all as to their mysterious source have made it to page 14 of Private Eye recently.

on the move on the radio

This March marks the two-year anniversary of a profound moment in broadcasting history: the birth of the On The Move show. Phil and Graeme and their special guests have been enlivening the air waves at 10am every Tuesday with their mix of news, chat and music.

It's the only, and quite possibly the best, radio show to tackle the here and now of transport under the simple motto 'It's not for trainspotters'... and it's not. It's for people who need to be able to get around easily to enjoy their lives in full - whether that's going to see friends, to the shops or to work or school. It's the show that gets you where you want to go.

It's broadcast from Levenshulme but can be picked up all over South Manchester. You can listen live on ALL FM 96.9 FM and listen again to all the content (except the music, as that would get us locked up) at www.onthemovefm.org. On this site you can listen to everything from the last two years, and explore through an easy-to-use 'tag' system - just give it a try.

The show continues to cover a diverse range of subjects including traditional transport themes such as walking, cycling, buses, trains and cars, together with important related issues - for instance, local shops, climate change and how to get involved in local decision-making.

For you cycling enthusiasts, there's coverage of the Love Your Bike campaign, In Town Without My Car day and vox pops with cycling, and not-so-cycling, folk of Levenshulme and Longsight. All this and more with local cycling expert Doug's providing his unique commentary.

If you have ideas for what we should cover, or live locally and want to get involved - get in contact through the website!



Cyclists Matter

"Cyclists Matter" is an innovative project being run by a couple of GMCC members in their own time with the simple aim of personifying cyclists.

That means making it clear that cyclists are people of all types and from all walks of life. They are doctors, teachers, paramedics, police officers, mums, dads and grandparents. Sadly it is not uncommon for people who choose to travel by bicycle

to be disrespected or disregarded. That is where "Cyclists Matter" comes in its own. In a positive way, it is intended to try and counter the negative attitudes many members of the general public, local authorities and even Government have by showing simply that, ermm, well.. cyclists do matter.

If you cycle regularly and you have a commendable or interesting career, voluntary role or hobby you may be able to participate. The only additional prerequisites are that you don't mind having several

pictures taken and published on the website www.cyclistsmatter.org.uk (when the project nears completion).

A number of people have already volunteered and the project team are very grateful to them for their offers of support. Those that have volunteered will be contacted as the project is pulled together over the coming months.

For further information or if you are interested in taking part, send an email to ed_o_brain@hotmail.co.uk



"I want to monitor the take up of existing facilities before adding more. But new investment will have to wait until the next financial year," said former Piccadilly Station manager Richard Sworowski in November 2002 when he was lobbied by a GMCC delegation. The long wait may soon be over. Duncan Law attended that meeting. He now occupies the top station job. Aware of the growing dissatisfaction (expressed in the MEN letters page), bike thefts

and ad hoc parking around the station Duncan delegated Duty Station Manager Mark Torkington to tackle the issue. In February Mark joined Vincent Walsh, Cos Harnasz and Network Rail Project Co-ordinator (and GMCC activist) Olly Glover to review the situation. They toured the station, identifying a vacant space between Platforms 9 and 10 to install up to 50 Sheffield Stands in a covered location overlooked by passengers on the traveller to Platforms 13

and 14. Security will be enhanced when Piccadilly's existing 170 CCTV cameras are increased to 400 with a DfT grant. The delegation was less keen on lockers. "Visible bikes send out a clear message to the travelling public. Come here by bike," commented Vincent.

Network Rail is responsible for other major stations including Waterloo and Kings Cross which have comprehensive platform parking provision. This reassured Mark who occasionally cycles to work along the Ashton Canal from his home in the Moravian Community in Fairfield, "I am optimistic that British Transport Police will support the initiative and TRANSEC (government's Transport Security advisors) will not raise any objections. We may squeeze the capital funds out of this year's budget but I am confident that the new facility will be in place by 31 December 2008."

Cycling for the climate

Chris Trueblood reports from the Autumn 2007 CCN Conference

In November after travelling by train and Brompton I arrived in Oxford to attend the CCN-CTC conference aimed at exploring cycling in the context of climate change. The day addressed ways of improving cycling on the roads to encourage more people to take up this environmentally friendly mode of transport. Cyclox -Oxford Cycling Campaign hosted the conference.

Mark Lynas (see www.marklynas.org) set the scene on what cycling means for climate change and environmental action. Mark has written many articles in the U.K. and three books on different aspects of global warming and carbon saturation. He explained that there are now categories of diverse opinion. The mad, bad and deniers all rage against each other in on-going debates. George Monbiot versus David Bellamy are some of the protagonists who express differing views on the science of climate change and its relationship to environmental politics. Many people sidestep the debates or don't wish to do anything about the probable irreversible dangers caused by climate change. Life

style issues, population growth, mass consumerism, rates of technological change, car dependency and the need to reduce carbon footprints are all contested areas in these discussions. The climate change movement have forced the media to respond to governments to bring about effective change. The need for effective communication, mobilisation and community engagement are all crucial to change attitudes and to build awareness for climate change action.

Adrian Dent's update on the CTC's "Cycle Hero" Campaign highlighted the huge impact the short cinema film has made on public attitudes. [HYPERLINK "http://www.cyclehero.com"](http://www.cyclehero.com) This DVD funded through DEFRA achieved global support and high profile media coverage by promoting cycling as a sustainable form of transport.

Jonathan Wood's visit to David Byrne's Talking Head New York show on How to Ride Bikes in NYC celebrated poorly designed cycle lanes which were humorously portrayed on a great presentation. Warrington Cycle Campaign have

achieved widespread acclaim for their web based facility and published book *Crap Cycle Lanes*.

Graham Paul Smith and Steve Melia introduced debates on designing for cyclists in urban areas particularly looking at the concept of urban permeability. Both writers made key observations on design layout in public spaces. There is now clear evidence in the UK to create carfree neighbourhoods. Good practice links concerns of permeability and the integration or separation of cyclists to the recommended guidance like *Manual for Streets*. Some excellent articles on this subject can be found on: [HYPERLINK "http://www.stevemelia.co.uk"](http://www.stevemelia.co.uk) www.stevemelia.co.uk

Howard Boyd outlined the progress being made to create map standards for all cycle routes facilities for traditional route maps. Facilities shown need to be accurate and maps should display honest and objective classifications. By fixing national values and standards this will create a new approach for map promotion, and overall guidance for local authorities within Local Transport Plan processes.

The afternoon open workshops were all challenging and informative.

Communicating the Climate Change message, expanding bike campaign's membership needs and understanding Section 106 planning gain agreements all proved to be really stimulating.

Finally Roger Geffen and Rob Fuller outlined the rapid expansion of the CTC staffing commitment. The development of the regional Cycle Champion staff will provide great benefits for cycle training and campaigning. The CTC will be able to offer a more locally flexible service and be contributing to targeting provision and networking support. This will present challenging opportunities and the new localism will allow a clear focus on three priorities:

- 20mph schemes
- Challenging Traffic Law and Car Driving Behaviour
- Stronger influences on planning and design issues.

CCN Conferences are always inspirational, well planned and informative on all current campaigning concerns. Look out for the next one in Cambridge in spring 2008.

Moston Street set for DIY Makeover in new Sustrans venture



A Victorian terraced street in Moston has been selected as one of ten schemes in the nationwide Sustrans **DIY Streets** project. The residents of Penn Street have no green space and are concerned about speeding traffic and high levels of parking from visitors to a nearby shopping centre. The Liveable Neighbourhoods team at Sustrans takes an innovative approach to the original Dutch woonerf design of home zones. The local partnership between Sustrans and Manchester City Council will enable residents to find simple interventions and durable materials to make their streets safer and more attractive. All at a fraction of the typical cost of a home zone such as those at Northmoor in Longsight and the Addison Estate in Old Trafford.

Once the new designs are agreed by residents, Sustrans and Manchester City Council, more funding will be sought so that the street alterations can be made.

DIY Streets aims to establish an equilibrium between drivers and pedestrians, where all users share the street on equal terms and cars travel at no more than a walking pace. The project, which will consist of traffic calming measures and greening the streets is to be led by community champions from each street. This approach is initially being piloted in Manchester, Cardiff, Sheffield, Hackney, Islington, Torquay and Port Talbot with the intention of becoming replicated on a national scale. To find out more visit www.sustrans.org.uk/diystreets

The second annual month long bicycle festival organised by Manchester cyclists

A bike craze has swept over the UK and it looks like it's here to stay. We've seen our favourite celebrities, like John Snow and Elle Macpherson, riding around. We've seen the fixed gear bike craze hit the catwalks at the Wheel and Heels fashion show in London. And now swarms of bicycle lovers are heading to Manchester for the I Bike MCR Festival, taking place over March and April.

I Bike MCR is a grassroots festival organised voluntarily by a group of cyclists in Manchester, UK that want to promote cycling and bike related activities no matter how crazy they seem, such as Bicycle Polo.

They aim to promote cycling in Manchester and also introduce new bike sports and events to cyclists and to share our skills and experiences with cyclists that might not have had the opportunity to try something before e.g. bicycle polo or alleycat racing.

One of the purposes of the festival is to celebrate the bicycle over car culture, Nes Brierley, who is involved with organising the festival explains, the bicycle "is a healthier, greener, safer, less aggressive, more sociable and more fun way to travel."

The festival opens with a bicycle ride where many cyclists will take to our city's roads on the monthly critical mass bicycle ride. In addition to the other benefits of bicycling over car driving, bicyclist Anna Sawyer on a recent critical mass suggested: "Social isolation can come from encasing oneself in a steel shell and moving through an environment without regard to the full panoply of its sights, sounds, smells and, among other thrills, the joy of fresh wind blowing in one's face". They hope to encourage more drivers to ride bikes and enjoy what Anna describes as the "freedom of cycling"

"We are not anti-car drivers," noted another critical mass rider, "We just want to celebrate the joy of biking and to share that feeling with others and encourage others to ride instead of drive." What Critical Mass would like to see, she added, is a policy of "appropriate use" for cars. That means, "when

no other means of transportation is practical," though, as one cyclist noted, "any place on Earth is within biking range, if you have the time."

The festival itself aims to encourage more people to cycle in Manchester. Cycling as opposed to driving is becoming a more and more attractive way to travel with 20% of Britains being obese, cycling will help to get us healthier. And the proposed congestion charge in Manchester may also mean that people taking the bicycle to work instead of the car will become more common.

The festival will be a hub for cyclists to meet each other and to be a chance to exchange tips toward creating a community with cleaner air, quieter streets and a supportive and supported bicycle community in Manchester.

There are a number of bicycling events planned for the month including bicycle treasure hunts, a midnight ride to formby, roller racing, social rides and a Bicycle Polo Tournament where teams from around the UK will compete to win.

The events are hoped to attract people from a wide background of cycling experience and those that maybe don't usually feel included in cycling events. For example Sunday 6th April is a day dedicated to females with female bicycle maintenance workshops and rides. This is due to the large gap between the amount of female cyclists in comparison to males, with 16% of men cycling at least once a week compared with only 10% of women (Department for Transport, 2002).

The TRL's "Attitudes to cycling: a qualitative study and conceptual framework" (1997) found that women were less keen on cycling due to concerns about personal appearance, stating that it spoils their hairstyle and were "worried about the view from behind". By holding a bike day in the festival solely for women they hope to help overcome this feeling and encourage women to see what a fun, exhilarating, safe and easy way to travel cycling can be.

"In U.S cities like Portland, San Francisco and New York there is a bicycle culture and cyclists meet regularly to ride socially together, to commute together, to share skills and to socialise together." Nes comments, "I hope that this festival with all its activities will help us to start to create a similar bicycle community here in Manchester."

The I Bike MCR Festival takes place from Friday 28th March to Friday 25th April 2008.

For more information or to get involved email: info@ibikemcr.org.uk or see the website at: www.ibikemcr.org.uk/festival.htm

and this is the timetable (quite a bit of this has already happened by the time this even went to print so apologies for that, I just thought you might like to see just how much there was/is - ed)



Friday 28th March

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=8886524797>

Festival Opening Party

(everyone invited!!!):

6pm Central Library Critical Mass Bike Ride

8pm - 3am Cafe Saki
(opp EBC, Wilmslow Road)

Bands: 7 Hertz ("folk, jazz, free improv, punk and just plain odd")
Al Baker ("Radical folk singer extraordinaire")
Egészségredre (Amazing Gypsy Ska band from Leicester)

DJs from Pick Your Own and Longshot
AND PICK YOUR OWN
Bring your favourite record and the Pick your own Djs will play it.
PLUS... Bicycle visuals, bike games, slow race.

Saturday 29th March

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=11621147410>
3pm Cathedral Gardens, Next to Victoria Train Station: Bicycle

Treasure Hunt Bicycle Treasure Hunt- a list of tasks with an assigned number of points for each one. How many points can you get in 3 hours? Bring digital camera/camera phone, bag, pen, map of Manchester, paper, oh and a bike.

It doesn't matter how fast you are or whether you're riding a shopper or a carbon fixie...points are won with cleverness and creativity... plus theres lots of winners inc. the child with most points, most points for person in best fancy dress etc etc

EXAMPLE OF POINTS SYSTEM:

20 points: whoever can get back dressed as a pirate

10 points: visit checkpoint at All Saints park

Sunday 30th March

Bicycle Welding Workshop
Email for venue details (it's one of our houses so we don't wanna give out the address on website!)
All day to build bikes for the Bicycle Art Parade

Wednesday 2nd April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=12135565959>

Bicycle Film Night

7pm at The Dancehouse Theatre
Featuring Klunkerz, Kiss Bike Kiss, I Bike MCR Film, NYC Videozine, Bike Theif . Tickets at Piccadilly Box Office
Telephone 0161 237 9753.

Movie Magazine International: "Savage is the craftsman who weaves this all together with one part pride, he's a Marin local after all, two parts awe, and three parts love. KLUNKERZ is a thrill ride and a throwback to a simpler time when bored youth went outside and invented fun. Still, one thing remains the same, a good day can still be measured by how much mud you have in your teeth."



USA Today raves: "Savage's funny and often poignant film looks at how a bunch of semi-stones hippies in Northern California developed a unique style of off-road bike riding through collaboration and competition. The free-floating and (sometimes) selfless sharing of technology quickly led to a full-blown industry and Olympic status as a sport in 1996."

Friday 4th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=10032456724>

Midnight Ride to Formby

Sunrise swim. Meet at The Sandbar at Quarter to Midnight to ride. Bring good lights, food, towel, swimming stuff, warm clothes, bike etc.

It's about 40 miles and as its a night ride we'll take to the road which we should have more or less to ourselves. A few stop offs for some light refreshment is likely.

"An adventure by moonlight. We'll ride through mostly traffic free country lanes, settling into groups to ride with people going at a similar pace. Stopping off now and again for a swig of something to warm us up. Flying through little villages, past dark fields, under a blanket of stars and a black sky dotted with bats...we'll feel tired and wonder why we're not in our beds at times and we'll never get that nights sleep back. But it'll be worth it. And as we ride into the sunrise and towards the shore of Formby where our cheerleaders, the red squirrels, will meet us..we'll be glad we did it....even if it rains the whole way!!!"



**Saturday 5th April
Bicycle Polo class**

1pm Platt Fields Park

The MCR Dropouts bicycle polo team will teach you how to play the sport and help you get a team

together for the tournament.

Sunday 6th April

1pm The Pankhurst Centre

Ladies Day

Critical Mass Ladies Bike ride to Reclaim the roads and feel confident by riding together (and to socialise!)...with a talk about the history of cycling and women and a ladies only bike maintenance class.

Friday 11th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=22597226472>

Hell Of the North West III

A fast ride around our city. Get to the checkpoints get back. Alley Kitten Race- As above but on kids bikes or shoppers! To participate in this event please register ASAP by emailing cantgoslo@gmail.com

Followed by party at The Sandbar, everyone welcome (whether participating in the alley cat/kitten or not). With DJs and a chance to hang out/ socialise with MCR bike community.

Saturday 12th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=12227197436>

2pm Bicycle Art Parade

Meet at Cathedral Gardens next to Victoria station on Saturday 12th April at 2pm for a nice picnic in the park and to admire each others fancily decorated steeds and riders (bring some nice picnic food and drink)..also if you don't get chance to bling your bike before you come, there will be opportunity and materials to do it there...

Also there as part of the Autonomous Spaces Event will be Folk bands, a sound-system, magic tricks, street theatre and art session! then we shall ride around the city showing off how great our blinged-up bikes look..

Sunday 13th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=9591312073>

Beer Ride

Meet at Noon at Cathedral Gar-

dens, next to Victoria train station for a ride into the peaks with a few stops at some nice country pubs.

We won't be cycling uber fast but it is quite a distance (obviously people can drop off whenever they like). We will give everyone points to cycle to together and so the faster ones get to the pubs first and wait for the others (which might slow them down on the next leg!)

Be prepared to ride about 30-40 miles at a steady pace. We hope to be back in MCR by the evening.

Saturday 19th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=22520893208>

Yo Fixie III

2pm outside The Sandbar



An event for fixed gear riders. With comps inc: Track Stand, Track Skid, Sprint and more. To participate in this event please register ASAP by emailing cantgoslo@gmail.com

The Sandbar have very kindly agreed to putting on an amazing "street party" type thing at the back of the bar, with a dj and outdoor bar, during the Yo Fixie event so even if you haven't got a fixed wheel bike you can come down and watch the others and socialise with other bike lovers.

Sunday 20th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=9971607739>

Bicycle Polo Tournament

1pm Platt Fields Park

Teams from around the UK compete to win the I Bike MCR Polo Tournament



with a game of bicycle tag at half time that's open to everyone to join in...so whether you're a polo player or not come down with your bike and have a go.. ace prizes to be won!!

If you want to play with your team REGISTER ASAP at info@ibikemcr.org.uk

If you want to start your own team to play in the tournament but want some tips come to practise on Saturday 5th April, Bicycle Polo class, 1pm Platt Fields Park

Friday 25th April

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=14320240405>

Critical Mass Bike ride

6pm Central Library

Followed by

End of I Bike MCR Festival Party

(everyone invited!!!):

8pm - 2am Aqua Bar, Albion Street, MCR with Bands: Cash for Your Stories, The Autonomads, The Kirkz and Hail Brethren DJ's from Pick Your Own and Longshot play Dub, reggae, ska, dubstep, disco etc AND the Rollopaluza guys roll up to put on a Roller Race!!!

Roller Race- The final heats will be amazing short races after competitors have set their qualifying times. "It's a drama – the gritting of teeth and twisting of faces, as riders give everything in those 20-something seconds of each race. Only opera could portray the intensity and drama." (Therese Bjorn, www.londonmessengers.org)

I Bike MCR Festival from Friday 28th March to Friday 25th April 2008

Email: info@ibikemcr.org.uk
Web: <http://www.ibikemcr.org.uk/festival.htm>



Traffic lights and trackstands; the life of a Manchester cycle courier

I first noticed them when I returned to Manchester seven years ago. They weren't your average commuter; they seemed to be out all year round and didn't wear standard commuter gear. They weren't like the back alley mountain bikers either, since they were in too much of a hurry and rode with a purpose. In fact they weren't like the other assorted two wheeled road users at all, mainly because they rode well, fast, and accurately. Some time later seeing a group of them outside a café, sheltering from the inevitable drizzle, I noticed something else; lots were on track bikes, or as near as anyway. Coincidentally, work colleagues had recognised the drawbacks of derailleurs for commuting through Manchester winters, the efficiency of this complex ironmongery to turn oil and fine grit into a grinding paste which destroyed the bike, and had taken advantage of the bike to work scheme to buy single speed commuter bikes; now here were a whole group of people riding the same sort of thing. They were a friendly bunch, happy to talk bikes and explain what they

did, why they rode single-speeds and the best ratios to ride. Until that day I had had no idea that Manchester supported any cycle couriers, I knew that they existed in London from 'lycra lout' articles in the nationals, but here? It was a revelation.

I asked whether they would be open to interview, they suggested Craig; Craig 'Nasty' had been in the game longer than most, was now 'retired' and working in a bike shop. Craig is thirty eight, and was a courier for more than twelve years; he had always liked bikes, and, in London at the time, decided the job of cycle courier appealed. Initially it was glamour that drew him, but the autonomy and sense of professionalism that held him. I asked him about that job: "It was easy to come by, and the company provided a bag, not that it was any good because it was designed for motorcyclists and kept sliding off your back!" "Then I worked in-house for an imaging company in Clerkenwell, a good job, well paid with a decent bag and clothes; I did my best work there."

I asked about pay; in the UK it's

all piece work while US cities like Seattle have companies which pay by the hour. Amounts paid were distance related and on commission, ranging from 50-66% of the take on each drop organised by the company. Short drops might pay £1.50, longer ones £5 or more, and riders had to go like the clappers just to keep working. Manchester paid less than London due to undercutting, and many Manchester riders were self employed. Craig remembered juggling calls on a mobile while riding a job, putting calls on hold to answer a two way radio for more work. The days were pretty standard; starting at eight thirty and busy until ten then quiet until lunch, busy again from two and on until six o' clock. A typical day might see ten drops. He'd travelled, working briefly in Perth, London, Washington, London again, and finally Manchester. London by this time had "...loads of courier companies..." but Manchester had only a few scattered individuals who had started off in about 1997 by handing out business cards. The whole courier idea had come from the states, the Western Union telegraph kids of the 1890s giving rise to the idea again in the '70s. The film 'Quick-silver' of 1986 had glamourised it, the media and imaging boom of the last two decades shifted to the UK and so here in twenty first century Manchester single speed track bikes were carrying documents and packages to and fro, from office to office.

What about insurance? Most had no third party or bike insurance, and relied on quick wits and skill to stay alive; "...it's just too expensive, a friend was 'doored', tried to sue and was counter-sued by the driver who couldn't play squash after the accident!" They may feel on the fringe but one financial advisor I asked said that he found companies prepared to offer life assurance, TPD (total permanent disability), and critical illness cover to couriers classing them as delivery drivers. Some couriers belong to the IFBMA or one of its affiliated associations, but this provided a unification not insurance cover. Was there a Manchester organi-

sation? "No we're too few, the council's not interested, there's no support." I contacted Manchester city council to ask their views; a spokesman said the council was in favour of increasing cycling as part of its aim to be the greenest city, and actually uses couriers itself; they had even promoted them during 2003 in GMPTE's 'On yer bike' magazine.

Craig was keen to point out that Manchester couriers were highly skilled and took the job seriously: "We're undervalued, and under-paid! We carry out our job with real professionalism, we save time and energy and who cares?" He described the knowledge needed, using back entrances never the front, knowing the floor, the office, even the desk for the drop, and skilfully timing drops on high floors with the lifts so that, as you left the office with a pick up, the lift was just returning from the top floor where you had sent it on your arrival. Most couriers are extremely organised "...you've got to be, it's no good puncturing and having to go to a bike shop to get it fixed while the customer waits..." those that weren't didn't stay in work long.

What were the mileages like? In Manchester they varied from 50 to 60 miles per day, but on occasion in London he had ridden 100 miles. All weathers I asked (knowing the answer); "All weathers!" he confirmed, if you didn't work you didn't eat, and in the winter you had to eat; lots! That brought us to cafés; "...most café owners don't like a bunch of smelly bikers congregating outside their door because they think we put off customers and don't spend enough, mainly because the price of a coffee is often more than that of a job..."

What about clothing, weather gear, and so on? "It's ironic" Craig said; "we ride in what works, what's comfortable, warm, durable, and cheap" he indicates a pair of below knee shorts; "ex US army with padded pants underneath! Now some manufacturers are trying to copy 'the look' to cash in!" Layers were important; it's hard to stay warm on standby. A Defect

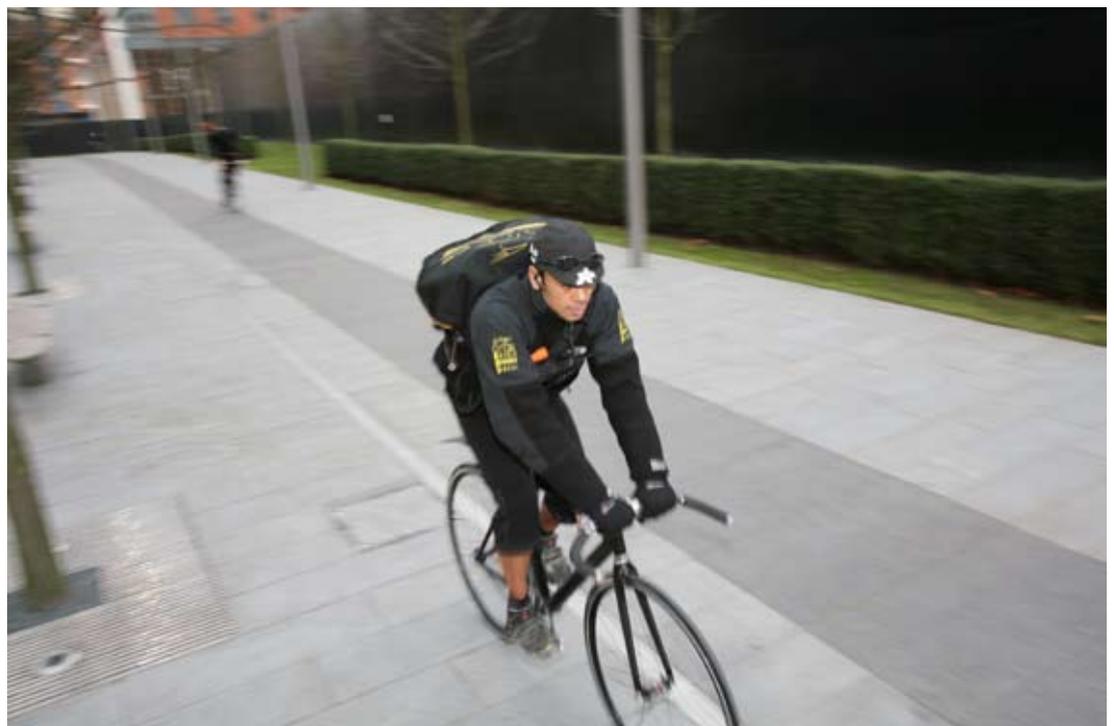


undershirt, wool jersey, arm warmers, a 'windtex' top, a hoody and a goretex® paclite for wet days. On your feet, two pairs of woollen socks, "...overshoes suck!" spd boots are 'ok', but some still ride two pairs of Keirin straps with any favourite trainers. And bikes? "...people used to use MTBs for the brakes and the strength, but now the 'fixie' is the favourite for speed, lightness, and the look of the bike itself" "...most guys (there are female couriers but not in Manchester) bought a frame, built it up and kept it for ever." Maintenance was important, chains were changed every 2-3 months, and sprockets maybe twice a year. One courier pays £20 a month for servicing to guarantee reliability.

Tyres that allowed you to skid the back wheel were good, mudguards optional, but he used a rear 'blade' to stop a wet backside, and gear ratios depended on the city, most ran 48:16 or other ratio in the high 70's, in Perth Craig had once run 52:12, great for speed, but by the time he'd cranked some up he would hit a red light! What about those red lights? "Yeah, couriers will sometime run a red but it varies with the pressure of the job" "If you know the light sequences (and if you're a pro you know them really well), there's no need, it's one of the reasons to run a fixie; if I do hit a red light I'd rather practice my track-stand than risk my life." Riding on pavements was part of it, many buildings just weren't accessible any other

way, but he'd never had problems; "...the police are pretty cool, they know us, we ride well and don't hassle pedestrians..." He re-emphasized the professionalism of the riders, their commitment to getting a package through on time regardless of conditions; "...some guys see the glamour because they like bikes, but they leave when they see the money and realise the dedication needed ..." He surprised me by saying that although some couriers did track riding or BMX for fun, the majority of Manchester riders only used a bike for work; at the 2006 'Alley Cats' messenger races not one contestant was a courier!

Why had he left? "I'd had enough, worked out that for each drop I'd have one near miss, that's ten or so a day, and you know your luck can't hold out for ever." Another courier agrees; "...there are old couriers and bold couriers, but no old bold couriers!" His view is backed up by a 2002 Boston study which surveyed 113 couriers and came up with some unpleasant facts. 70% had had an injury that kept them off work, 55% had had injuries that required professional attention, and the incidence of injuries that kept them off work was 47 per 100 cyclists per annum, almost entirely due to collision with vehicles [1]. The hazard



of other road users is part of the job, in London 7 couriers have been killed, all by HGVs; thankfully Manchester seems to have escaped this perhaps because the couriers are more cautious. Craig fishes out a sew-on patch from his bag; "...a friend from LA gave me this, sums it up really." The patch reads: "Your career is in my bag, how much is it worth?"

What about the future? "The media work will die soon; it's all going broadband anyway, and legal work will follow maybe ten years later when lawyers can wear themselves off paper! The future is small cargo, trailers, stuff like that." Given the need to reduce carbon emissions it is interesting to note another thing from the Boston study; the authors estimate that in 2000 over 16 tonnes of CO2 were saved by Boston couriers; something UK cities might wish to consider in their efforts to attain carbon neutrality.

James Palmer

References:

1. Dennerlein JT & Meeker JD. Occupational injuries among Boston bicycle messengers Am J Ind Med 2002; 42: 519-25

The Connect2 project needed us - But do we need Connect2?

GMCC-Talk is an email discussion group amongst those keen to promote cycling in Greater Manchester. Last autumn the Peoples Millions Lottery vote provoked a lively debate on the merits of Sustrans Connect2 bid. Contributors have agreed to publication of the correspondence. You can join these regular debates on the future of cycling locally and nationally by emailing: GMCC-Talk-subscribe@yahoo.com

The Gorgmanator wrote

Connect2 is an exciting UK-wide Sustrans project that aims to improve local travel in 79 communities by creating new walking and cycling routes for the journeys we all make every day. By building bridges and new crossings over barriers such as busy roads, rivers and railway lines, Connect2 will connect people to the places they want to go. Each crossing will link to a network of walking and cycling routes, taking you to your schools, shops, work and green spaces. Connect2 is competing against three other projects for funding of £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Millions which is to be decided by public television vote in December this year. The objective of the Connect2 project is to create traffic-free walking and cycling routes across the U.K., creating closer communities, promoting healthier living and protecting our environment.

Ed o brain wrote

Our roads have lots of different users, including children transported by their mums and dads using cars. There are vulnerable road users on our roads, even if cyclists (and pedestrians) are removed. Their safety is the responsibility of all the other road users, including drivers, who with the help of education, legislation and enforcement should drive in a manner that is in accordance with that responsibility. Connect2 is yet another project that will help relieve drivers of that responsibility. I particularly object to "building bridges and new crossings over barriers such as busy roads". I thought one of the reasons local authorities were using more at grade crossings and fewer bridges these days was because we were moving away from the draconian planning principles of the 60s and 70s that put

private transport (the motor car) at the top of the agenda allowing multi-lane roads to literally divide communities. Further more, this is public money and I am loathe to see so much spent on this when Cycling England claim that a similar sum would stop between 27 million and 50 million car journey's every year. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6998086.stm>> Our priority should be reclaiming our streets where people live and play and giving neighbour communities the chance to develop - not building new infrastructure just for cycling and walking. The rub for me with Connect2 is that it's too much money to be spending on to narrow an agenda. There are many other aspects to creating an environment that is better for cycling and better for communities.

The Gormanator wrote:

Unfortunately, the response from Ed o Brain is particularly unhelpful and highlights the reason why it is often very difficult to make progress in this country. I accept that no initiative is ever perfect and therefore empathise with many of the comments; however, if it is moving in roughly the right direction, which it is, then we should support it. Let's focus on the rightness, rather than the wrongness. After all, if we don't support it, then a non-sustainable transport project will get the £50 million. I encourage all those with similar views, to channel their energies in a constructive way to make the change we want happen. On a personal note, I have experienced the positive contribution that Sustrans has made to our communities over the last 10 years. I now see many more families, couples and commuters enjoying these new trails all over the U.K. Anyone who cannot see this obviously hasn't looked. Some points of clarification - Connect2 is not a cycling project (I refer to the comment regarding Cycling England), it is a sustainable transport project which includes cycling and walking. In many cases, Connect2 will not be building new infrastructure. For example, the scope of the project in Sale-Stretford is to properly surface an existing canal towpath. This is not public money, it is money that the public has chosen to spend on Lottery tickets. In conclusion, let's continue working on promoting sustainable transport in the U.K., addressing

the far-reaching agendas that we all want. In the meantime, vote for Connect2 and let's see some progress.

Ed o brain wrote

If you want to see progress in this country, how about a conviction for cycling legally on a road? Some people in this country already think it is against the law to cycle on a road, a view heavily supported by the amount of cycling infrastructure we already have, a view held by some police officers and even a magistrate. The law took the view that the cyclist should cross three lanes of traffic, not once but twice, in addition cross five extra roads where they joined two respective roundabouts. Not only that, but proceed along the cycle path at its perceived maximum safe speed of 12 mph, when even a vicar freewheeled down the hill on the road at over 20 mph using a small wheeled folding bike. That's progress. I can tell you all about it. And really, all the cycling infrastructure in the world is not going to support the kind of modal shift we need to become sustainable. I have no doubt it will encourage more people onto bikes but at what expense? These routes are ideal if you live and work close to them, don't mind cycling typically at less than 10 mph - but they still have a long way to go in terms of continuity and quality. They will always be inferior to the road network, otherwise we may as well just criss-cross our country with hectares and hectares of more tarmac. And just before I get accusations of being a died-in-the-wool road cyclist, I regularly used such routes both in Telford and in Manchester. Even in London. Some of them are okay for taking my son along in his trailer, although with anything other than a standard bicycle many actually become accessible. Some of them are okay for just a leisure ride. I regularly help people struggling to lift bikes over some of the barriers on the Trans-Pennine-Trail as I'm enjoying a break on a leisurely ride. Let's make this clear, I'm not opposed to schemes that genuinely help link isolated communities and "build bridges" but £50 million is an awful lot of money compared to the total amount invested in cycling as a whole. And that is my main objection here. Cycling England think that £70 million spent on a range of cycling measures is

enough to considerably reduce the number of journeys undertaken by car. Cycling England has been set up by our Government and given money to promote cycling. It's not an independent charity with its own agenda. Has the NCN really made that much difference? As far as I can see, more and more people are taking to bicycles in spite of cycle facilities, quite happily using the pavement. Oh, does that mean we should turn all our pavements into dual use paths? No, I thought not. No, you can't mean that. Pedestrians have a hard enough time as it is. The feedback I've had from friends and relatives living close to some of the proposed Connect2 schemes is that they are not required. But just to be balanced, I have also heard positive feedback first hand from other areas. This suggests to me there is some creativity in spending the £50 million. It's a bit like the £190 million Sustrans wanted to fund improved cycling links including elevated routes in London for the Olympics (Goal 2012), a bid they made without consulting any other cycling groups. The central part of the bid was a dedicated cycleway spanning the Thames when an existing link nearby made a more suitable candidate - and they wanted £50 million just for that.

But back to topic. It should not be left to Lottery funding to encourage cycling and for that matter walking. When one considers the subsidies given to rail transport and motorists the level of investment in walking and cycling is nothing short of a travesty - especially when 50 per cent of car journeys are less than 5 miles (RAC). Or to put it another way, half of car journeys could be made by bike. Where there are genuinely insufficient links local authorities and central government should be investing and making funds available. If we really want a project that puts sustainable travel on the map, let's see a range of measures that tackle the road network, cycle parking, cycle training and foot paths. Many paths are dangerous and present problems with accessibility - the difficulty I have lugging a heavy suitcase from the train station around the corner. It's ridiculous spending this kind of money, some on links that people don't actually desire. And this is having spoken to a number of people with far greater under-

standing of the implementation of Connect2 .

Personally, I would rather see the money spent on one of the three other projects. Sustrans does do some good work, but in its drive to seek funding it has done a lot of damage to cycling. I speak as a campaigner who lobbied for a balanced approach to cycling, trying to encourage council officials to consider all types of cyclists in their planning, not just wannabe cyclists, leisure cyclists and those who cycle on footpaths. It's not enough to allow provision of a few dedicated cycleways whilst dropping the needs of cyclists and pedestrians to the bottom of the list in most traffic- scheme changes. And the Lottery may be a voluntary tax instead of a mandatory one, but it is public money in the sense our Government lays down the legislation that influences and controls the spending of it. So my advice is forget Connect2, vote for one of the other projects which will have a positive impact in years to come when all our dedicated cycle ways have proved insufficient, except in the most rural areas, after the oil runs out and we are all forced to cycle.

Vincent Walsh wrote

Although I actively support Sustrans and the Connect2 bid I share many of Ed's misgivings. Research shows little clear evidence that leisure cycling prompted by the NCN leads to modal shift. Ironically it may generate car journeys with families loading bikes onto roof racks and driving off to ride the NCN. Does it matter? Is all cycling good cycling - and always and everywhere to be encouraged? The retail trade believes so - but should campaigners? In recent years Sustrans has eclipsed the CTC in the national cycling consciousness despite the best efforts of CTC Director Kevin Mayne to drag the dinosaur into the 21st century. Sustrans appears to reinvent itself with a new logo and corporate image every other week while its ubiquitous John Grimshaw has the ear of everyone in high places. So what shall I do on the feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December), light a candle, make the call to the Peoples (sic) Millions or curse the darkness?

Jorge wrote

On the question of "Is all cycling good cycling?" I hope you don't

mind a comment from an unwashed, newbie cyclo-commuter. My two pennyworth: if it doesn't break the law or cause damage or distress to other people, you bet it jolly well is! So what if some evil parents take their kids cycling somewhere nice by car? Where do we think tomorrow's cycling folk are going to come from? The last thing a campaigning organisation needs is to create a them-and-us, closed shop feeling.

Rod King wrote

I consider that Ed's comments are at the core of the debate about how we do our campaigning. Cycle promotion is not expensive or a luxury to come from additional funds such as the Lottery. But any cycle promotion does need the foundation of a safe and respectful sharing of the roads for all road users, especially the vulnerable ones. Other countries build their cycle promotion and sensible transport on the basis of safe vehicle speeds and no-fault liability of motorised road users for vulnerable road users. Whilst countries such as the Netherlands certainly have some good Connect2 type schemes these are built on the foundation of cycle rights on the road rather than in place of them. The problem is that if we promote off-road facilities without those basic rights then we are perpetuating the ignorant myth that by providing enough off-road facilities we can overcome the problem of mixing vulnerable road users with high speed traffic. So I see there are two sets of basic requirements to be requested as rights and as citizens before we should promote ourselves as a deserving good cause. Firstly, we need a basic provision of safety and respect on the roads. This can only come through a 20 mph speed limit as default in residential and urban roads and a no-fault liability. Secondly we need funding for cycle promotion from the public purse in proportion to the percentage of cycling trips in urban areas that we aspire to. If we are looking for 10 per cent of trips in towns to be made on bikes then cycling should take 10 per cent of the highway infrastructure budget. These are not requests or aspirations but rights. Rights that we assert, not as cyclists, but as citizens in a world where car-focussed travel is increasingly seen as unsustainable and not conducive to civic society. Unfortunately, I suspect that Sustrans has become

the government's favourite cycling charity. It is able to show how much it is doing to promote cycling without having to face up to the problem of on-road conflict between vulnerable road users and high vehicle speeds. For that reason I consider Sustrans to be colluding with central government in failing to promote cycling in a serious and sustainable manner. Anyone who has experience of NCN routes knows that in general they fail to deliver as sustainable transport. The sus seems to be more appropriately an abbreviation from suspect rather than sustainable. I am not denying a great number of cycling activists are working hard within the Sustrans umbrella. Or, indeed that Sustrans intentions are not honourable. However, it should be within our capability as activists to see the wider picture and the complex interaction between cycle promotion, road use, law setting and politics, and understand the effect all our contributions are having. Hence this is a very important debate. Whether we campaign softly for infrastructure and schemes or we take the harder route of campaigning for rights and responsibilities on our roads. I wish to build a better cycling future for my grandchildren and believe that off-road routes and bridges will never deliver a safe door-to-door cyclable route wherever they wish to go. Yes, sometimes it's tough climbing a hill on a bike rather than taking the easy route. But if you want to lift your cycling to a higher plane then taking the low road will never get you where you want to go.

John Grimshaw wrote

Together we won £50 million! You must all be feeling as elated as I am at the moment. Connect2 is a great project, and the only one in the competition which gives people living in communities across the UK the opportunity to tackle the triple challenges posed by our travel culture - obesity, climate change and peak oil. Although this Lottery bid has been a long drawn out process it has resulted in a number of invaluable benefits. It has given us an unprecedented opportunity to undertake positive public consultation, and every scheme now has that most precious of ingredients - committed local support with 79 communities actively wanting to see the scheme realised. The high public profile of the competition also means that Local Authorities,

Governments, their agencies and funders, are more likely to be that bit more supportive and to go that extra mile which makes all the difference, at least we hope so.

Ed o brain wrote

£140 million with match funding. I hope the money is well spent and the NCN is turned into something much more usable. But be ready to campaign hard to keep our rights to cycle on the road in case Sustrans really do bring the NCN up to a suitable standard. When the motoring lobby and general public, who are convinced cycling on the road is too dangerous to even contemplate, learn more about Sustrans and the NCN, all the money spent on it and are convinced it is a viable alternative to cycling on the roads, we will likely end up banned from roads, at least where there is an alternative NCN route. It's not only about cycling but the status motorised traffic is afforded and how that effects all road users and the communities roads cut through. It will not be appropriate to cycle on well used stretches of NCN at 20 mph. In less built up areas cycling at these speeds can make cycling a practical alternative to the car for travelling further distances.

Olly Glover wrote

Whilst I agree that we must always be vigilant about protecting our rights to cycle on roads, I think the statement that "we will more than likely end up banned from roads, at least where there is an alternative NCN route" is a bit strong. The successful campaign to oppose changes to the Highway Code shows the strength of opinion and campaigning ability within the cycling community, and also sent a strong message that cyclists can achieve change when they work together and lobby hard.

Ed o Brain wrote

One of the prime arguments in the summer when cyclists campaigned about the draft highway code effectively banning us from using roads where alternative facilities were available, was the quality of those facilities. Connect2 may be the spring board to sorting out cycling facilities once and for all but there may be unforeseen consequences. In an atmosphere where the public believe cycling on the road is dangerous and motorists claim cyclists slow them down, it is not too far fetched to imagine cycling on the road where (good

quality) alternatives exist may be banned. The original version of the new Highway Code was an attempt to do just that. There are regular petitions on www.pm.gov.uk calling for cyclists to be banned from using roads where alternatives exist, groups on Facebook with large memberships demand the same. A better indicator to me, is the response from many people when my own case* was highlighted by the media. Remember cyclists are already confined to off-road facilities in many other countries – with facilities better than ours. *For those that don't know, just do an internet search on my name, Daniel Cadden

Final Votes

Sustrans' Connect2

119,348

The Black Country

83,556

Sherwood

48,822

Eden Project - The Edge

34,559

In our area who are the winners.....?>

In April 2007 Sustrans reduced its Long List of 127 proposals to a final list of 79 schemes and 20 reserves. At that stage the Pendleton Gateway was deselected – poor Salford loses out again. Four projects in Greater Manchester did make it through to the final list from Bury, Rochdale, Stockport and Trafford.

local schools and travel to Bury town centre.”

Rochdale Canal Towpath Connections

This project will connect the centre of Rochdale to the centres of Oldham, Middleton and Heywood via threads of green space and waterside environment of the Rochdale towpath. This regenerated waterway will form the spine of a growing network of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to and along the canal corridor. It will provide a tranquil and pleasant route in direct contrast to the blight and pollution of the A627(M).



Sale, Bridgewater Canal connections

The Bridgewater Canal has always been considered as a possible greenway that could provide a link between Stretford and Sale, crossing over the River Mersey, under the M60 and avoiding a large number of major roads which dissect this area. The proposal will particularly concentrate on improving the quality and number of access

points to the route as well as improving the surface of the towpath itself. “This project will improve access to the Cheshire countryside for Manchester based cyclists and improve many people’s commute.” Oldham and Tameside feature



Marple and Stockport, Goyt Valley connection

This proposal creates a beautiful new route and bridge over the River Goyt which will link one side of the valley with the other and makes sense of the paths and routes that have been built over a number of years.

The valley is so deep and tree-lined that whilst it lies within a few hundred yards of large urban populations it seems to be a world apart. This Connect2 project will link many of these local residents to the deep countryside nearby. “I am thinking about starting to cycle to work and an off road route to Stockport would really benefit me as the roads are too busy and dangerous for cycling. The bridge over the river Goyt would be really beneficial to the area and would encourage a lot of people to cycle to Stockport, especially with the possible introduction of congestion charging on the A626.”

amongst the 20 reserve schemes which will be called forward should any of the 79 final list schemes find they are unable to complete their programme.

Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne - Park Viaduct

Oldham and Ashton are two large towns that are almost touching but only linked by a single major road that is heavily trafficked and extremely hilly. The former railway line between the two towns overcame this problem with a fine Viaduct at Park Bridge to create an equally direct route. This proposal connects the two towns by constructing a high level bridge 200m long to overcome the chasm and create an easily graded route suitable for walkers and cyclists of every ability between the two town centres. “This project will open up new and

interesting areas to explore for the whole family within easy cycling of Oldham town centre.” Ashton-under-Lyne and Hyde - The Peak Forest Canal The Connect2 project has had numerous applications for the reconstruction of canal towpaths. In the case of The Peak Forest Canal, the condition of the towpath is so bad and the links into the surrounding communities so poor that it is an excellent example of how a reconstruction together with new links, focused on the centres of the nearby populations, will bring about a whole new idea of how to travel in the area. “This connecting link has been asked for by many since the Apethorne Godley rail path was built. This is bound to be very popular if built.”

Postscript: John Grimshaw resigns as Chief Executive of Sustrans

Having just celebrated the charity’s first 30 years, our thoughts turn to the future. The pace of change is astonishing, not just in our environment and the other crises embracing us but increasingly in government and public attitudes to sustainable transport. It is gratifying to see that, finally, the argument is being won. Everything that Sustrans stands for and wants to see happen is being talked about at the highest level in government. The detailed and delicate work now begins to ensure that action replaces talking and real money is invested in bringing about the transition to a low carbon, active travel culture. I have for some time been planning to step down from my role, but now, at the beginning of Sustrans’ next thirty years, the time seems absolutely right.



Bury, the Woolfold Gap

The existing railway path through Bury is broken at Woolfold by a now missing viaduct. This proposal is to replace the viaduct and make a number of links onto the railway path. It will create a spine route through the town with a number of connections. It will put great effort in to the on-road sections through the centre of Bury itself in order to give these the same quality and feel as the traffic-free paths.” Completing this missing link in NCN will have an enormous impact on maximising the use of NCN6 to access both



On Her Bike in Trafford – Filipina rides in from Oz

For four years Trafford Council has lacked a Cycling Officer and a Cycle Forum. That ended in October 2007 with the arrival of Filipina Moore. Here she describes her role and background and reveals that Congestion Charging would benefit Trafford cyclists.

What attracted you to the job? *My post as Transport Policy Officer gives me the opportunity to develop my policy skills as well as build links with all the stakeholders involved in local transport strategy to make real improvements to the network. Cycling issues occupy about a third of my time.*

How does your previous work relate to your current job? *I started as a graduate policy assistant working with the Australian Customs Service. Then I moved to the Victoria State government as a policy officer in the freight logistics area. My previous job was at the Greater Manchester Centre*

for Voluntary Organisations in their Transport Resource Unit. This involved working with the voluntary sector and GMPTA to identify opportunities for improving local passenger transport.

In moving from the voluntary sector to the statutory sector are you poacher turned game keeper? *No, the experience gained in the voluntary sector made me aware of the benefits of engaging with people in order to get the best outcome. The voluntary and public sectors have different tools available and by working together, providing support and engaging with the right groups and individuals we can ensure a collaborative approach to policy development.*

Do you drive? Do you own a car? *I do drive. I don't own a car but I am a member of the Whizz Go Car Club.*

How do you get to work? Where do you park?

I get to work either by Metrolink or by bicycle. I park my bike in the shelter at Trafford Town Hall or in the secure staff area under Sale Waterside Centre.

Do you use your bike at work? *I use my bike occasionally for work if there is a time benefit in doing so.*

How much do cycling staff in Trafford receive in travel expenses/mileage rates? *Currently, Trafford staff receive 30p per day for cycling to or at work. Neither I nor my colleagues claim. I understand this figure is under review.*

How would you describe the current level of cycling in Trafford? *Trafford has a fairly high rate of cycling when you compare it with other Authorities across Greater Manchester. However there's plenty that can be done to increase the rate. The Council is committed to building upon this and maximising the potential for increasing levels of cycling, both leisure and on-highway. The Trafford Cycling Strategy is under review and we are working*

with the Trafford Cycle Forum to develop the local cycling network.

What are your three major priorities?

- *Develop safe routes into and through the town centres, in particular Sale, Stretford and Altrincham*
- *Promote the use of the Trans Pennine Trail and Bridgewater Canal and work with neighbouring authorities to develop links*
- *Promote cycle friendly infrastructure*

What are the three greatest difficulties/challenges?

- *Encouraging new / inexperienced cyclists*
- *Balancing the needs of all stakeholders and managing expectations*
- *Funding schemes and ongoing maintenance*

How will the introduction of congestion charging across Greater Manchester impact on cycling in Trafford?

Judging from London's experience, if congestion charging is introduced within the M60 ring we will see an increase in cycling, particularly for short commuter journeys or journeys linking to public transport. However we need to make sure that strategic alternatives and infrastructure are available to potential cyclists.

What is the present state of cycling in Trafford Schools? Is Bikeability offered?

The level of on-road training is very high in Trafford for Y6 children. Our Safer Cycling scheme trained 1805 Y6 pupils in 2006/07. That accounts for 66 per cent of all 10-11 year olds in the borough – the highest proportion in Greater Manchester. Safer Cycling also involves a small component of off-road training. Trafford Council has not yet adopted the Bikeability Standard. There are currently difficulties with Trafford taking on Bikeability including funding. Trafford is not eligible for the Bikeability Grant from Cycle England because we already deliver high levels of training, methods and accreditation. In future, with barriers to the scheme removed and enhancements, Bikeability will be considered.

Your accent betrays you are not a Traffordian. How does cycling in your adopted country compare with your native country – and any others where you have lived? *I've been here for nearly five years and I see more new cyclists on the road around Greater Manchester. This is a good*

thing but brings challenges including safety and security. I visited Stockholm last year and was impressed with the links between cycling and public transport. I was also amazed that people left their bikes unlocked in the city centre. That would not happen in many other places, let alone here. I hail from Melbourne which has a population similar to Greater Manchester. I was there over Christmas and noticed a marked increase in the amount of cycling. This can be attributed in part to rising petrol prices, but also to the council's five year plan focusing on improved on and off-road cycling networks and better bike facilities. In Taiwan, where I grew up, cycling was a part of every day life. Bicycles were the main form of transport for families and individuals. However, rapid economic growth has seen the bicycle transplanted by scooters and cars, leading to congestion and poor air quality.

Do you holiday by bike?

The Peak District around Edale is a favourite destination, as is the Lake District at Coniston and Grasmere.

Describe the workings of the Trafford Cycle Forum

The Forum meets quarterly, attended by me and traffic engineers depending on agenda topics. All councillors are welcome. Three have attended so far: Matthew Colledge (Conservative), Stephen Adshead (Labour) and Neil Taylor (Lib Dem). Cllr Colledge (Deputy Council Leader and Executive Member for Technical Services) was appointed chair. We have representation from Seamons Cycling Club, GMCC, Sustrans supporters and Trans Pennine Trail rangers. Any individual with an interest in cycling is free to participate. We aim to balance promotional activities with technical and strategic matters.

What has the Cycle Forum achieved so far?

We formed a technical group providing valuable input to the improvements underway on the Trans Pennine Trail. We promoted the successful Sustrans Connect 2 Lottery Bid to improve the Bridgewater Canal between Sale and Stretford. We are redrafting Trafford's Cycle Strategy.

The next Trafford Cycle Forum is on Wednesday 23 April 2008, 6 pm Altrincham Town Hall.

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One Less Car – almost One Less Bike

One winter's night our car-free household almost became a One-Less-Bike Family. I had D-locked my bike to the railings beside the front door to facilitate a quick departure to nursing night duty. Sandwiches made, uniform packed, I opened the front door to find a car jack wedged inside my lock. My neighbour had to assist me to release the jack. I was very lucky – the bike was undamaged and the D lock survived intact. It had been my practice to leave the bike locked in full public view for hours on end. Not any more - clearly my joint had been cased. Beware of this latest ruse by the criminal fraternity. Ensure that your D lock is securing the back wheel not simply passed through the cross bar – which is a common sight. This precaution thwarted my thieves.

Vincent (Wiser) Walsh, Rusholme

P.S. Any motorists want a spare car jack?



and they're still available

Still the GMCC's answer to someone that wants to be seen for all the right reasons - its own bespoke designed, Manchester made gilet and is still available among others from Will's Wheels, Harry Halls, Eddie McGrath's and Bicycle Doctor of course. It'll keep you quite dry when raining and keep a bit of heat in on the way home at dusk over a T-shirt .

Just to let you know that I will be doing cycle stamping and general security of cycle on Ashton-u-Lyne open market on the 19 April 08
Chijioke Ebizie

letters

Sir,
I have by chance noticed your recent newsletter 'Pothole Autumn 2007' on the internet.

The leading article about the upsetting terrible fatality reported - 'Police Support Officer Killed on a Bike' - suggests that "the HSE's report [of the incident] could be crucial to the future of not only our cycling policemen and women but anyone else who cycles as part of their work."

The suggestion that the accident investigation report may have implications for anyone who cycles in an occupational capacity is misleading.

One of my close cycling friends is one of HM Inspectors of Health and Safety. She commutes to work by bike. When at work, she travels, by bike when the work is local. Apparently so do a number of her colleagues, some who are based within your campaign group area.

I am reliably informed that the Health and Safety Executive promotes its own cycle to work

scheme to encourage commuting and travelling at work by bike. They also have an employees' Bicycle Users Group with members nationwide.

As for this tragic incident, HSE will be tasked to investigate, and report on the findings. Any subsequent action would only be the result of a breach of established statute law. There is no question about this jeopardising cycling to, from or at work.

Like most other cyclists including the HSE cyclists, I am also a pedestrian, and motorist. As cyclists, we know that there are also risks to us as pedestrians and motorists. I will not delve into statistics, but being a motorist or pedestrian is hardly risk free. Indeed, HSE use the road fatality statistics as the main benchmark of the tolerability of risk to individuals that on average the public finds broadly acceptable. We should not get the risks out of perspective, and continue to promote cycling as the way ahead.

Neil Dexter

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WIGAN	Damian Garner	01942 404061	damian.garner@wigan.gov.uk

Bike Shops offering discounts to GMCC members

A1 Cycle Spares -

0161 998 2882

414-416 Palatine Road, Northenden

A6 Cycle Warehouse,

0161 248 5400

752-762 Stockport Road, Longsight

Altrincham Bike Shak

0161 929 9355

10 Oakfield Trading Estate, Oakfield Rd

Bardsleys Cycles

0161 432 4936

482 Manchester Road, Stockport

Bicycle Doctor

0161 224 1303

68-70 Dickenson Road, Rusholme

www.bicycledoctor.co.uk

Cyclelife

0161 962 3037

67 Cross Street, Sale, M33 7HF

cyclelife.sale@btconnect.com

www.cyclelife.com

Eddie McGrath Cycles,

0161 748 2733

31 Station Road, Urmston, Trafford

Ken Foster's Cycle Logic

0161 881 7160

374-6 Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton

www.kenfosterscyclelogic.co.uk

Manchester Cycle Exchange

0161 748 2532

1 Brook Terrace Barton Road

Davyhulme

Bennetts

0161 969 1818

172-4 Northenden Road, Sale Moor

NW Mountain Bike Centre

0161 428 3311

249 Stockport Road, Cheadle

Skidmores Cycles

0161 624 5912

37 Union Street, Oldham

Withington Cycles

0161 445 3492

26 Burton Road, Withington

Pothole is the newsletter of the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign. Although the views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the GMCC

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