

## Cyclist Wins Commuter Challenge

Words and pictures by Peter Abel and Daniel Cadden

### Cycling Slogans:

*It's not what you ride.... it's how you ride it!*

*Does my bum look fast on this?*

### Extraordinary Meeting

An Extraordinary Meeting (EM) of the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign will occur at 7.30pm on Monday 10th November 2008 in Friends Meeting House, Mount St, Manchester M2 5N to vote on the following constitutional change, which is intended to bring the constitution into line with the application made to open a new bank account with the Co-operative Bank:

In section 6 "Finance" delete paragraph (ii) which reads

*"Funds may be drawn on the signature of the Treasurer alone on amounts up to a figure nominated by the General Meeting."*

and insert

"(ii)

*(a) Bank account signatories will be nominated by the General Meeting.*

*(b) Funds may be drawn on the signatures of any two of the nominated bank account signatories on amounts up to a figure nominated by the General Meeting."*

This change is proposed by Ted Lawson and seconded by Dick Venes. A copy of the constitution of the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign is available at [www.gmcc.org.uk/constitution](http://www.gmcc.org.uk/constitution).

A regular GMCC meeting will follow the EM, so why not come along and then join us for a drink afterwards at a nearby hostelry?

On Tuesday 16th September GMCC set out to determine before the world (or at least Manchester) the best mode of transport for an urban commute. After a considerable amount of planning, the stage was set and the gauntlet was laid down to cyclist, Charlie Baker, who pitted the humble bicycle against motorcar, omnibus and railway. The challenge started in the Stockport district of Heaton Chapel and finished at Manchester Town Hall in Albert Square. These locations were chosen to represent a typical short commute into Manchester City Centre from a nearby district. All the participants in the challenge set off from the corner of Warwick Road and Broomfield Road in Heaton Chapel at precisely 8:24 am. Charlie demonstrated with ease the superiority of the bicycle at rush hour by arriving first at the finish, just 20 minutes after leaving the start. Then train passenger, Oly Glover, arrived in second place taking a respectable 35 minutes. The third person to cross the finish line at the Town Hall was



the motorist, David Mason who took 43 minutes. Unfortunately however, it was bus user, Richard Venes, to arrive last with an unfashionably late journey time of 52 minutes.

In respect of journey cost, it was again the cyclist who won. GMCC calculated the cost of the cyclist's journey to be 38.5 pence, where as the bus user would have paid 90 pence for their journey (using a 4 week "Megarider" ticket). Marginally more expensive was the train at £1.10 (based on a season ticket). Finally, trucking in behind, the

journey cost in the car was estimated to be £2.30, not including parking charges!

The Carbon Dioxide emissions figures in grams for the journey were 0, 382, 603 and 1123 for the cyclist, train, bus and car respectively. This shows the cyclist to have a clear straight win.

Each commuter took the quickest legal route available for their mode of transport. The 5 mile distance was selected because over half of all car trips are estimated to be less than 5 miles.

The day of the challenge also saw the launch of European Mobility Week, in which an opportunity was provided for towns and cities to promote sustainable travel modes. With traffic congestion, CO2 emissions and rising fuel prices in the headlines the Commute Challenge provided an exciting way of illustrating the costs and environmental benefits of different forms of transport.

Oly Glover, Greater Manchester Cycle Campaign Secretary said: "the Commute Challenge was an objective exercise to illustrate which form of transport is best for the environment, health, cost, is quickest and most convenient – on all counts the bicycle came first.

The challenge commuters were greeted at the finish line in Albert Square by Councillor Richard Cowell (Executive Member for Environment) who said, in reference to the upcoming Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) referendum (see page 2): "Commute Challenge has been an interesting way to raise awareness of the transport decisions we are faced with on a day to day basis. In December, the people of Greater Manchester will be making a big decision on the future of transport. It is great to see Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign and other community & transport based groups taking a lead in the debate."



## Why Does Manchester Need the Transport Innovation Fund?

Car dependency: It's a bad habit and we need to break it. Some car journeys may be essential, but thousands of everyday car journeys are not. That's why we need Transport Innovation in Manchester.

According to the Department for Transport, 23 per cent of car journeys are less than 2 miles long. That is roughly 30 minutes walking or 15 minutes cycling. Yet Manchester is choked at peak times by increasing levels of congestion and slowing traffic speeds.

The Transport Innovation Fund (TIF), introduced by the Secretary of State in the July 2004 white paper, 'The Future of Transport' outlined a fund supporting:

- smarter, innovative local transport packages that combine demand management measures, such as road pricing, with measures to encourage modal shift, and better bus services
- local mechanisms which raise new funding for transport schemes"

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) subsequently submitted a bid for TIF funding which seeks to improve public transport and reduce congestion in Greater Manchester. The TIF investment brought to Manchester will total £3 billion, £1.5 billion of which will come from Government grants, £1.2 billion in the form of a loan

which will be repaid using peak time congestion charging and the remainder from other sources.

The TIF money will pay for Metrolink expansions, improved trains and better bus services. Furthermore the investment will mean new public transport interchanges, improved stations and a smart payment system. The successful implementation of the TIF bid (including congestion charge) would be a huge

step toward a cleaner, greener, leaner, more amicable and ultimately less car-dependant Manchester. More efficient transport and less congestion will mean:

### More space for living

- Too much space is allocated to

costs of delivering goods and services throughout Manchester should in turn be reduced.

### More equality

- Households without access to

society by removing the anonymity and segregation cars give us and replacing them with conviviality and social responsibility. Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign supports the Greater Manchester TIF bid as it will encourage more people to cycle and in turn make cycling safer. However, the GMCC continues to actively campaign for more TIF money to be spent creating a safer environment for cycling.



car parking. Streets are lined with cars and filled with mechanical noise instead of conversing residents and playing children. Parks, other public spaces and public rights of way are overlooked, undervalued and underused because car dependant families tend to ignore them.

### More prosperity

- More public transport and more people using it will lead to better regulation and lower costs. Necessary car journeys will be more predictable and subject to fewer delays. Less fuel will be wasted by drivers idling in traffic and accelerating from standstill. Cars will incur less mechanical wear from stop-start traffic. People will spend less economically inactive time in traffic. The

a car will be less disadvantaged as public transport improvements will mean increased flexibility and therefore more opportunities. These same households are often situated in the areas most adversely affected by congestion. The TIF bid will bring these people tangible improvements in health and quality of life.

### More independence

- Growing numbers of people will learn that many journeys are achievable on foot, by bicycle, by public transport or by a combination of modes leading to more independence before a driving licence is obtained. Some will even discover that they can give up the car completely and do more with the income saved. These benefits have the potential to re-stitch the very fabric of

## What Can I Do?

### Be sure of the facts:

Make sure you understand the details of the TIF bid so that you can be sure to spread the truth when faced with the misunderstandings harboured by the No Campaign.

### Make your views known:

The consultation period may have ended, but if you have concerns over how TIF money is spent, let your political representative know via [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

### Join one of the yes campaigns:

There are a number of organisations actively campaigning for the TIF bid. These include: Greater Manchester Yes Coalition - [www.wevoteyes.com](http://www.wevoteyes.com) United City - a Pro-TIF business lobby group - [www.unitedcity.co.uk](http://www.unitedcity.co.uk) Clean Air Now - [www.cleanairnow.co.uk](http://www.cleanairnow.co.uk)

### Get active on facebook:

Join the "I \*support\* congestion charging in Manchester facebook group (<http://www.new.facebook.com/group.php?gid=17193979785>)

### Vote yes in the TIF referendum:

The referendum is due to take place on December 11th. Make sure that you are on the electoral role in order to receive your ballot paper in order to cast your vote.

## Got an opinion?

Then GMCC would like to hear from you. Particularly if your view relates to the TIF or congestion charging and how they affect cycling. Email [nl\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:nl[at]gmcc.org.uk)

*"These benefits have the potential to re-stitch the very fabric of society..."*

## Feelings Run High

As the TIF bid has entered the Mancunian consciousness there have been emotional reactions, particularly from those who object to the congestion charge. Resoundingly this objection is from people who have already paid for cars and anticipate being dependent upon cars in future. Not only are they outraged at the idea of paying for the roads, they feel betrayed. If it wasn't frus-

*but I don't want the congestion charge.*

To each of these complaints there is an answer:

- *Decreasing the volume of traffic makes the roads more usable for all road users, including car drivers.*
- *When you drive into the city at peak hours you add to congestion. We are all traffic.*
- *The TIF bid is a package of public transport improvements. This will make it easier to get to school without using a car.*
- *The poor have the most to gain from*



trating enough to wait in traffic jams, to have other car drivers insult them with apparently no provocation and then to spend miserable moments hunting for those elusive parking spaces while burning some more of their costly fuel, they are now being further frustrated by a congestion charge. This is not what driving was supposed to be like. This is not the idea they were sold by their parents nor by the car adverts. This sense of betrayal is very real. You can hear it when people say things like:

- *The congestion charge is anti car.*
- *It's not my fault there are traffic jams, so I shouldn't have to pay.*
- *There's no other way to get our kids to school.*
- *It hurts the poor.*
- *Drivers are already overtaxed.*
- *Car drivers have a right to use the road because they pay road tax.*
- *You shouldn't charge people to get to work.*
- *Buses steal road space from car drivers.*
- *Better public transport is a good idea*

*improvements in public transport.*

- *Many households in Manchester do not have a car.*
  - *The real cost of owning a car has decreased over the years.*
  - *There are more cars on our streets than ever and we've run out of space for them all.*
  - *Drivers pay Vehicle Excise Duty. This money goes to the exchequer. Local councils pay for street maintenance.*
  - *The congestion charge applies only to drivers who pass a cordon during peak hours. There are plenty of ways to avoid the congestion charge.*
  - *In mixed traffic, buses are fifteen times more space efficient than cars.*
  - *The money for more buses and trams will come from tax payers. Half of this money will then be paid back by people who decide to drive cars when the roads are at their busiest. This is fair because cars take up more space than other any other group of vehicles.*
- Much of that will seem obvious to those who have engaged with the debate but it will be a revela-

## So What Does England's Leading Cycle Campaign Have to Say?

GMCC spoke to *London Cycling Campaign* to find out about their views on plans for Manchester's Congestion Charge, given the experience they have gained from the difference congestion charging has made in London. They said:

"There is no doubt that the introduction of the congestion change in London has been a key stimulus in one the sharpest increases in cycling ever seen in a major city. Cycling in central London soared within the first year and, as a range of barriers to cycling were removed and cycling promoted, it has continued to grow making the capital a more liveable, pleasant and healthy city."

"The London charge runs 7 till 6.30 which eliminates the prospect of rush hour being shifted to a later time as people wait for the 9.00/9.30 deadline."

"While some in the motoring lobby may think that it is in their interest to prevent congestion charging this is a significant mistake. Congestion charging does what it says on the tin – it helps reduce congestion. Motor car promotion and programmes like Top Gear encourage car use and car ownership (for many reasons such as fashion and status rather than plain transport) – the outcome is more congestion and, consequently, congestion charging. If families were not encouraged to own several cars but were to share instead there would be no need for congestion charging. As it stands every cyclist who does not own a car or uses their car less often is enabling those who do run cars regularly to park more easily and to experience less congestion."

tion for those who have focussed on the congestion charge rather than the whole TIF bid.

Still, these answers won't wash because they don't deal with that sense of betrayal. And paradoxically it is the car drivers' belief in their own dependence on their cars that is the most compelling argument for a

*"The TIF bid is the only plan on the table to help get this city off the treadmill..."*

mechanism that funds alternatives to the car. The longer Manchester's drivers are hooked on their cars, the longer the queues will get, the more fruitless the hunt for parking will be, the less tolerant drivers will become, the more fuel will get burnt (which itself comes at an increasing premium)

and the more intense the road rage will grow. The TIF bid is the only plan on the table to help get this city off the treadmill, and as part of the consultation, the city is asking you what you think. There are those who have said the bid doesn't go far enough, that it's too weak. Maybe that's true. But there isn't another system on offer, nor has one been proposed. The city will ask you if you support the TIF bid or not. Given people's perception of their dependence, this is one hell of an audacious question. The TIF bid needs all the help it can get.



## No Joy in Happy Slapping!

Words by Dougg Briggs

Cycling into Manchester on a recent Critical Commute ride I got talking to another frequent Critical Commuter, Sarah Hewitt of Didsbury and was concerned about a story she related to me about a recent assault on her. Sarah was cycling along through Didsbury when a car approaching from behind slowed down and as it passed her the front seat passenger leant out of the car and slapped/hit her. The car then sped off. Although Sarah was shocked she didn't come off her bike and managed to catch up with the car further along the street at some traffic lights, where she managed to take the details of the car.

Unfortunately for the occupants of the car who plainly jointly committed the assault, what they didn't know is that Sarah is a practising barrister and is fairly well up on things to do with the law - as one might expect! She took the case to the police with the expectation that they would do something about it. However, so far they are reluctant to take any court action against the driver of the car used in the assault. Only after a lot of pushing from Sarah was he traced and interviewed but he has refused to name the offender who struck the blow. The police will not pursue the matter further against him despite his obvious involvement.

Here we have a case where someone has undoubtedly been assaulted and has subsequently obtained details of one of her attackers, but the police don't seem to be interested in taking any action but seem to prefer to treat Sarah as an awkward nuisance who needs to be placated. This sort of assault on cyclists seem to be getting more prevalent. I myself have been the subject of similar assaults. I think that they are similar in nature to the so-called 'happy-slapping' phenomena, where innocent people are assaulted purely for the entertainment value for bored youths. There

have been several high profile incidents of happy slapping assaults. In the wake of one such incident in September 2007, a girl was jailed for using her mobile phone to film a happy slapping incident where the victim ended up dying. In the wake of this case the CPS 'issued a stark warning that they would not hesitate to prosecute people over "happy slapping" incidents.'

It may be, therefore, that the CPS would find that prosecution of people who assault cyclists for fun to be in the public interest. So why are they and the police seemingly so reluctant to follow up Sarah's case? Personally I find it appalling that they have, so far, failed to take the incident seriously and should therefore be

held to account and made to explain their inaction. Sarah is considering taking out a private prosecution if the police continue to be reluctant to act. Unfortunately the costs of that may be prohibitive. Sarah is glad however to report a very sympathetic response from Russell Jones and Walker the CTC solicitors who are to undertake a civil claim for her against the driver. Maybe it would help if readers write to the Pothole editor regarding any similar incidents in which they may have been assaulted or abused whilst cycling and where police have failed to act. We can then start to see if a picture emerges of general resistance by the police to act on such incidents and maybe we can bring

wider attention to the situation. In the meantime good luck to Sarah with all this and glad to see it hasn't put you off getting on your bike.

**Editors Note: Do you have your own story to tell? Details of similar incidents can be sent to via email to [nl\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:nl[at]gmcc.org.uk).**

## CycleNation Update

The CycleNation (formally Cycle Campaign Network) and CTC 2008 Autumn Conference will be held in Warrington on Saturday 15th November. Entitled 'Streets Ahead', it will look cycling issues and campaign on the theme "20s' Plenty". For more information visit [www.cyclenation.org.uk](http://www.cyclenation.org.uk) and click "Conference Bookings".

## Students encouraged to "Bike MCR"

With sky rocketing fuel prices, the coming congestion charge, growing concerns about climate change and the rise in obesity and health problems, more and more Mancunians are leaving the car at home and taking to their bikes.

I bike MCR is a voluntary cycling community group that is helping people do just that and introducing them to brand new biking experiences including bicycle polo and bike dancing.

They organise a month long annual festival that features all sorts of biking activities to get people on their bikes and to build Manchester's cycling community.

This Spring Manchester saw the second I Bike MCR Festival take place with a great deal of success. Events included a plethora of bike activities and events which were attended by a wide variety of people from Manchester's (and as far afield as Vancouver) bike community.

The second annual festival was even better attended than last year's festival and has seen a massive increase in the bike and fixie community of Manchester. The I Bike MCR email account has been flooded with comments praising the work and

desperate for it's continued existence.

Now they are planning a mini week long one as well this Autumn to get the thousands of students coming to Manchester get on their bikes too. They have a whole week packed full of exciting activities for students (and other people are welcome to join in too) including a bike tour around the city to show new students local off-road cycle routes, bike shops and other cycling amenities and a bicycle film night at the Manchester University's council chamber. Also planned are bike maintenance classes, cycle confidence training, mountain biking, a bike treasure hunt, bicycle polo classes, bike rides and a moonlight bike ride.

Students will also be invited to join a commute to university every day that week where they will ride in a long line together from Owens Park down Oxford Road to university. One of the organisers Nes Brierley says "we hope that having this daily group commute will encourage more students to cycle as they will be able to make new cycling friends and also cycling as a group increases people's confidence in cycling on the road, which can be quite daunting for some. Especially freshers that are used to cycling in quiet towns."

The festivals are organised entirely voluntarily by cycling enthusiasts in their spare time and rely on donations from participants and local bike shops to pay for equipment etc. They do it not for profit but, as Nes Brierley says, for "a passion for promoting cycling".

Their annual festival gets a lot of praise from the bike community and residents of Manchester with one of their supporters saying, "...it is at the forefront of promoting cycling in Manchester... it forges a worthwhile and healthy community spirit."

We are sure that their mini festival will be just as successful. It takes place from 6th October to the 12th October 2008. The festival is open for anyone, not just students, to take part. Find out more at [www.ibikemcr.org.uk](http://www.ibikemcr.org.uk)



## Bikes on Trams

The campaign to allow bicycles onto off-peak Metrolink trams is picking up. We have been communicating with new Metrolink Director, Philip Purdy, telling him about commitments GMPTA made about carriage of bicycles on trams and showing examples from around the world where this works. During off-peak periods, trams have spare capacity that could be filled with more passengers. Cycles increase the catchment area of each

Metrolink station nine-fold, enabling more people to use trams and in-turn use up spare capacity.

Help us keep up the pressure on local politicians (many of whom we believe to sympathise with our aims) by e-mailing the letter to be found on the GMCC website ([www.gmcc.org.uk/metrolink](http://www.gmcc.org.uk/metrolink)) to your elected representatives, for whom you can get contact details by visiting [writetothem.com](http://writetothem.com). You can edit the letter to make it personal to you and your locality.

## New GMCC Structure

Following the March 2008 AGM at which the new Honorary Secretary Olly Glover was ap-

pointed, GMCC has forged and adopted a new structure. Facilitators have been appointed (in addition to elected officers) to help direct and further the cam-

Please keep us posted on any responses you get back using [nl\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:nl[at]gmcc.org.uk).

## GMCC e-newsletter

July saw the launch of the GMCC e-newsletter. It features campaign bulletins, local event information and details on how you can actively support GMCC. The e-newsletter is intended to improve the way GMCC engages its membership. We also send out minutes of our meetings, so readers can see the issues discussed and the actions taken.

The e-newsletter is issued once every month or two months and supplements Pothole. The latest edition can be seen by visiting: <http://www.gmcc.org.uk/main/#post-128>.

To subscribe, send an e-mail with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line to Olly Glover, GMCC Honorary Secretary, at: [honsec\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:honsec[at]gmcc.org.uk). Your feedback, will also be welcomed, either by email or in person at one of our monthly meetings.

Each facilitator is there to support progress in a specific campaign area. If you have any issues, concerns or points of view you would like to bring to

the attention of the campaign, then please drop a line to the most appropriate officer/facilitator. Or come along to a meeting! (See cover page)



**Honorary Secretary: Olly Glover**  
[honsec\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:honsec[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Olly co-ordinates and leads the different strands of the campaign. His priorities for his year in office are improving the structures and processes of the Campaign, boosting its profile and membership and ensuring the campaign sets objectives, both long and

short-term.

**Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Ted Lawson**  
[treasurer\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Ted has performed these essential roles for the campaign for many years. He is currently aided by a small team of helpers: Paul, Mark and Steve. Thanks to them all. Ted also works on the GMCC website.



**Pothole Newsletter Editor: Daniel Cadden**  
[nl\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:nl[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Dan is refreshing our already popular newsletter, Pothole. He aims to ensure editions are regularly published whilst broadening the newsletter's appeal.

**Cycle training and awareness facilitator: Ernie Buck**  
[awareness\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:awareness[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Ernie's main objective will be improving road users' awareness of cyclists including liaison with bus and taxi drivers. Additionally Ernie will campaign for more cycling training, both for children and adults, using the extensive knowledge and experience he has of cycle training, which he delivers via the Manchester-based BikeRight! organisation.



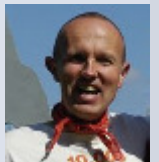
**Funding facilitator: Doug Briggs**  
[funding\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:funding[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Doug's seeks funding sources for when we want to run a larger campaign or a related activity which requires a larger than usual sum of money. He could, for example, start a specific fundraising campaign or draft up an application for voluntary sector grants.



**Media officer: Vincent Walsh**  
[media\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:media[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Vincent is our point of contact with the media. For Vincent, cycling is a lifelong passion. His motto is, to paraphrase Descartes, "I cycle therefore I am."



**Planning and infrastructure: Richard Alderson and Dick Venes**  
[planning\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:planning[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Richard and Dick will ensure that cyclists' views are taken into account in development of cycling and road schemes in the various metropolitan boroughs. They will campaign for better representation and consultation of GMCC across Greater Manchester and represent cyclists views.



**External campaigns and partnerships facilitator: Daniel Cadden**  
[partnerships\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:partnerships[at]gmcc.org.uk)

In this new role, Dan will be forging links with other transport / environment-related groups in the region, and encouraging more joint working between GMCC and these groups.

**Lobbying facilitator: Olly Glover**  
[lobbying\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:lobbying[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Further to his Honorary Secretary role, Olly coordinates lobbying campaigns designed to influence national and local politicians, and other organisations on cycle-related matters. He will use letter-writing; petitioning; lobbying and direct consultation to increase GMCC's influence on cycling issues.



**Public transport facilitators: Steve Bowater and Chris Trueblood**  
[publictransport\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:publictransport[at]gmcc.org.uk)

Steve and Chris facilitate campaigns which focus on the relationship between cycling and modes of public transport. Currently they are pressing for commitments to allow off-peak cycle carriage on Metrolink, introduce cycle parking at railway stations and maintain or improve the carriage of cycles on trains.



## The Colnago C50

Words and pictures by  
Doug Briggs

Like most of us I've been riding bikes since being a kid and started time trialling and road racing when I was 19. My first racing bike was made by the guys who used to make the frames at Carlton Cycles in Worksop - they set up as Columbia Cycles after Carlton shut down. This frame was made from Reynolds 531SL - the 'SL' stood for 'Special Lightweight'.

When I got back into road cycling a few years ago I bought a secondhand road bike, with Reynolds 853 tubing, built by Bob Jackson of Leeds. I still have this bike and it's fair to say it's jolly nice - even more so since I set it up with Look carbon forks. Putting a set of carbon forks into an older steel frame and converting it to an Ahead headset is a pretty cost efficient upgrade - not only saving nearly a pound in weight but adding the benefit of carbon fibre's shock-absorbing properties which have to be felt to be believed - or rather not felt, if you see what I mean!

However, a mate of mine - actually a very quick cyclist - has always poured scorn on my

ering - Ernesto Colnago in Cambiago, Milan, Italy. He started making frames in 1954 and is noted for his association in the 1970s with the greatest rider of all time - Eddy Merckx. As well as Merckx, over the years many top riders have used Colnago frames to win all the great races on the continent, including Giuseppe Saroni, Gianni Bugno, Tony Rominger, Joop Zoetmelk, Moreno Argentin and Roger De Vlaeminck. This year the points jersey in the Tour de France was won by Oscar Freire of the Rabobank team - riding a Colnago frame.

In 1986 Colnago collaborated with ATR Composites and Ferrari to produce a prototype all-carbon bike. This collaboration has now evolved into the C50, brought out to mark Colnago's 50th anniversary. In the C50 Colnago still uses traditional construction techniques, in that lugs are used instead of the full one-piece monocoque moulding common to most carbon bikes. The lugs and bottom bracket shell are made from carbon fibre with the carbon matting being laid up by hand. The bottom bracket shell uses a titanium threaded insert bonded into the carbon, to take the bottom bracket.



choice of steeds. "Why not stop prattling about with crap and get yourself a proper bike" would be the sort of soft, comforting words of wisdom he would impart when advising me on my next bike. A proper bike? Well, in the minds of many cyclists, there is only one maker worth consid-

The list price of a C50 frame is around £2,500. Even accordion makers can't stretch to this sort of dosh so last year I started looking on Ebay to see what was around. Eventually a secondhand C50 frame came up and I managed to secure it for a pact with the devil which involved something about a bottomless well

and a badly corroded thimble. It came with a Chris King headset and, luckily, the correct Colnago seat pin - 'luckily' because these frames use an odd size seat pin and the Colnago version doesn't come cheap. I built the bike up with a Camagnolo carbon Chorus 10 speed groupset, excepting an older set of Dura Ace twin pivot brake calipers. Wheels are Mavic Open Pro rims on Chorus hubs built by Rick Green Cycles in Handforth - not particularly light but good all-round training wheels for cycling over potholes and rough roads. The chainset is a compact version but with 36/48 rings - the 36 inside ring is non-standard made by TA, manufacturers of a wide range of very good quality chainrings in a range of sizes to suit many different chainsets. The block is a mix of Chorus and Record sprockets I put together to achieve the ratios I was after.

It rides as one might expect and behaves exactly as one hears tell of full carbon bikes. That is to say it soaks up road bumps and vibration in a most uncanny way, whilst being incredibly stiff. A good bike frame will resist the bending moment which is applied to the frame when a rider presses down on the pedals. This bending moment occurs because the pedals are to either side of the axis of the frame. A poor frame will bend with every pedal stroke and then spring back after each stroke, with the result that some of the rider's energy is wasted on making the frame bend side to side instead of being used to propel the rider. When carbon fibre is moulded in certain ways in a bike frame it is very good at resisting this sort of bending. On the C50 this property really is most apparent, both on the flat and riding up hills. A feature of Colnago frames over the years is the very laid back geometry used. When one gets into racing bikes and frame jargon one hears sort of things like "the 73 degree head angle makes for a lively and responsive ride making this frame ideal for the rider nipping in and out of the peleton like a mountain goat, tirelessly flying over mountain

passes as if possessed of angel's wings for feet etc.". Basically, the steeper the head angle of the bike the more twitchy and less stable the bike becomes. (This 'twitchiness' is also tied up with the amount of bend, or rake, in the forks which, when considered with the head angle, leads to what is known as the 'trail' of the frame - the actual measurement that determines a bike's stability. Maybe in a future Pothole readers might want to know more about this sort of thing.....or not). Anyway, the point is Colnago have always made very stable bikes. For example 73 degrees is indeed very common for a typical contemporary road bike. The C50 in my size uses a 71.1 degree head angle, which leads to a very safe feel to the bike. The last few weekends I've been cycling around Holme Moss and the Snake Pass. Coming down long descents off the Pennines with gusty cross winds feels a lot safer on the C50 than on any other bike I've had. Racing bods may criticize the frame for not being responsive enough, yet as I wrote above Oscar Freire won the Green Jersey in this year's tour - a competition for the most consistent sprinter - on a Colnago frame with same geometry as a C50. I tend to think that, as a bike is inherently unstable, why not make it the least unstable as possible without adding another wheel!

So to summarise - an amazing bike which has to be ridden to be believed and which I was very lucky to get my hands on. Mind you - don't forget Christmas is almost upon us. In a few months time you too could be riding the ultimate bike - as long as you don't mind spending the rest of your life emptying a well with a perforated thimble.

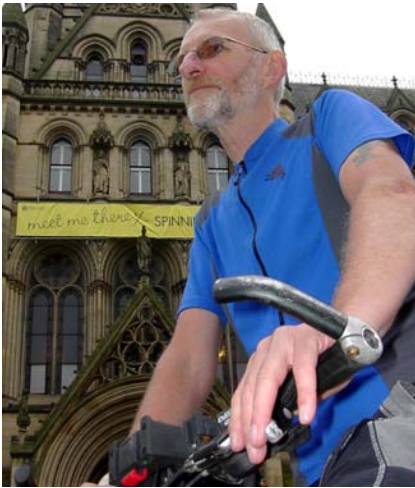
**Editors Note: A reviews section is a new feature to Pothole which in future will also include questions from readers' with answers from GMCC on all aspects of cycling, as well as readers correspondence. If you have a review you would like to submit, a question you would like to ask or a view you would like to air, then drop an email to [nl\[at\]gmcc.org.uk](mailto:nl[at]gmcc.org.uk).**

## I May Be Gone Some Time

Words by Zanda Bailey

### GMCC meets a Manchester cyclist who did the longest ride possible.

On July 19<sup>th</sup> 2005, Ernie Buck loaded his panniers onto a new touring bicycle and clipped into his SPD pedals. However, this was no ordinary Sunday cycle tour.



"I had always wanted to visit the sites associated with my hero Mahatma Gandhi," explains Ernie. "I ride my bike for transport, I always have." The ride to India had been in the planning stage for years but to ride half way round the world and then to return on a plane just seemed wrong. So he decided to keep heading east, through Asia, through Canada and across to Nova Scotia, returning to England using the shortest possible Atlantic crossing. How does a man in his late 50s, with a touch of arthritis, manage to power his bicycle all the way around the planet? "Cycling was an integral part of my life. I had a 20 mile round trip to work. The low impact nature of cycling is ideal for cardio vascular fitness without making arthritic joints worse."

What did he pack? Ernie answers in two words "Too much!" He goes on, "I set off attempting to cover all eventualities from campsite to five star hotel, for snow through monsoon, for all societies and occasions." Ernie also

bought clothing en route, often in preparation for the next country on the map. "I bought lightweight below-the-knee trousers for riding when I crossed the border into Turkey but it's best to be sympathetic to Islam so I had a couple of full length cargo pants made up by a Kurdish tailor in Van in eastern Turkey which served me well in the colder parts of Iran and Pakistan." There were also legal requirements to adapt to. "I had to buy a helmet when I got to Canada." SPD 'clipless' pedals enabled him to get more power out of each pedal stroke and were a huge improvement on the flat pedals he had used all his life. Before the ride, people had tried to persuade me to use them but I stubbornly refused". A bike shop proprietor finally said "Ernie, I'm going to put SPD pedals on your present bike and lend you these shoes - get out there and try them!" I was convinced

within the first mile. But riding 400 miles a week is gruelling and it took its toll. "I desperately needed new tyres and a nine speed block and chain when I got to New Delhi." Ernie hunted in vain for parts and eventually placed an order with the British shop that had sold him the bike. "DHL worked wonders for £90 - Bradford to New Delhi in 3 days. Ironically I discovered that the tyres I'd ordered were manufactured just down the road in India - but for export only."

Ernie's massive calorie spend required him to eat lots and this proved to be a real challenge. The physical effort of the ride was now visible on his body and he was getting dangerously thin. "Stuffing enough in to keep energy levels was difficult. I remember looking at myself in the mirror in Calcutta and seeing a picture of the relief of Belsen. The varied diets of Thailand and Malaysia eventually helped me get back into some sort of shape. I fell in love with

mango in India and still eat lots of it now, mostly dried. Bananas, dried mango, strong dark chocolate, cherries or plums are all in my pannier on long trips these days."

Yet Ernie's poor condition and an infection that accompanied him in India did not stop him giving the local 'boy racers' a run for their money. "I'd be riding at my normal pace and overtake a local, on his rattly old 'Hero' bone-shaker, and soon after hear the same bicycle clanking up behind and gradually overtaking me. I'd glance to my right to see a grim-faced young man sweating profusely and looking straight ahead, determined not to be outdone by some foreigner on a heavily laden bike. A few yards in front they'd slow down again and I, keeping my unaltered pace, would overtake them again. If I was feeling devilish and had managed to get a good breakfast, I used to make a race of it. Riders who could speak English did sometimes engage me in conversation and I met many interesting people that way."

His biggest impression from the trip is the friendliness of the people he met. "I retain a warm glow when I remember that most people in this great big world of ours are warm, kind and friendly once you get to know them."

A spell of work as a language teacher in India gave respite before the second half of the tour which featured, most memorably, the splendour of the Canadian Rockies. Ernie arrived back in Manchester just in time for Christmas 2006, having ridden 20,126 kilometres, through 15 countries. If he could return to just one place, which would he choose? "It's a toss up between Iran and Canada; for the warmth and generosity of the

people in both cases. Iran had beautifully smooth roads." What did this ride mean to the man who did it? "Moving on becomes a way of life and the journey itself constitutes a large punctuation mark. So, I had a life before the ride, went for a ride, and now have a life after the ride." This new life comes with the best job he has ever had. After I arrived home I read John Franklin's Cycle Craft. It so perfectly articulated my own riding style, described as "assertive but defensive". "It prompted me to find BikeRight! here in Manchester and sign up for the cycling instructor's course. I've held some high powered jobs in my career, I've been the director of a company, but teaching people to cycle on the road in this way is the most fulfilling job - turning out tomorrow's cyclists." Tomorrow's cyclists couldn't have a more experienced teacher, nor one as committed to cycling as a means of transport.

Is Ernie planning another tour? He has just bought a new bike, a Reise and Muller Birdy, and he is going to test it by riding from Manchester to London next week. You might think this a long ride but everything is relative. Ernie has a pipe dream. There's some great riding to be had starting in New Zealand, riding north through Australia, island hopping north through Pacific Asia and then heading West through the former USSR. Tours like this show how viable cycling is. If Ernie can circumnavigate the planet on a bicycle, we can all cycle too, for business and pleasure.

A full transcript of the interview with Ernie Buck is available on [www.gmcc.org.uk](http://www.gmcc.org.uk).

You might like to read Ernie's travelogue at [www.thebuckstop.net](http://www.thebuckstop.net).



# Tracknut's Tavern

## An Interview with: GBH Custom Hacks

Welcome to Tracknut's Tavern, where Tracknut will be bringing you news from his own unique perspective, with help from his trusty sidekick, Stoker Joe. Tracknut's first roving report takes us to GBH Custom Hacks, a cycle shop in Manchester's Northern Quarter. Although quaint, especially when considered next to large chain cycle stores, it is somehow very fitting with its vibrant and bohemian surroundings.

Tracknut, accompanied by his sidekick, Stoker Joe, dropped by one Tuesday morning with their reporters notebooks and tape recorders ready to subject the proprietors to a barrage of questions:

**Q: GBH is a common acronym that sounds painful to most people. Whats does it mean?**

**A:** It's short for Gbob [G] and The Hippy [H]. They are the names we go by. See, we even have it tattooed. [*Gbob and Hippy both turn around to show Tracknut and his sidekick, Stoker Joe, the tattoos they each have on base of their necks. Sure enough, GBob has a "GBob" tattoo and Hippy has a "Hippy" tattoo!*]

**Q: What inspired you into the cycle trade?**

**A:** [H]We both started by riding BMX bikes. And then we started working at Harry Hall's cycle shop, on Saturdays and Wednesday afternoons at first. We worked there for 5/6 years before we were head-hunted to join Edinburgh Bicycle Co-operative's store when it opened in Rushome. Although it is a co-operative, when they went from sharing profits to giving shares it went a bit too corporate.

**Q: What is the best thing about running a bike shop?**

**A:** [G]Running it for ourselves - doing what you want to do to bikes instead of having people say "Why are you fixing that piece of crap when you could sell the customer a new one?"

**Q: Starting a bike shop can be a scary thing. What has been your lowest moment so far on this venture?**

**A:** [G]Getting robbed. 16 bikes were taken. That was all of them in the shop at the time and of those, eighty per cent belonged to customers. Money had to be borrowed from family setting the business back by a year.

**Q: GBH Custom Hacks is not your common garden bike shop. What sets you apart?**

**A:** [H]Predominantly it is a workshop. We fix bikes first and sell them second. We convert bikes from one style to another so that people keep their bikes. We also try and recycle bikes. If someone's bike is not comfortable, we will help them change it to make it comfortable instead of selling them a new one. Also we try and recycle old bikes to keep them out of the skip.

**Q: What has been the most exciting recent development at GBH Custom Hacks?**

**A:** [G]Getting an account with Euro-Asia Imports. It's been difficult but it means we can easily obtain parts.

**Q: Where would you like to see yourselves in ten years time?**

**A:** [G]Sticking with this place, I kind of like it.

[H]Getting

the most out of a good relationship with the neighbours, getting more storage.

[G]Start doing our own parts and also clothing

[H]Yeah T-shirts but not just any screen-printed mass-produced T-shirts, but ones we get made from recycled cotton or hemp. Also products produced by reusing tyres, tubes and other bike parts. Clocks, lamps, tables, anything really!

**Q: What do you ride?**

**A:** [H]Raleigh Team track bike that belonged to Adrian Timmis, he used it to train for the Tour de France. It's got two types of steel in the frame bonded together.

[G]An EAI Bareknuckle fixie. We both ride BMX too.

GBH Custom Hacks is refreshingly different from other cycle shops. The reconditioned bikes proudly draped outside take the place of a shop window depicting the latest in lightweight technology. Inside, it even smells the way a bike shop should The whole place is purposeful in presentation and functional in feel. GBob and Hippy are both open minded and although they seem to quickly be building a bit of a cult following amongst experienced cyclists, they have a lot to offer anyone looking to buy a complete bike or get an old bike fixed up!



## local authority contacts

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Wigan	Peter Wickett	01942 404 317	P.Wickett[at]wigan.gov.uk

## GMCC Bike Shop Discounts:

### 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 5355  
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 3031  
67 Cross Street,  
Sale

### 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

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