

Bike week: what's it all about?

Rob Raikes, ex 'Bike Doc' shares his opinions

The Brompton challenge (previous Bike Week)

Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign

meets on the second Monday of each month, 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, close to Manchester Town Hall. The meeting is usually followed by a drink in a nearby pub. Come along and see what it's about or join our social rides

Bike Week Then and Now **Rob Raikes remembers**

Some years ago, my co-worker Mary Clark, suggested we should run a whole week of events for National Bike Week. We decided to do two rides, a treasure hunt, a pub quiz and a pub ride.

As I remember, the rides went along the Fallowfield Loop on one evening and out to Styal and round the Airport on another.

The treasure hunt sent people round Chorlton meadows and back to the Marble Beer House, and the pub crawl ended up at the Marble too.

The quiz, all about bicycles, of course, took place at the Marble Bar. Are you sensing a theme here?

For the first three events, the same four people turned up each night (thank you, oh ye faithful!). We had six for the Treasure Hunt and eight for the Pub ride.

Interestingly, the Pub Ride, was the only event to outlast the year, thanks to Dick Venes continuing to organise it.

National Bike Week has been running in the UK for several years now. It is in the newish tradition of "awareness weeks" beloved of politicians and local government workers to show that they really care.

It is a measure of how deeply important cycling is that it warrants a whole week to itself. I failed to find National Bike Weeks in France, Germany, Denmark or Holland. Only in the UK, Ireland and the USA.

This notion of cycling as transport doesn't seem to have taken much hold yet in the corridors of power. It does seem to be catching on with the general public. There do seem to be more bikes around on the streets, and sales have been good at (some) bike shops at least, anyway in my experience.

So what of this National Bike Week? Is it the shot in the arm that the "cycling community" needs, or is it just cosmetic gesture politics? Most local authorities only start planning a few weeks before, so it lacks the profile it deserves.

In the brief history of my involvements in National Bike Week a theme seems to be that of preaching to the converted, and failing to convince the unbelievers. Perhaps this is because all the push for cycling is to do with such worthy things as health improvement, green concerns and economics. Not that these aren't really important, but I sincerely believe that the way to get people onto bikes is to let them have fun on them. Most of the events are designed to be fun. Maybe they just need to be trailed a bit earlier.

Happy Cycling One and All !

At another Bike Week there was the famous GMCC Brompton drama in St Anne's Square, where a number of "city gents" on Bromptons had to negotiate an obstacle course of "A Government White Paper", some "Red Tape" and some "Moving Goalposts" manipulated by "Faceless Bureaucrats" in order to reach the finishing line of "An Integrated Transport Policy". This squib was considered politically incendiary by the organiser of the St Anne's Square event, and the City Gents were ordered to leave the square by the Community Coppers no less, who



were, it has to be said extremely polite, not to mention a bit embarrassed.

This year, there is a Social Ride on Thursday 24th June starting at 5.30 p.m. at Albert Square, and going to the Airport via Route 6, which I think goes all the way there.

I expect Dick will be leading the Pub Ride again.

(see over for Bike Week events listings or go to www.bikeweek.org.uk to search in your area)

Bike week/month June 2010 **Reasons to get out on your bike**

www.bikeweek.org.uk

A flavour of some Bike Week events coming up in June (details correct at time of going to press).

Stockport

Sat 5th June, 11am-5pm. St Peter's Sq Bike Event (part of the World Environment Day). This event is about getting everyone to think about the benefits of cycling whilst demonstrating going green can be great fun!

Wed 23rd June, 7pm-8pm. Stockport Community Cycling Club invites riders to a bridleway and canal side ride starting from Bredbury Hall. 0161 487 2387 stockportcycling@ntlworld.com

Rochdale

HealthCycles (for over 16s). Email seamus.kelly@ctc.org.uk or call 01706 922055

Sunday 20th June, 9.30-10.30am. A gentle ride for 45 minutes. Queen's Park, Heywood, OL10.

Mon 21st June, 9.30-10.30am. Healthcycle beginners. Truffet Park, Bowness Road, Langley, Middleton M24 4WT

Tues 22nd June 9.30-10.30am. Healthcycle intermediate. Queen's Park, Heywood, OL10

Wed 23rd June, 10.30-11.30am Healthcycle intermediate. Truffet Park, Bowness Road, Langley, Middleton M24 4WT

Wed 23rd June, 1.00-1.45pm, Adult beginners /easy ride. Broadfield Park, St Alban's Street, Off Drake Street, OL16 1QT

Manchester

7-27th June, Greater Manchester Workplace Cycle Challenge. A fun and free workplace based challenge that encourages people to give cycling a go! Organisations across Greater Manchester will compete to see who can get the most staff to ride a bike for just 10 minutes or more. Register here <http://www.gmworkplacechallenge.org.uk/> and get national challenge news at <http://www.ctc.org.uk/desktopdefault.aspx?tabid=5313>

19-27 June GM Cycle Commute Challenge 2010. The Cycle Commute challenge is simple: all you have to do is cycle to and from your place of work/study at least once during Bike Week (19-27 June), login and record your cycle trips. You can challenge your company or college to register and take part as a team. Entrants can win some great prizes! More details at www.cyclegm.org

Wed 16th June, 8am - 12pm. Annual Celebration of Cycling on Oxford Road for staff of Higher Education Precinct Organisations (UoM, MMU, CMFT & RNCM). Led routes into Oxford Road with a central meeting point offering breakfast, Dr bikes, cycle shops, security, freebies, information, advice.

Fri 18th June, 6pm, Adult social ride. From the Spread Eagle, Wilbraham Road. Along the canal to Sale and back via Sale Water Park.

Sun 20th June, 11am 'Loop the Loop' ride from Chorlton Park, along the Manchester Cycleway to Debdale Park and the City Centre and return to Chorlton Park via quiet routes. (organised by Friends of the Fallowfield Loop)

Tues 22nd June, 8am-3pm Bike to Work day, Albert Square, Manchester City Centre. Open to all! Bike Maintenance, servicing, cleaning, information, advice, freebies and have-a-go activities! Bike for your breakfast! (only applicable to cyclists on the day before 10am). Bike skills from 11.30am-2.30pm

Thurs 24th June, 5.30pm Greater Manchester Cycle Campaign Social Ride starting at Albert Square, and going to the Airport via Route 6.

Sat 26th June, Bike Fabulous. A showcase of stylish cycle wear and cycle accessories. Events throughout the day in the Arndale Centre, Manchester. More details at www.bikefabulous.org

Sun 27th June Mersey Valley/Fallowfield Loop ride from Chorlton Water Park (organised by the Mersey Valley wardens with help from Friends of the Fallowfield Loop and Sustrans rangers). See www.merseyvalley.org.uk.

If you would like more information please contact the Environmental Campaigns Team at 0161 953 2751 or email bikeweek@manchester.gov.uk

Warrington

Tues 22 June, 12pm-2pm. Bike Week cycle fair. Stalls, prize draws, cycle information, rides. Chadwick House, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6AE ehayes@mepc.com 01925 858 862

Sun 27 June, 12pm-4pm, Charity fundraising ride. 01925664108, Catherine.Meddemmen@5bp.nhs.uk

Bike to School Week, Contact your local travel plan organiser.

Tameside

Sun 27th June, 10am-1pm, Tameside Tour. 8 mile bike ride mostly off road using the NCN66 from Ashton-under-Lyne to Oldham. For families and children. cycling@tameside.gov.uk 0161 342 3906

Trafford

Sun 20 June, 12pm-5pm. Trafford Bike Festival aimed at the whole family. Worthington Park, Broad Road, Sale, Trafford, M33 2ES. Guided rides, displays, activities and Dr Bike workshop. 0161 912 1462 cycling@trafford.gov.uk

Bike Friday

Bike Friday takes place starting at various locations across Greater Manchester on the **last friday morning of the month**. Cyclists converge on Exchange Square in the City Centre by 8.30am. It's an opportunity for cycle commuters to tag along for a chat or gain confidence cycling on city streets.

8am starting points are:

- Stretford Mall (next to Chester Road bus stop)
- Chorlton Library
- Withington Library
- Levenshulme Station
- Prestwich Pizza (junction of Bury New Road and Scholes Lane).

RED means STOP

Do cyclists ignoring red lights understand the consequences of their actions on pedestrians and vehicle users? Sarah Hewitt says the potential for harm and the increased hostility their actions arouse towards other cyclists is not worth it.



When I commute by bicycle into Manchester City Centre I am acutely aware that my safety and comfort depend, in no small measure, upon the skills and the good will of motorists. I need them to be ready, willing and able to see me, and to give me both the space and opportunity to undertake my journey safely.

Obviously it is compulsory for motorists to drive safely but not for them to extend goodwill to cyclists. I firmly believe that I have a much safer and pleasanter time if my presence on the road is welcomed rather than resented by other road users. I want my journey into the city to be a feat of co-operation—not a battle, even of wills.

I am therefore saddened and frustrated at the large number of fellow cyclists who seem to think that red traffic lights do not apply to them and who simply ride on through or show no more than the barest hesitation before proceeding. What do you think you are doing? Why do you think that the rules, which apply to everybody else, should not apply to you?

Junction regulations are not simply to protect you. Even if they were, you are not entitled simply to shrug off protection because you think you can do without it. Your actions suggest that you think your own judgment is superior to safe regulation.

Can you imagine the chaos and danger that would result if all road users were to choose which rules they wanted to comply with and which they did not? In fact by jumping red lights you are assuming that everyone else will be complying with the rules you are ignoring.

No harm caused?

I anticipate a response that your actions never do any harm and have very little potential to do harm except to yourself. Have you really thought that through? You might well cause physical injury to yourself but also to others whether as a direct result of a collision with you or as a result of taking evasive action.

In the event of an accident where you were injured by a motor vehicle, most drivers—regardless of fault—would suffer a deal of distress and shock at what had happened to you.

By your actions, you choose to place your fellow cyclists at risk from the hostility and resentment you have provoked. Cyclists are frequently disliked by motorists: More often than not this is a downright **unjustifiable** attitude, but by jumping red lights, you provoke the hostility of even the most supportive car driver.

No time to stop?

I wonder what amount of time you actually save by your actions? I doubt it can be much more than a minute a time and is unlikely to be much more than 5 minutes in any half hour journey. So, five minutes gained for a lifetime of resentment for all of us—I cannot see, on any balancing exercise, that such a gain could possibly be worth it. Please stop at red lights. What good reason have you got not to?

Sarah Hewitt

Sharing the roads: bikes and buses

Graeme Sherriff, Manchester Friends of the Earth



'Love Your Bike' (Manchester's Friends of the Earth cycle campaign) is finding out how buses and bicycles can share the road better.

The campaign that aims to get more people cycling more often has been tackling a tricky issue. How can cyclists and buses better share the road to ensure that our two-wheeled friends can get around safely. This is an issue that has been raised time and time again and, although there have been few actual casualties caused by bike-bus snarl ups, it is not only an issue that worries people who cycle, but also clearly puts off others from cycling.

Step one has been to carry out a survey of driver behaviours that people who cycle in the area have experienced, and which make them concerned about their safety. Campaigners asked other campaign groups what they thought were the 'top 10' things that bus drivers do that could make cyclists feel unsafe. They then made a web questionnaire and invited cyclists to respond. The level of response was a very pleasant surprise: over 700 individuals filled out the questionnaire. The results were decisive. A very clear 'top 3' things emerged.

- Firstly 'passing too close to you' (78% of respondents put this in their top 3 behaviour that are most likely to make them feel unsafe when cycling),
- Secondly 'pulling out from bus stops without looking and signalling' (60%)
- And overtaking when not necessary (in busy traffic or approaching a bus stop) (43%).

These concerns were identified, in this order, for all sub-groups split by frequency of cycling, i.e. it makes no difference if the cycled once a month, or everyday. The full results can be downloaded from the campaign website www.loveyourbike.org.

The next step is a survey of bus drivers to find what they see cyclists doing on the roads to put themselves at risk. So watch this space.

RIDE FOR THE CHRISTIE

2 day mystery bike ride 31st July and 1st August

This event helps Christie's to raise money to fund projects which are outside the scope of the NHS. It's a 150 mile circular route spread over two days.

Last year the charity raised nearly £12 million which funded, amongst other things, a new radiopharmacy, communications skills training for nursing staff, a new state-of-the-art surgical robot and groundbreaking cancer research. Find out more at <http://www.christies.org/events/cycling/mystery/default.aspx>

Pothole is the newsletter of the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign (GMCC).

Views expressed in Pothole are not necessarily those of the GMCC.

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Hon Secretary via: secretary@gmcc.org.uk or telephone 0161 248 9150.

Shops offering discounts to GMCC members

A1 Cycle Spares 0161 998 2882
414-416 Palatine Road, Northenden, M22 4JT

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

Bennets, 0161 969 1818
172-4 Nortenden Road, Sale Moor

Bicycle Doctor 0161 224 1303
68-70 Dickenson Road, Rusholme
www.bicycledoctor.co.uk

Biking Factory Shop, 0161 773 2125
424, Bury New Rd Prestwich M25 1BD

Cyclelife, 0161 962 3037
67 Cross Street Sale M33 7HF

Devereux Cycles, 0161 973 5234
34 Green Lane M33 5PN

Eddie McGrath Cycles, 0161 748 2733
31 Station Road, Urmston, Trafford

Evans Cycles Manchester , 0161 834 6732
201 Deansgate M3 3NW

Harry Hall Cycles, 0161 236 5699
67, The Arches, Whitworth St West M1 5WQ

Hirsts Cycles, 0161 794 2000
60-62, Chorley Rd Swinton Manchester M27 5AD

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, M417NG

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

Peak District Bike Ride

Sunday 6 June 2010



Starting and finishing in Buxton. Choose either a 16, 30 or 55 mile route. Suitable for families, individuals and teams.

This bike ride will raise funds for MAG (Mines Advisory Group), a UK based landmine clearance charity. Text BIKE along with your name and email address to 81025 0161 238 5447 events@maginternational.org www.maginternational.org/bike. Registered charity 1083008.

Local authority contacts

GMAuthority	Contact	Phone	Email
BOLTON	Aubrey McCreesh	01204 336480	aubrey.mcreesh@bolton.gov.uk
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MANCHESTER	Cycling Infrastructure	0161 954 9000	contacts@manchester.gov.uk
OLDHAM	Paul Bruffell	0161 770 4360	paul.bruffell@unitypartnership.com
ROCHDALE	Dave Stewart	01706 924608	dave.stewart@theimpactpartnership.com
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