

# NEWSLETTER



Lancaster and District Cycle  
Campaign

## AUTUMN 2009

Free to members

[www.lancaster-dynamo.org.uk](http://www.lancaster-dynamo.org.uk)

### EDITORIAL

A strong tail wind is propelling the campaign to implement 20mph as the default speed limit in our city centre and residential areas. And no mere local squall either, for it is howling through the corridors of central power, too. An initiative that Dynamo has long believed will do more than anything else to improve road safety by removing the biggest barrier to urban cycling: fear of fast road traffic.

Nationally the Department for Transport is strongly encouraging local councils to introduce them where appropriate. Indeed, several cities and one London borough have already done so. Moreover, there has been a recent national 20mph zone evaluation conference in Portsmouth, to which Lancashire County Council sent a traffic engineer.

Locally the topic is also now on the agenda for the November meeting of Lancashire City Council's Cycle Liaison meeting, to which Dynamo sends a rep'.

Furthermore, Rod King, whose '20 is Plenty' campaign group is doing a great job at helping towns to introduce these zones, is scheduled to speak at a public meeting in Lancaster on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 7.30 p.m. at the Storey Institute** – be there if you care.

While in September, the Lancashire Locals accepted Cllr Whitelegg's proposal to order an officers' report into 20mph zones, which will be discussed at their November meeting.

Even our own dear Lancaster Guardian has finally come out in support of them.

Most importantly, what can you do to maintain the momentum? Well, we need to go viral on this. Those of you with email will already have received a generic letter on default 20mph speed limits for you to send off to both your city and county councillors. For those without email, a copy is enclosed in the newsletter.

We encourage you to make as many copies as you want to enable your friends to sign up, too. They need not be cyclists, in fact, the wider the range of support the better, because 20mph zones are not just for the benefit of cyclists but for all who live or travel in one. Pedestrians, cyclists and residents, everyone is a winner.

*The website you need to find out the names of your city and county councillors is:*  
[www.lancaster.gov.uk/a-to-z/c/councillors/](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/a-to-z/c/councillors/)

Come to the review of the old cycling year,  
help to plan the next and  
renew your subscriptions at the

### **DYNAMO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

followed by an illustrated talk on:

### **SALT AYRE COGSET**

**Making the Cogs turn . . .  
Revolution in the making and the key  
to success in the formation of a  
COMMUNITY KIDS' CYCLING CLUB**

by Paul Andrews

**on Thursday 22 October 2009  
at 7.15 p.m.  
upstairs at the Gregson ,  
Moor Lane, Lancaster**

All welcome

### **CAMPAIGNING SECTION**

#### **NEW ROUTES**

- 1. Route through Royal Lancaster Infirmary to Ripley St Thomas School**

The long awaited cycle route through the Royal Lancaster Infirmary is now open, at

least during the day. For security reasons within the infirmary grounds it will operate 7.00am to 7.00pm, and the gate between the infirmary and the Waterways land will be locked at night.

The route starts, on the town side, from Aldcliffe Rd opposite the shop, over Basin Bridge, through the old British Waterways maintenance yard and then through the end of the infirmary staff car park. From there it goes over the infirmary internal roads, climbs up the short but steep incline, around the air ambulance helipad and onto Ashton Rd opposite Pointer Court.

Note for safety reasons the internal road is closed when the air ambulance is landing or taking off. It does not occur often but if you time it wrong you could be held up for up to 5 minutes while they transfer a patient from the helicopter.



*Aerial shots of the route over Basin Bridge, and opposite as it passes the helipad. Our intrepid correspondent, Steven Townson, scaled 45m up the boiler house chimney to get you these world exclusive images.*

The route is open for a 12 month trial period initially and if there is no trouble with "undesirables" using it as a quick access point to target cars on the car park etc. it will be extended. Additional lighting and security cameras have been installed to monitor the situation.

Further along Ashton Road, Lancashire County Council are proposing to install MANDATORY cycle lanes (i.e. it will be illegal to enter them with a motor vehicle but not compulsory to

cycle in them) over the railway bridge near Ripley School. Given the current line of illegally parked cars on the bridge, and the large number of cars that stop here at school start and finish time it will be interesting to see if, or how, they are enforced. The work is in conjunction with other work including new crossing refuges at Pointer Court, and near Bridge Road. The minimum running lane past the refuges will be 4m.



*Bird's eye view*



*Entrance from the newly-tarmacked canal bridge, Aldcliffe Road. Note opening times: 7am to 7pm*

Lastly at the cul-de-sac end of Ashton Rd near Penny Street bridge the County Council are proposing amending the existing traffic order that makes it a cul-de-sac to allow 'cycling in

both directions' at this point. There are no details about how this will operate but it is assumed that they will construct a short cycle path over the grass.

**Steven Townson**



*Route towards RLI helipad (steep hill ahead!)*

## 2. Church Street

Two-way cycling is now permitted on both Middle and Upper Church Street.



*Cycle contra-flow lane at top of Upper Church Street under construction. This has now been completed, with a toucan crossing over China Street to the Judge's Lodgings.*

## 3. The gyratory



*New cycle lanes on China Street and 'unofficial' pavement contraflow.*

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGNING**

### **IF CYCLING IS THE SOLUTION, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?**

*(Notes from CTC conference in Manchester 30-05-09)*

#### **Congestion Charging**

Olly Glover, chair, explained why Mancunians voted overwhelmingly against (4:1) in the referendum on congestion charging and sustainable transport. While a majority supported the latter proposition, there was great hostility to the former, reflecting, he claimed, an unhealthy bond between man and his /her car in our autocentric 'society'.

#### **An urban cycling manifesto**

Koy Thomson, London Cycling Campaign, argued persuasively the need for a National Code for a Sustainable and Healthy Public Realm, towards which an Urban Cycling Manifesto would contribute. He proposed as a slogan: A CYCLISED CITY IS A CIVILIZED ONE.

#### **A helmet setback**

Roger Geffin of the CTC explained how cycling looked set to prosper under John Prescott's Integrated Transport Bill 1996, but it suffered a great setback from 2000 on. Thanks in no small measure to MP Eric Martlew's Compulsory Helmet Bill, which diverted much of CTC's campaigning energy. The DfT continues to pursue a pro-helmet policy while the CTC opposes.

#### **Urgency on 20mph zones**

Roger talked up the importance of blanket 20mph zones and the need to lobby promptly while Jim Fitzpatrick is in post. Only one Tory MP supports them. Rod King is keen to help Lancaster with its 20 is plenty campaign. He said a community led approach rather than a cyclist one is the way to succeed.

#### **An idiot's guide**

CTC have produced 'A New Vision for Cycling', an idiot's guide to the benefits of cycling, which is designed to wave in front of MPs and Councillors who still don't get it.

#### **Lancashire's poor safety record**

CTC has also produced a very useful and well researched document, Safety in Numbers, which shows how cycling becomes safer the

more who do it. There's a comparative chart of authorities' safety records which fingers Lancashire at the dangerous end, with York at the safe end.

#### **SMIDSY**

CTC is launching a new road safety campaign, entitled SMIDSY, 'Sorry mate I didn't see you'.

#### **IMDT or Inner-city Motorway Demonstration Town**

NHS consultant, Joe Mellor, chair Leeds Spokes NHS, talked about the difficulty of cycling to work in Leeds. Apart from having his bike nicked fairly regularly, Leeds suffered because it had been one of the first Demonstration Towns in the 60's - demonstrating the folly of inner city motorways. He went on to condemn the NHS's lack of engagement with cycling. The UK's largest employer and less than 20% of NHS trusts had Bike to Work schemes in place. He didn't know what the solution was.

#### **The man with the solution?**

Though Bruce MacDonald, Cycling England's consultant number cruncher thought he knew what the solution to the "big question" is: quantify the value that investment in cycling produces compared with other modes. He admitted it was a difficult - some might say impossible - calculation. One stat' that was well received is: a motorist will cost the NHS in the course of his life £10,000 more than a cyclist. Interestingly Bruce wasn't a cyclist, yet.

#### **A tyre slasher**

Richard George, Campaign for Better Transport, certainly produced the most depressing insight about DfT and Regional Authorities: that one of the criteria used when accessing the economic benefits of the different transport schemes is the amount of fuel duty each one will generate. Might as well slash your tyres now.

#### **Hard nuts on wheels**

CTC Cycling champion, Juliet Jardine explained how she had made new cyclists out of two particularly hard nut groups. Firstly, secondary girls in Sefton, who as well as going through all the training hoops, had formed an on-road cycling club and had successfully campaigned for new infrastructure - gov't listens to young girl cyclists, apparently.

The other 'hard nuts', Asian ladies in Manchester will take to wheels and in droves if you offer them three wheels and an armchair for a saddle. This generated a debate about whether the bicycle industry produced appropriate bikes for other such groups i.e. children, pensioners, ethnic women etc. Should it lead or just reflect consumer choice?

### **Pink bike scheme**

Feminising cycling with fashionable kit and pink bikes really does work. A strategy confirmed by Amy Fleuriot from Cyclodelic. She reminded us that when cycling first took off in Victorian England it was a very stylish and fashionable activity, particularly for women, and now she was sexing up kit to attract women to cycling, and not without some success in London, at least. A strategy which was met with much approval from the largely male floor.

### **Where Dynamo needs to improve**

The most entertaining workshop was presented by Steve Connor, who was employed by Manchester City Council to communicate its successful £20,000, Love Your Bike campaign. I compared it, unfairly of course, with Dynamo campaigns. We need to do better in the following:

- a. A more nuanced approach to market/audience segmentation, and aim for the consensual 63% rather than the fringe - apparently mosaics would help????
- b. We need more than just the occasional newsletter and website that might get read by the faithful, we need to start viral communications and twittering our e-messages.
- c. Catchy Slogans and graphics are vital, how about? 'Save the planet, Start with Lancaster'.
- d. His graphic, that appeared on the back of every bus in the city and on a thousand cyclists' tabards, described two lanes on a road, the green cycle lane and a grey car lane, the former was labelled FAST lane, the latter FAT lane.
- e. Above all he stressed the need to get out on the street and meet the cyclists of tomorrow.

To conclude, it was a good conference and encouraging to see so many keen, well-informed 20-somethings, who most definitely do get it.

Ed'

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## **LOCAL CAMPAIGNING**

*Dynamo's verbal statement to the Inspector at the Centros Miller Planning Inquiry on 30-6-09. (An edited version)*

Dynamo started to campaign in 1994, when there were no facilities in Lancaster for cyclists other than roads. Today there exist the foundations for an effective and attractive network of cyclist friendly routes.

As you probably know Lancaster was one of the first group of 6 towns to receive Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) status for 3 years in October 2005, when it was funded to the tune on £3m – half from the Department for Transport (DfT) via Cycling England, and the rest match-funded by the City Council. In 2008, Lancaster received further funding from the DfT to continue as a CDT for 3 more years. It enjoys CDT status until 2011.

Centros's planning application is unacceptable on grounds of incompatibility with national, regional and local transport directives for cycling.

Let us look at these directives in relation to Lancaster. In 2008 Cycling England evaluated Lancaster City Council's first three years of progress as a CDT. Their evaluation made it clear that one of the three main conditions of receiving further funding was that the city centre be made permeable to cyclists. Indeed as I speak, the process of allowing east-west cycling through the old city centre, via a soon-to-be constructed cycle contraflow in Upper Church Street, is underway. This is a vitally important strategic move and shows that the City Council, or at very least the council's CDT team, finally recognises the imperative of city centre permeability.

The City Council's progressive view is clearly at odds with that of Centros. Centros has repeatedly refused to designate a cycle route through the proposed development. Their lack of commitment to promoting cycling is further revealed in Centros's rather limp and somewhat condescending statement, that cycling will not be prohibited through the site. A lack of prohibition of cycling is not at all the same as an acceptance of cycling, or an

invitation to cycle, which is what we want to see from Centros. As a result of Centros's refusal to provide a route through, cyclists from Freehold and the Ridge Estates seeking a through route to access the Millennium Bridge or the old city centre will have to negotiate a Central Street and or Central Square very likely packed with strolling shoppers – a certain recipe for conflict. Cyclists on their way to work or school or the city centre need a designated through route.

The inspector expressed concern, when Cllr Chapman was giving evidence on the need for a cyclists' through route, that if you give cyclists two white lines to cycle between they will bomb along, or words to that effect.

Well, I would respond to that by saying we are cycling demonstration town and it up to us to demonstrate that such a route would work – that is whole point of CDT's: to show the way forward so that others can learn. If we look at what has happened in other parts of Lancaster it is evident that when cyclists and pedestrians are provided with a designated shared route they can negotiate their ways safely. For example, the Lune shared use path, between Morecambe and Lancaster, which is very heavily used, when it was completed some years ago users tended to be to be rather casual regarding lane discipline. However, nowadays traffic flows much more smoothly and with far more discipline. In other words the route itself has imposed a more co-operative approach on both pedestrians and cyclists.

A second instructive example is the Lancashire Coastal Way, another shared use path which follows the Lune estuary from St George's Quay to Glasson Dock, and which is more of a leisure route than the Lune path. Here signs were erected advising cyclists to give way to pedestrians – a practice that is widely used in shopping centres on the continent – a simple but effective solution to avoid conflict and one which addresses the inspector's concern about cyclists' tearaway tendency.

Of course, as the site now stands there does exist a direct route across Alfred Street car park to connect with the Phoenix Street contraflow and beyond to the Millennium Path, as well as other useful cycle routes across the site to other destinations in the city. Indeed, in recognition of what had for a long time been an unofficial cycle route – I personally have used this route regularly for a good ten years - the City Council has recently built two stretches of feeder cycle lane with anti-vehicle barriers at the exit points of Lower Alfred

Street car park, thus formalising this useful and well-used route.

There was some disagreement in week one of the enquiry between the Council's transport consultant, Mr Mullen and Professor Whitelegg for IOC as to the amount of usage on this route. Mr Mullen, who lives well outside the district, glibly asserted that it wasn't used very often, while Professor Whitelegg, who does use the route, claimed it was fairly heavily used. As someone who has used the route daily over a long period I can say that what is not in dispute is that it currently serves a wide range of cyclists' needs. While some days I don't see any other cyclists, I have noticed on others that it is used by pupils commuting to and from Our Lady's High School, city centre and supermarket shoppers, work commuters and cyclists accessing the Millennium Bridge from the east for whatever purpose. In any case, as a CDT, we are not just committed to catering for existing cyclists, but attracting many, many more people onto bikes too. Therefore, the question is not merely about current use of a facility, but how closure of such a facility will negatively impact on other people's propensity to hop onto bikes.

It is the case that Centros is proposing an alternative peripheral cycle route around the site, one that proceeds down Alfred Street then back along St Leonard Gate; that is not through the site but around it. Yesterday, Aurora, a local resident, indicated she was most unhappy with this new route and I would like to build on that – not literally of course! This new route is unacceptable for two reasons.

Firstly, it is longer; it describes two sides of a triangle as against one of the current route. Remember Lancaster is in the business of encouraging, not discouraging, new cyclists. But by far the most serious objection is this: St Leonard Gate will become as cycle unfriendly as you can possibly imagine, no matter the traffic-calming that is proposed by Centros. While there is some uncertainty about the precise number in increase of vehicles - Dr Guiver thought that 2000 extra per day might be on the high side, Professor Whitelegg suggested a 25% increase - there can be no doubt that vehicle traffic flows along St Leonard Gate will increase substantially, and consequently discourage even the most confident cyclists.

Please bear in mind, Dynamo has conducted several questionnaires of local cyclists as part of our Missing Links campaign, and in response to our question as to why other

family members, colleagues and friends don't cycle, the almost universal answer is, because they are frightened of the volume of traffic around the city centre. These surveys were subsequently passed onto Jason Kennedy for the City Council's Planning Department to ponder. But it is not just the increased flows that will deter cycling, for the truly frightening aspect of the scheme in terms of perceived and real levels of danger is the fact that the peripheral route will pass across the entrance and exit to an 800 place multi-storey car park on St Leonard Gate. Not only will there be a near constant stream of cars entering and exiting, but there will be roughly 8 delivery lorries per hour as well as service vehicles and coaches parking to allow passengers to alight all adding to the danger and unattractiveness of Leonardgate. No right-minded experienced cyclist, let alone novice or child cyclists would use this stretch. So, rather than encouraging cycling in accordance with Cycling England's directive by making the city permeable for cyclists, Centros is in effect erecting a barrier to cyclists, and a formidable one at that.

If one needs further evidence of Centros's uncharitable, not to say contemptuous, attitude to Lancaster's cycling aims and aspirations, then let us examine the number of cycle parking stands positioned around the periphery of the site. The North West Regional Authority recommends a minimum of 220 while Centros proposes only 147 – a shortfall of 83. Furthermore these stands are only for retailing and restaurant customers. There is no firm commitment by Centros to provide an adequate number of stands for housing residents or office workers.

So, to underline the main thrust of Dynamo's argument: Centros's scheme, by destroying existing routes and building a longer and more dangerous one, undermines and is inconsistent with Lancaster City Council's commitment to Cycling England and the Department for Transport to develop cycling by encouraging new cyclists and its own stated aim; to double cycling levels in the district by 2011.

I would like to conclude by putting local cycling into a wider context. On day one of the Inquiry the Inspector expressed an opinion, one that Matt Wilson reminded him of yesterday and I make no apologies for reminding him of it again - that when he first looked at Centros's scheme it reminded him of the sort of city centre schemes he used to design back in the 1970's.

This statement encapsulates so much that is wrong with this scheme. Back then in the

carbon carefree days it was considered acceptable to build big shopping complexes in the centre of cities, ones which attracted motorists and their cars right into their hearts. But the world has moved on since then. Now the government has committed us to 20% carbon reductions by 2020, and 80% by 2050. We now know all about the very real threats of climate change and peak oil, the soaring rates of asthma in urban children, the national obesity pandemic and the damage done to listed buildings through air pollution, all problems which travel by motor car exacerbates significantly while cycling and walking ameliorates them. All around the world - and this is especially happening more and more across Europe - politicians, policy-makers, planners and engineers are rising to the challenge of ridding our cities of cars, and of reviving them by bringing walking and cycling back in. The age of the car as a key mode of urban transport is passing, and we should make sure not to continue promoting it.

And finally to the future, perhaps the greatest success of Lancaster's tenure as a CDT has been the large number of primary school children who have enthusiastically embraced the cycle and bike maintenance training they have been offered under the Bike-it scheme. A generation up and ready to ride. A generation that will be taking sustainable transport very seriously and will want and need to walk and cycle far more than their parents ever did. So I ask the inspector to consider very carefully what sort of city scheme would best suit their needs?

The Centros scheme, with its built-in dependency on car travel and its barrier to cycling, and which will, by 2015 – its expected operating date - be almost half a century behind the planning curve? Or a scheme that encourages human powered mobility and individual vitality by promoting walking and safe cycling to, through and around our entire city?

*The final decision by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is due by 14 January 2010. 'Inquiry diary', a barbed account of the proceedings can be read on It's Our City web pages.*

Ed'

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE CYCLE TO WORK DEAL, IS IT WHEELIE GOOD?

I was told by the assistant in Leisure Lakes Cycles that there is now an eight-week wait for a delivery of a new Brompton. This, he explained, was mainly due to the success of the government's Cycle to Work Deal which encourages you to buy a new bike and kit for about half price. All you need to do is to get your employer to sign up to it.

It sounds like a really good scheme and if it gets more people cycling to work then it is to be applauded. However, just how fair and comprehensive a scheme is it?

Essentially it's a tax break, so those workers on the minimum wage are excluded from it. Basic rate tax payers get 40% discount, while higher rate tax payers get 50%. Just how regressive is that?

I find it difficult to believe that higher earners cannot afford to pay the full price of a bicycle, while those excluded probably cannot.

Moreover, getting your employer to sign up to it is not always that straight forward as many public sector workers are finding out.

In the name of social justice the scheme wants turning on its head, as well as making it obligatory for bosses to enrol. I for one will not support it in its current form.

**Des Pond**

### IS THE CYCLE RAIL TASKFORCE JUST A VIRTUAL ONE?

Earlier this year I signed a petition on the Number 10 website to require the train operators to provide an integrated system for the carriage of bicycles and ensure there is adequate capacity available.

In August I got a reply (see <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page20260>) that states that, "In April 2009, the Cycle Rail Integration Task Force launched a competitive fund seeking train operating companies to work with them on a bike and rail programme. This challenges train operators to improve cycle/rail integration across their franchise and to work with partners to improve access, reservation systems and station facilities. The winners, who will be selected in July, will be expected to deliver real improvements over

the next 2 years setting the standard for all train operators."

I searched the Number 10 web site for all the words "Cycle Rail Integration Task Force" and got no hits. I did the same on the Directgov web site but restricted my search from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009 to the present (15<sup>th</sup> August 2009) with the same result, i.e. no hits.

I know it is a big ask but I believe the civil servants who put these responses together should ensure they make sense. Alternatively, it could be that ministers have not made it clear that cycling addresses several concerns about life in the twenty-first century. These include reduction of traffic congestion, increased activity levels that can reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases plus a reduction of individuals' and society's carbon footprint.

**John Leach**

### EVIDENCE OF A DISAPPEARED CYCLE LANE?

I was going to rant about yet another unbelievably bad cycle provision courtesy of the CDT but when I went to photograph it the offending lane had been removed. Somebody must have tipped them off or perhaps they saw the light, I don't know.

The provision in question was one of these red strips that have a dotted white line along the outside with a bike symbol and are usually placed across junctions. This ran in the most dangerous and ridiculous manner from the traffic lights at Owen Rd (opposite Skerton High school) to the Spar Subway petrol station. It was placed in such a way that a cyclist would have to be on the pavement to enter it. Once on it, assuming they haven't been mown down by a car turning left, they would have to negotiate the traffic light post in the way of their exit back onto the pavement.

I don't know how they came to a common sense decision to remove it, but they have. Anybody who wants to see it still can, as the scorch marks on the tarmac where it was burnt off are clearly visible.

**Steve Andrews - frustrated ranter**

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## OPINION PAGE

### THE CAR RULES!

Well, at least until 2011 if we are to believe the 2009 Census rehearsal form which fell on many – including my – Lancaster doormats this week. Lancaster is one of the three areas selected to rehearse for the 2011 Census process, together with Anglesey and Newham in London.

I will not go into the standard bulky form asking what are deemed the 'necessary' questions to know who lives in Britain, and how. But I want to talk about my surprise on seeing the cover image of the glossy 4-page leaflet that comes with the survey.

For those of you whose house was passed by, let me describe what it looks like. Set on a white background, an inspired origami artist has been creative with coloured paper, folding away, to craft the following scene: four people, two tall, two small, standing in pairs (of one male, one female). 'The classic 2.1 nuclear family' I presume - which we know is a bit of an exception in many areas in today's Britain. The (I have to say, rather flimsy) parents and children though guide our eye to the centre of the image, a bulky blue origami car.

The vehicle stands proud in the middle, the centre of the household. Behind car and people stand their homes: a large detached house for the people, next to it and half the size, a generous home (aka garage) for the car. So there you have it, and remember this image as a picture speaks a thousand words (of which there are many in this survey, together with square boxes to put crosses in). This image will remain my only memory of the wordy survey. And it annoys me, for several reasons.

I have to confess, my initial thought – and I am still not absolutely sure that it isn't the case, in which case I apologize, and my faith in humanity is restored - was that the image was ironic. You know how 60's and 70's advert styles are now fashionable again, and nerdy is cool? So I thought, perhaps they want to spread the message that the 2011 Census will make short shrift of the widespread misconception of the nuclear family, revealing how dated our public opinion is. Instead the Census would give hard (for backed up with numbers) evidence to prove how inappropriate this image is. That would be clever, and very convincing. Perhaps those

'Romans' at the Office for National Statistics, are not that crazy after all. I fear this is unlikely. So let me continue with why I mind.

The main reason I object to this image, is that it portrays and sustains a certain way of thinking.

This thinking is car-centred. Just going on the image: the car is the hub of the household, needs its own house (half the size of the family's house), and is necessary for daily life. We find this car-centred vision from *Top Gear* to transport policy to car adverts (the following car insurance advert springs to mind: 'My life shouldn't stop just because my car needs repairs' – the insurance company's solution to this 'dilemma' is not to provide you with a bike, but with 'a courtesy car as standard'). The transport situation as we know it will not, because cannot, last. If anything, a national household survey planning for the future should be wiser than to confirm this archaic view.

Apart from being behind the times and irresponsible, the image is also ignorant and non-inclusive. While the leaflet specifies that this survey is held in 'your local area', living near Primrose in Lancaster I do not feel this survey has anything to do with me, or my area. The street I live on, and all those surrounding, have terraced houses without gardens, many people do not own cars, most people walk, some cycle. Cars are parked on the street, or in the back alleys, as there is no space for garages. What's more, the image could be upsetting. Looking at the colourful 'standard' cover page family, I may feel I am not doing very well, as the household portrayed is doing so much better: two parents with kids, a car, a house, and a garage.

Inclusion or locality obviously were not major concerns of the designers.

On further inspection of the image, I spot, white against the white background, and thus subtle but present, a few flimsy paper trees to the left of the horizon. To the right I can make out a skyline, because this family is not so privileged that it's home comes with extensive grounds; let's keep it real, it does live in a built-up area. Hang on, is it, no, yes, it is! The Gherkin, next to the Canary Wharf tower: the London skyline. Not that close to home then.

A rehearsal survey depends on the public's goodwill to fill it out. The leaflet introducing this one has surprised and annoyed me. I do

not feel included, I feel a bit below par, and I am flabbergasted that a rehearsal for 2011 still centres all (family) life around the car. If the main topic being researched was transport, I might understand the unfortunate mistake. But the Census is about people and households, surely the car should not take centre stage.

What message does this leaflet spread? What does it tell us about how people think, how people do not think and how people will be influenced to think? In Lancaster of all places, a Cycling Demonstration Town, with an active green movement, perhaps a bit more thinking would not have gone amiss.

Making a bicycle out of paper may be a challenge, but it certainly is not as hard as the transport challenge we will all be facing in 2011. Better start practising.

Postscript: Walking through town today I notice purple banners advertising the Census. These take a totally different approach. A picture of a 'real' mum with a 'real' son, riding an 'origami' toy bike sports the slogan: 'Shape your local facilities'. Now that's more like it.

**Leonie Hunt**

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## **BLOGGING, CYCLING, CLIMBING**

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I think about cycling quite a lot. Doing so is both my job and my passion. I also really like writing about cycling. So for a while now, I've been thinking that I should probably start a blog. But then I also thought, but what's the point of a blog, there are already so many, and surely no one reads them?

But like anyone, I need reason and motivation to write. Writing helps me think, thinking helps me write. For a sociologist, writing and thinking are kind of like a virtuous circle. So finally, a couple of months ago, I got around to setting up a blog. I called it *thinking about cycling*, and I see it basically as a way for me to write short articles about the wonderful worlds of cycling, mainly with a personal perspective.

How easy it was to set up! I had no idea it'd be quite so straightforward. And now, quite suddenly, if I feel like I have something to say, I can say it, post it, and send it out there into the blogosphere. Magic! Although it's not my main reason for writing, it would of course be lovely if other people find interest in what I

write. And rather amazingly, I have had some readers.

I'm also discovering that blogging is a great way of making contact with others. For example, a couple of weeks ago Mikael Colville-Andersen got in touch, and asked me to do a series of 5 guest blogs on his *Copenhagenize.com* blog. This has around 2,000 readers every day, which I'm fairly sure is a good deal more people than have come across any of my articles in academic books and journals.

If you fancy checking out my blog so far, you can find it at <http://thinkingaboutcycling.wordpress.com/>

But here's one of my posts, chosen because of its local interest, and to give you a flavour of the kind of style in which I'm currently (I'm sure it'll change - that's one of the great things about blogging - an opportunity to experiment) writing.

### **Hill Climbing**

In British club cycling, autumn is the time of hill climbs. A hill climb is a race, by yourself, against the clock, up a hill. Simple really. Simple, short, and tough. My first ever competitive cycling experience was the English Schools Cycling Association Hill Climb Championship near Matlock, Derbyshire, in - ooh - 1983 or 4, I guess. I was a student at Solihull Sixth Form College, I was new to the sport, I was riding a cheap Raleigh 10 speed, and I don't think I'd ever seen - let alone ridden - a 1 in 4 hill before. I didn't make it to the top. I don't remember feeling embarrassed; after all, I'd given it a go. I do recall grunting men on fixed wheel bikes grinding their ways to the top, and that first unforgettable feeling of trying - and failing - to ride up an asphalt wall.

Last night was the second of Lancaster Cycling Club's annual club hill climbs. It's become my Club, and this year I've got a bit more active, going for 'training rides' rather than simply 'rides', and riding quite a few evening 10 mile time trials. But I'm still this side of plump, and I was frankly terrified of the prospect of trying to haul my mass uphill at speed. It's only a year ago that the prospect of riding up Jubilee Tower, last night's climb, at *any* speed, was daunting enough. But there were also good reasons to have a go: becoming more involved in the Club has increased my commitment to support events; my main training partner, Jon Barry, fancies himself on

the hills and was keen to have a go; and for the first time in more than 20 years, I'm planning to train through winter, and to have a proper go at racing next year, so it makes sense to set some times which I can use as benchmarks for my progress next season.

Part one was last week – the short, steep climb of Condor Bottoms. I surprised myself at the speed at which I set off, but felt reasonably OK. Then I saw the bunch of spectators at the hairpin bend up ahead, waiting at perhaps the steepest section of the climb. Obviously you want to look your best as you go past a watching crowd, so I tried very hard to look calm, graceful, dignified, fast. Ha, ha, ha ... I'm sure they weren't deceived, and as soon as I was past them, my legs turned to jelly. Still, I clawed my way to the finish, and though I was slow, I beat 3 minutes, which was my personal target.

Last night was part two, the longer, higher climb up the other side of the valley, from Quernmore crossroads to Jubilee Tower, perched high above Morecambe Bay. On a sunny evening, the views up there are glorious, the Lakeland hills to the north-west, the Fylde coast to the south-west, Lancaster down far below and Morecambe stretching out to the sea. But Jubilee Tower was the destination, we started from the bottom. There I met William, who lives half way up the hill, and so rides it regularly, but who was last night riding his first ever competitive event. How wonderful to race on the roads you know; I love it when a rider wins on home turf. I won't try to guess William's age, but I hope he wouldn't mind my suggesting he's a fair bit older than me. And then I started, a minute behind Jess Atkinson, who's 13 years old. Cycling's what you'd call an inclusive sport ...

Although it involves struggle and a certain pain, I loved it. I loved riding hard up a hill which only a year before I was scared to tackle at all. I loved the rare feeling of racing without a helmet (it's all uphill, after all). I loved needing continuously to judge whether I was overdoing it or underdoing it, and adjusting my effort accordingly. I loved knowing the steepest part was over, and feeling my speed increase with the softening of the hill. I loved overtaking and shouting encouragement to Jess, to be myself overtaken and have the encouragement of her Dad Graham. I loved the feel of sweat dripping from my chin. I loved finishing, being at the finish, watching others finish, the post-race talk. I loved seeing the care and commitment of people such as Bob Muir - time

keeping again last night – who invest their love in the preservation of this magical sporting world.

One hundred and fifteen years after the last one, the second bicycle boom is underway up here in the north west of England. I'll write much more about this over the coming weeks, months, years, I hope. But the growing popularity of club cycling is one aspect of it. Last night was beautiful – I mean *really* beautiful – to see. Women, men, girls and boys, all ages, mothers and fathers with daughters and sons, old hands and novices, gentle calls of encouragement drifting across the dipping sun of a glorious autumnal evening.

I hope I am there next year, I hope I am a little faster next year, I hope that perhaps my son Bobby will ride out with me then, and I hope that cycling's revival will be that bit stronger, clearer, more self-assured. And I count myself very, very lucky to be able to hope for all these things. There are many reasons to ride a bike, and they include these.

**Dave Horton**

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## **LOCAL CYCLING PEOPLE**

### **OUR CDT WORKPLACE CYCLING OFFICER OUTLINES HIS WORK**

I took up the role of Workplace Cycling Officer on the Cycling Town project team at Lancaster City Council in January 2009, so when the editor asked me to write an article about my work it was a good opportunity to outline what the project offers to workplaces and some of the challenges our team faces.

#### **Key workplaces**

Lancaster with Morecambe Cycling Town has a specific remit from Cycling England of getting more people cycling to work, with a focus on a limited number of key workplaces. The large employers in the District are predominantly public sector bodies so I am currently working closely with the large academic institutions, organisations within the health sector and the city council. Each presents a different challenge and whilst one intervention may be working very well at one workplace it does not necessarily follow that the same intervention will have similar success elsewhere.

## **No easy task**

Encouraging people to cycle to work is no easy task but it can be made easier by creating a 'cycling culture' within large employers, a culture whereby cycling is an acceptable form of getting both to and from work, and for travelling to and from meetings. This cycling culture can initially be nurtured through high-profile interventions such as prominent cycle parking outside key buildings through to highly visible signage throughout a site. These are some of the key indicators to both cyclists and non-cyclists that cycling is promoted and, importantly, accepted at a workplace.

## **Cyclists and non-cyclists**

These high-profile interventions must be supported by other activities which help both people who already cycle to work to enjoy a better cycling experience but also those who wish to try cycling to work who may have little idea about where to start.

## **Working with seasoned commuters**

Existing commuters are important to the Cycling Towns project as they are, in essence, the visible everyday evidence that people can and do cycle to work. Something as simple as the site of 20 or 30 cyclists arriving at a workplace can have a powerful impact on those who travel to work by car. Seasoned commuters are usually at the forefront of a demand for change within in a organisation – as commuter numbers increase, this demand reaches a point whereby senior people within the organisation begin to listen and act. We try to support existing commuters by helping to set up bicycle user groups which offers a forum for cyclists to formulate plans and ideas to make cycling a better experience within a workplace. We always encourage workplaces to involve staff who have the ability to either act on recommendations or who certainly have the ear of senior management. Existing commuters also provide valuable feedback on helping the Cycling Towns project get more new people cycling to work as they themselves have already overcome many of the barriers which face new cycle commuters. Part of my job is to help communicate this advice from seasoned commuters to those who may wish to try cycling to work and those who have never contemplated it.

## **Helping the novices**

For the new commuter we offer a range of assistance which helps people to try cycling to

work for the very first time. As I attend events one of the most frequent comments I receive about cycling to work is that "the roads are too dangerous". The Cycling Town project is addressing this in a number of ways, not least through the work done by my colleague, Gary Bowker, who is delivering a fantastic on and off-road, safe cycle network across the District. We offer cycle training to all of our key workplaces, in addition to our general project training offer to all local residents. As an accredited National Standards Instructor I have delivered many of these sessions myself which gives me a much deeper understanding of people's perceptions of their own cycling abilities and wider perceptions of travelling by bike. In almost all circumstances, the trainee has the necessary skills to cycle on road but does not perhaps have the confidence. We work with trainees on basic safety on minor roads through to negotiating large junctions which they are required to pass on their daily commute. It's important to train people in relevant locations and relevant situations, this makes the training and the experience for the trainee all the more valuable.

## **2009 is already a record year**

To date, in 2009 the project has delivered more training to workplaces than in any previous year. Car drivers tend to know the local roads network very well but are often not aware of the off-road cycle paths or contra-flow cycle lanes within the District, which makes their cycling quicker and safer. Personalised journey planning is an important tool in getting people cycling to work and is something I am keen to increase use of in the future with an online cycle journey planner in development.

## **Maintenance as well as safety**

Second only to concerns about the safety of cycling on roads are maintenance issues. A few basics pieces of information go a long way towards helping the new commuter start with confidence. It is still surprising to see commuters relying on puncture repair kits as a solution to punctures. There is definitely a 'Eureka!' moment with some when I advise commuters to carry a spare tube in case of a flat and simply repair the puncture during a lunch break to save messing around with glue and patches on the side of the road. A high proportion of commuters also run with tyres under-inflated, so much so that when we run our Dr. Bike events at workplace events the bike owner often thinks we have 'done something with the wheels', when in reality

we've just inflated the tyres to the correct pressure. I say again, some basic pieces of info' can really make the difference between cycling to work and cycling to work and enjoying it. We also offer maintenance classes and workshops within organisations to enable people to carry out their own basic repairs such as adjusting brakes, lubing correctly and adjusting gears. These are usually very popular and allow people to keep on cycling throughout the year without the need to call on a mechanic for what are essentially very basic tasks.

### **Still much to do**

The above outlines just a small proportion of the work we do to promote cycling to work. Pulling these facets together across multiple workplaces is no easy task. I am very much reliant on the support and interest from senior management within workplaces to help drive forward cycle-friendly initiatives. Fortunately, with the organisations currently benefiting from our key workplaces programme we have had great support. A lot of work has been done but there is still so much more to do.

**Matt Moran**

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## **NEW CARNFORTH CYCLE MUSEUM**



*James Quinn, that's the one without the bling, and the Mayor get it rolling*

### **Grand Opening**

Friday, 1st May 2009 was the day of the grand opening of the brand new cycle museum at Dyno Start in Carnforth. The Mayor of Lancaster, Councillor Keith Budden officially cut the ribbon at 2pm. The opening was also attended by the police as well as shop owner Keith Quinn.

## **Restoration Work**

Work has been on going restoring the bikes for many years now and the cellar has recently been refurbished into a museum.

The bikes range widely from children's cycles to commercial bikes. They also span the best part of a century from 1910-1996, so it will interest cyclists of all ages. For adults it will bring back fond memories of childhood while for younger people it will be fascinating to see how bike designs have developed over the years.

### **The younger generation helps out**

Keith Quinn's grandson, James, provided some of the finishing touches as part of his week long work experience in the shop.

"I enjoyed helping to refurbish the museum right from being a dusty store room up to being an elaborate museum", said James. "Collecting some of the information about some of the bikes was quite difficult, and it would be great if anybody could recognise them and give us information we don't have"

**Paul Stubbins**

***Anybody who wants to see the museum, or has bike information, should call Dyno Start on 01524 732089, as visitors are very welcome by appointment, providing they are not too busy!***

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## **PEDALLING SECTION**

### **ENGLISH TOURING**

#### **Cycling in Suffolk: foreign touring?**

This summer we were offered a two-week house-sit in a Suffolk village between Stowmarket and Diss. For someone who regards a railway station, a cinema and a corner shop for late-night crisps as essentials to modern living, I had my doubts about it - the village had no amenities at all (apart from a 7 a.m. bus to Ipswich and a 5 p.m. bus back) and was 10 miles from the nearest railway station and 4 miles from the nearest shop. However, for some years Suffolk has been on my list of places where I would like to cycle, so I took a deep breath and said yes.

Was I glad that I did so! Everything was perfect from the moment we got off the train at Stowmarket. The ride to the village was in

bright sunshine and relatively flat. While not pancake-flat like the Netherlands, Suffolk is a piece of cake after Lancaster. The minor roads were very quiet and motorists were generally courteous. The 10 miles from the railway station seemed like the merest jaunt.

Our house-sit was one of the wood-framed, pink-walled, thatched cottages that can be seen in many Suffolk villages (and jigsaw puzzles). It seemed to have only a small garden, until we discovered the path round the back and the orchard and paddock beyond. Our duties, fortunately, were limited to the greenhouse and vegetable garden, which left us plenty of time for 50km day rides around the countryside and surrounding villages.



*Our house-sit*

What made Suffolk seem to me like a foreign country wasn't just the chocolate-box villages, flint churches and scores of little moats and ponds, but also the weather. Apart from one morning of rain, the sun didn't stop shining in 2 weeks. Each day I looked at the weather forecast for Lancaster to gauge how our own garden would be faring, and it was solid rain. I've monitored the weather forecast since, and it's the same story. Comparing my memories and photographs of Suffolk with those nearer home, I can discern a clear difference not just in shade and tone but in colour. Here the predominant colours are lush green and the silvery-grey of the sky, with patches of darker grey for the houses. Suffolk, in contrast, I recall as blue and golden – the blue sky and the golden fields of cereal – with splashes of pink for the cottages.

Contrary to my expectations, existing without a village shop was not a problem. There's no hardship in cycling 4 flat miles on quiet lanes in brilliant sunshine to the Co-op in Debenham – particularly not when you have a choice of

tea rooms before starting on the return journey.



*Green tunnels*

I do wonder if our experience of Suffolk was unrealistically idyllic – after all, it must rain sometimes, and there must be some cottages where the thatch doesn't appear to have had a recent shampoo and set – but I don't go looking for gritty reality on holiday.



*Eye church*

There are a number of national and regional signposted cycle routes in Suffolk – more details [www.discoversuffolk.org.uk/cycling.aspx](http://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk/cycling.aspx) at

**Patricia Clarke**

## LOCAL, DOOR TO DOOR RIDES

### Condor and Wyre Valleys

A 42km, hilly circuit climbing up and over the Condor and Wyre valleys is my favourite local ride. For experiencing a variety of land uses it's almost unbeatable: suburban residential, city limits institutional, small agricultural holdings, a large managed estate and open moorland. All that in a two, three, four or even five-hour ride.

As I live in Freehold any ride eastwards involves the shock of an immediate climb. Dalton Road is marginally less steep than the other rising exits. Even so it's quite steep, and the need for increased traction by high-revving motorised traffic as it climbs has removed the tar from the tarmac, leaving not just 'mac' but exposed chippings, which in defiance of crushing rolling rubber have established an attractive colony of bright green moss. Resembling, how I imagine, a hawk's aerial view of Lancaster might look with its grey stone-work spotted with green spaces of gardens, allotments and parks.

Turn right into Derwent Road, which can prove a nasty experience for cyclists since the county council built in two pinch points - despite objections by Dynamo and others - and is best avoided at busy times. Anyway, onward and upward via Quernmore Road as it passes the Lancaster Royal Grammar School for Boys on the far side, and notice on the nearside a colonnade of mature horse chestnut trees that have been planted right next to the very edge of the kerb, or possibly the kerb was built close to their boles. These chestnuts may well be old enough to have witnessed the rumbling carts of the hanging processions which terminated at the gallows somewhere near the entrance to Williamson's Park.

Just past the arched entrance of the aforementioned park, richly labelled and dated in gold leaf, you can avoid the main road by taking a left turn into the cemetery. Here the yews, the longest lived of all trees and once the staple of long bows, have probably witnessed even more of life and certainly death than the chestnuts. A word of warning though, it has now become a 'drive-in bone-yard', although the narrow gate at the far end presently prevents it becoming a drive through one.

You emerge onto Stone Row Head which leads down to the Ridge Lea Hospital and Lancaster Young Offenders' Institute, aka the Farms,

where I was once employed as a teacher of literacy to lads, some of whom sadly never managed, and not for the want of trying, to locate the business end of their pencils. So I prefer to turn back into Quernmore Road, which is lined on the right with a new estate of unaffordable homes, whose link roads are themed on posh and prestigious golf clubs: Wentworth Drive, St Andrews etc.

The estate was built on part of the grounds of the old Lancaster Moor hospital, whose remaining buildings dominate the other side. Even when I worked here this 'gothic cathedral to the disturbed', with its four-spired tower of a crow's nest and its draughty, high-ceilinged corridors had an eerie atmosphere. Now that ivy is strangling the padlocked wrought-iron gates and railings, and brambles, like barbed wire, coil around the boarded-up entrance, it is positively spooky. The old hospital signs, like Garnett Clinic, almost obliterated by grime, have been trumped by those of the security firm that allegedly patrols the wooded grounds. Whatever happened to the plans to build an eco-village here?

The boundary of the old hospital buildings is adjoined by an undulating, rectangular field which is usually occupied by cattle and sheep, but two hundred years ago faster quadrupeds featured here for it's the site of the old Lancaster horse race course.

Uphill from the races the tarmac crosses over a 24/7 roaring river of steel, that is the M6. Inspired by Nazis with their mania for speed, and built by the British Cement Manufacturer's after WW2, they are emblematic of much that has gone wrong with civilisation: a casual destruction of green space, an encouragement to hyper-mobility, a promotion of speed over safety and a slaughter strip for swans, owls and other life forms, not least homo sapiens. It's a relief to be up here looking down on it.

As you start to climb out of institutional Lancaster and past the old course, over your left shoulder, on a clear day, the summits of the Lake District mountains appear, followed by Morecambe Bay and suddenly you are surrounded by fields - you're in the countryside already. Doesn't it feel great?

As you turn right into Little Fell Lane, the distant Pennine Range, dominated by Ingleborough's sphinx-like profile, spreads out lazily across the horizon. On more ambitious days you might want to heed its call.

Just before turning left at the crossroads there is a lumpy mound which has been well-grassed over, and used to be a stone quarry – stone for building has been excavated from around Quernmore since at least Roman times. Rather than being tempted to sweep down the steep descent on Wyresdale Road, pause near the top to view the Condor Valley with the road steeping up on the far side towards Jubilee Towers. I remember coming here to watch a stage of the Tour of Britain about twelve years ago – the peloton hurtling down like a psychedelic string of sausages on the far side, only for it to diffuse into recognisably individual human grunts and snorts as gravity extracted its payback.

At the bottom it's worth stopping at the stone bridge over the River Condor where the peaty coloured stream babbles on towards Glasson Dock. There are pedestrian refuges on both sides so you don't need to worry about the traffic, not that there is much when I usually ride it early on a Sunday morning. Not quite totally obliterated by the elements, on top the nearside parapet, are the carved words, CONDOR MILL BRIDGE. There is an adjacent pond – PRIVATE NO DOGS – which could have been the mill pond, and the bridge itself has twin arches only one of which is now in use; the other may have been conduit for the old mill race.



*Condor Mill Bridge with pedestrian refuge*

Climb gently towards Quernmore then turn right into Long Lane and the mushroom farm/factory announces itself well before you pass the forcing tents and mounds of steaming compost, which are a great favourite with the birds. East European voices used to be recognisable, if not comprehensible, on Sunday mornings, but of late I haven't seen the gangs of young pickers who used to move up and down the lane from tent to tent – maybe we're all eating fewer mushrooms these recessionary days.

Turn left at the crossroads and begin your 2.5 kilometre climb up Procter Moss Lane. When you reach the summit the satisfying vista of the Fylde peninsular lies below and on clear days a matchstick-sized Blackpool Tower is visible. Before the summit and the watershed between the Condor and Wye valleys, pause at the small stone bridge over Damas Gill as it descends towards the river Wyre. The region is scattered with these attractive bridges and they are a good place to examine the trees that find the banks of mountain gills so fertile. As is the case here, it is often the alder, whose dwarf cones are in turn so attractive to the probing little tweezers of the shy little siskin.

At the end of Procter Moss turn left into the glaring eyes of a generic raptor in wood which 'welcome' you to 'The Forest of Bowland', a designated site of natural beauty.



*The Duke's stylish hedgerows*

As you roller coast towards Abbeystead you might notice the beech hedges have been carefully topped into triangular roof shapes rather than the reckless flailing widely practised on our hedgerows by Lancashire County Council's slash and burn squads. There is a beautiful variety of pollarded, coppiced and carefully spaced mature deciduous trees. The beech and oak colonnade towers above you as you drop down to the bed of the Wyre. Grouse are strutting

over the hummocky grass, and occasionally smeared in matted feathers and entrails on the road – aristocrats' road kill. The tarmac is maintained to Olympic standard.

Just imagine the many things that often disfigure our countryside such as petrol stations, caravan parks, theme parks, car parks etc. Well, there is an absolute absence of them here – not even a Woody's Nibbles. This unspoilt beauty comes at a price though, and the price is the Duke of Westminster aka Gerald Grosvenor. The Grosvenor family, from Le Gros Veneur (Fat Hunter), one of William's original robber barons, was charged with keeping the Welsh on the far side of the Dee and handsomely rewarded with massive tracts of land for so doing. It's darkly ironic that the French got rid of their aristos in dramatic fashion over 200 years ago, while we are still saddled with them. The Grosvenors' current position as one of the richest families in Britain is largely due to Sir Thomas Grosvenor's unsavoury marriage in 1677 to twelve-year old Mary Davies, whose dowry included 300 acres of marshy meadowland in what is now Mayfair and Belgravia. In 1982, the current Duke, Gerald bought this estate of 22,000 acres of prime grouse moor, just a short whirl in his helicopter from his 11,000 acre estate in Eaton, south of Chester.



*Abbeystead Bridge over the Wyre*

The alder-lined stone bridge straddles one arm of the river Wyre – the Tarnbrook Wyre – which joins the Marshaw Wyre just 200 metres from here, to form the Wyre proper.

Carrying straight on past the very private, estate hall and up the very steep Abbeystead Drop harbours dark reminders in my memory of a terrible and fatal cycling crash. An estate Land Rover backed blindly out into a pack of plunging cyclists, which had become separated from the commissar's car, during the Dolphinhholme Classic cycle race. Perish the memory.

Better, but no less steep, to turn right at the ever-open 4-bar gate past a Japanese knotweed swamp and over a second iron bridge which crosses the canalised Marshaw. There is a signed footpath through the wood which you can follow in a roundabout way to Dolphinhholme. Riverbanks are notoriously difficult to access in the UK because of medieval and absolute property rights to private fishing. Anyway, the cycling option, straight up, is a steepening if short climb. In spring, its steep banks, below a shady canopy, are carpeted with bluebells and wild garlic.

When you emerge from the wooded estate onto the main road the open moorland of Hawthorne and Catshaw Fells rise up before you. In summer the uncultivated slopes, covered in purple heather, are interrupted only by a couple of isolated farmhouses and the report of 12 bore shot guns being cruelly unloaded into defenceless creatures.

The moorland road twists steeply down into the Cow's Mouth, a popular and pretty picnicking spot that disappears under campervans and cars on sunny days. Climb up and out over three cattle grids, or should they be called cycle grids – the Dutch build almost vibration free grids that only deter four legs not two wheels. Anyway, follow this sweeping road for three kilometres of superb wide views stretching as far as the Fylde coast before turning right into Tinkers Lane and right again at Wagon Road.

Suddenly you are on old, winding, leafy lanes. While the roads up to now have given you some stunning countryside, they have all been rather straight as most of the sensuous curves and hedgerows were removed when the land was enclosed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: an act almost as barbarous as motorway construction.

These snaking lanes with turf dividing strip drop you down onto Dolphinhholme bridge that gives you rare views both up and down the secluded Wyre. Lower Dolphinhholme is not really a village – no pub, no shop, no post office – and since the new exclusive, executive estate was built it has become a dormitory

village cluttered with parked cars, yet still pretty enough.

The climb out from the old Dolphinholme Mill up to the mini-roundabout is definitely a granny-gear job but mercifully short. Pedal straight across over Starbank past the remains of some long abandoned, wartime storage sheds, which had been discreetly hidden from the view of the Luftwaffe. When you reach the sharp lefthander dismount at the dilapidated farmhouse and pass through the almost closed gate and walk to the edge of Ellet Crag. Below you is the vast barren crater of Ellet quarry, otherwise invisible from the road. The greedy diggers have bitten into the public footpath that once ran along this cliff and it is no longer considered a safe walk. Its stream of quarry vehicles in the week have turned the Lancashire Cycleway into Lancashire Lorryway, just as the hurtling leather boys and gals have turned it into the Lancashire Bikersway at weekends.

At Five Lane Ends, sensibly ignoring the Lancashire Cycleway, turn right towards Galgate. Once through the village, depending on your appetite for climbs, choose either the route through the uni' or the steepish climb right just past the church. The latter, via Kit Brow Lane, will reunite you with Long Lane, the road that leads to the dear old mushroom factory.

Well, you can find your way back home from here. Hope you enjoyed it.

Ed'

*If you've got a favourite local ride, please let our readers know about it by putting it in print and mailing it to Dynamo*

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## **TALE FROM THE ARCHIVES OF A YOUNG CYCLE TOURIST**

In the early 90's my now ex-wife and myself had very little money, so the only holidays that we could afford had to be taken by bike direct from our home in Carnforth.

Luckily, living on the doorstep of two national parks it was not a problem. You were on the bike from point one, no trains, flights or ferries and no language barriers (unless you count Yorkshire).

The other thing we never did on any of our tours was plan or book ahead, we would know the places we wanted to see and that was it. with no plan there is no plan to fall apart and

we have stayed in some pretty interesting places as a result: a farm run entirely by children (so it seemed), hippy hostels, new age camps and the ground floor of Leeds Bradford airport, to name but a few.

We had decided we were going to do the full limestone country of North Yorkshire, we were going to take it easy aiming at 30 – 40 miles a day with plenty of time to take in the attractions, sample the local food and drink and eat at pubs in the evening, in other words, a luxury tour (for us anyway).

The tale starts midway through, we had taken in a few sights that lead us nearer to home than we wanted to be, so we decided to head north again. Our OS map showed a 30 -35 mile day to a group of campsites. We had covered most of the distance that morning so we took a long lunch break with a fair few beers in the knowledge that we only had a few miles to go. In fact we thought it might be nice to pitch camp early and ride back to spend the afternoon without the heavy panniers. But as I said earlier, don't make plans, they go wrong.

Well first of all it started to rain, light rain that the showerproofs could cope with, while the light darkened. Then the real rain began, followed by the cavalry, and before long it was like cycling through a pond. The constant spray from the wheels filled our shoes. You could hardly look up from the road it was that heavy and the panniers have given up trying to repel water. We're in the pre-Ortlieb age of leaky panniers. The result was that the bike got heavier, progress got slower and I began to poach in my own sweat.

We got to the clump of campsites on the map only to find that the National Park authorities had said there were too many in the area so they'd closed them all. The nearest was 37 miles away in Malham.

Now hungry as it was nearing 5pm we decided we had no choice but to head there and stop for food on the way. We examined the now disintegrating map for the quickest route; there was no room for error as the map would not survive another unfolding.

Mile after mile, puncture followed puncture as we went battling the heavy rain without finding shop, pub or café.

At about 9pm we entered a small village, and braked heavily at the sight of a homemade sign that simply said "camping 1/2m". We couldn't find it so stopped at the pub to ask

where it was. They had finished food at 8.30 so we decided to buy a few pints of "Old Peculiar" because it is high in calories, honest, and some bar snacks. We sat down in the most worst place a wet cold, tired cyclist, who has nowhere to sleep, can: by an open log fire.

We eventually peeled ourselves away and got to the campsite to pitch our tent in the pitch black night. The rain had stopped for now, so it wasn't long before we were inside eating stale bread buns with rancid butter and well sweated cheddar. We settled down and were soon in a deep sleep.

Soon afterwards we were awoken by the loud voices of people 'whispering' on the way back from the pub. The noise soon quietened down, with the exception of a Liverpool family next to us. Their camp consisted of an ex-ambulance, with the kids in a cheap pup tent next to us. The two boys laughed and talked loudly preventing any possibility of sleep.

Eventually Vicky decided enough is enough, opened the door and threw the two remaining stale bread buns at their tent. Silence followed immediately and we settled back into a deep sleep.

We woke up at the crack of 10am but with nothing for breakfast decided to try and get to Malham for food, but our bodies were not co-operating and the packing was slow.

A moment later our Scouse neighbour came over.

"Did youse two 'ear anyone sneekun about last night?"

"No, we were very much asleep"

"Well someone was, and de hit de kids tent then they scuffled round de camp, de kids were scared so de slept in my bed in de van."

"It was probably just wildlife, you get that in the country"

"No it wasn't or it'd be dead, I sat on de stop of de van all night wiv me knife so I'd of ad anything that came by, day better keep away tonight or I'll av em!"

At this point Vicky was in the tent biting on her sleeping bag to stifle hysterical laughter. Later she asked me how I'd kept a straight face.

"Easy", I said, "Fear of being beaten up or stabbed!"

I was also lucky in that the local wildlife had indeed appeared and kindly eaten the bread bun evidence.

**Steve Andrews**

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## OVERSEAS SECTION

### Foreign Touring



*Jennifer & Richard – two Dynamo members - arrive at the Med' having cycled from Normandy via several river systems, including the Loire and the Allier. Look out for their illustrated talk.*

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## FROM OUR DEVELOPING WORLD CORRESPONDENT

### On Not Cycling in Bombay

Before travelling out to India to undertake a 7-month contract playing piano in a swish, 5-star, Mumbai Hotel, my plan was to get a bicycle and explore, but.....

*The following is an extract from the journal I am keeping of experiences here.*

As part of the over zealous bureaucratic culture of India I was required to register in triplicate my work visa at the overstuffed, chaotic city centre Visa Registration Office.

What follows is an account of my first trip out of the Hotel to register my work visa.

## From the sea of tranquillity into the maelstrom of madness!

Chaperoned from the icy cool, luxurious, hotel into a newish, scratched and dented, air conditioned Chevrolet people carrier. Past the armed security guards, through the gates and out into the insanity of Bombay traffic.

...Cars, big dirty trucks, squat ancient buses lacking any glass in the windows and bursting at the rivets with passengers, motorbikes, ox carts, auto rickshaws or tuktuks and cows. Then there are the taxis: black and yellow ones are cheap without air 'con', the blue ones are not so cheap but cooled. Sleek, blacked-out limousines, dogs, children, bright sari clad ladies with heads piled high, masses of slim men and a just a few valiant, lion-hearted cyclists... THROG the streets.



*Quiet Sunday traffic*

## Three into eight does go

Eight lanes of anarchic traffic on a three lane road ...and we are in amongst it. It's like a film streaming past outside the cab windows. Then the driver opens his window, to spit. Hot, furnace like air and noise belches in. We are, sort of, stopped at a red traffic light, where everyone is edging forward, jostling for space and position. Pedestrians stream across in front and around us and children, risking life and limb, bang on the windows selling flowers, flags or just begging. Then all of a sudden, in a cacophony of horns, shouting and engine noise - we're off! The lights haven't quite changed yet, the intersecting traffic and unfazed pedestrians still swarm across in front of us. Then, propelled forward by the wave of honking metal behind us we miraculously find our way, no, squirm our way through, across and onwards ...driving through Bombay!

## Our much missed gyratory

...this makes the Lancaster one way system feel positively safe and civilised! But despite the madness of the roads, after two months

here I am loving it! The ridiculous contrast of appalling poverty and overblown wealth is difficult to come to terms with but everyone, both inside and outside the Hotel, is friendly and kind ...and tolerant of my idiotic questions!

I walk out as often as possible yet there are no quiet places to walk, even the little side roads are crowded with people, traffic and noise. It is dusty and dirty pretty much everywhere. I particularly miss cycling over the top to Caton, and smelling the cool fresh air, and ordinary pleasures like having the window open as everything is sealed up in the hotel. The Monsoon has just about rained its last drop and it has started to get very hot here, 34 degrees again today.



*Hero's rival: Atlas*

## Why Hero Was So Named

Finally, in the interests of research for this article, and for the strange but compelling joy of being out amongst it all, I took a manic tuktuk ride to a bike shop the other day. A brand new 'Hero' with no gears is 3,200 rupees (£41.50). Tempting, but I can't help but wonder what the 'death by bike' statistics are here in Mumbai? Four people a day are killed crossing the railway lines!

If you would like to see photos and read more, do send me an email ([rob.bee@virgin.net](mailto:rob.bee@virgin.net)) and I will send a link to my web/blog site once I have got it organised.

Happy - cold, wet but relatively tranquil - Lancaster pedalling!

**Robert Bee**

## NEW DYNAMO WEBSITE

With the demise of Geocities, we had to find a new web host for the Dynamo website. We went to great expense (£3 p.a.) of getting a dedicated address, so the new Dynamo website is now at [www.lancaster-dynamo.org.uk](http://www.lancaster-dynamo.org.uk).

If you have an opportunity to publicise the Dynamo website (e.g. via links to your own website), please do so.

**Patricia Clarke**

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## DYNAMO RIDES

### The First Feast of summer, 3<sup>rd</sup> July

It poured with rain all day, and I was filled with foreboding about the prospects of anyone turning out for a ride in the evening, especially as Andy Murray was due to play for a place in the semi-finals at Wimbledon. However, by four o'clock the sky was clearing, and by six the sun was shining on a fine, warm evening. I set off for the Town Hall steps with high hopes for a good turnout for Dynamo's first summer Friday Feast.

By 6.30, I was deciding whether to pedal off by my lonely self for a solo ride, or just return home alone. Then, Hurrah! Nick turned up at the last minute and saved me from my own company. We decided to do the ever-popular Glasson Dock ride, and to visit the Victoria to eat, as they are friendly and their food is good. On the way, we passed the new "Café d'Lune"(sic), at the entrance to the Condor Green car park. It looks very nice, with a lovely large outdoor patio and plenty of bike racks (unfortunately the "wheel-bender" type), but at the moment it only opens during the day, so we couldn't try it out.

On we went to the Victoria, where we had portions of superior hand-cut chips (excellent) and pints of Everard's Beacon Ale (also excellent). The ride both there and home was fun, plenty of good conversation, and lots of bird life to be spotted on the estuary. We had to be careful to avoid the green frogs, which were crossing the path, probably lured out by the previous wet weather. Nick and I parted company at Stodday, promising to meet up for the next feast.

So, where were you? Sitting at home watching Andy Murray fail to qualify? Enjoying a barbeque in your back garden? On

holiday somewhere more exotic? We missed your company, and hope to see you out on the next feast. The destination is decided on the night, and is usually within 45 - 60 minutes easy riding. All you need to do is meet us on the Town Hall steps with your bike, lights and money, so go on, try to make it for the next Dynamo Friday Feast.

**Claire Duplock**

### Future Dynamo rides?

As some of you may have noticed, we have had fewer and fewer programmed Dynamo rides in the past couple of years. This has been for a number of reasons: the difficulty, for personal and professional reasons, for rides "leaders" to book themselves up a few months ahead; the low - or even non-existent - turnout on rides; our knack of picking the wettest Sundays of the year; the free maps and route guides from the City Council that enable people to organise their own rides; and the perennial problem of insurance cover.

In some ways this is a shame, as the rides were a way of people finding out about - and hopefully joining - Dynamo. This is something that we will keep under review.

In the meantime, if anyone is missing group cycle rides, Lancaster City Council now offers rides throughout the year. Details can be found on the Celebrating Cycling website ([www.celebratingcycling.org](http://www.celebratingcycling.org)). There are women-only rides ([www.celebratingcycling.org/wow](http://www.celebratingcycling.org/wow)) and some longer Thursday evening rides ([www.celebratingcycling.org/twenty](http://www.celebratingcycling.org/twenty)). There are also the more challenging CTC rides - details at [www.ctclancaster.org.uk](http://www.ctclancaster.org.uk).

Dynamo will continue to have occasional rides, but these will be at much shorter notice - perhaps less than a week - so that we can take advantage of any expected fine weather and organisers' availability. We'll inform members of any such rides by email.

We hope that members will find this a satisfactory substitute.

**Patricia Clarke**

**Lancaster City Council's CDT  
website:  
[www.celebratingcycling.org](http://www.celebratingcycling.org)**

# QUIZ

## Dear Dullards,

There was no winner of the spring issue prize quiz, in fact there were no entries – not even Pascal.

The **answer** to the mystery cyclist was Alan Turing the famous Bletchley Park Wheeler and five times winner of the Milk Race.

So now it's eyes down for a special, double roll over prize – yes, two years' free tyre air. All you have to do is answer the following bog simple questions.

### 1. Picture

Simply locate this image, and no smart arse submissions like 'the universe', spot-on grid co-ordinates only.



### 2. Quotes

All you have to do is identify the author of the following quotes.

- a) 'When most of us get behind the wheel of a motor car, 10,000 years slip off our shoulders and we go back to the Stone Age – no quarter given, the weakest to the wall, every man for himself.'
- b) 'There is nothing at the end of any road better than may be found beside it.'

### 3. Literature extract

Just name the novel and author.

'The last hanging we had in this parish,' he said, 'was thirty years ago. It was a very famous man called MacDadd. He held the record for a hundred miles on a solid tyre. I

need to tell you what the solid tyre did for him. We had to hang the bicycle.'

'Hang the bicycle?'

### 4. Connections

What is the connection between Victorian anti-car protesters and the name Jehu?

**Bil Eccy, compiler**

### DONE WITH YOUR NEWSLETTER?

Don't just put it in the recycling bin. Leave it somewhere for others to read it – waiting rooms, your staff room at work.

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- Annual membership: £5 waged, £2.50 unwaged

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Dynamo committee.

Let us know if you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email in future.