

# NEWSLETTER

## January 2008



Lancaster and District Cycle  
Campaign

Free to members

<http://uk.geocities.com/dynamocyclecampaign>

### EDITORIAL

*'Lancaster and Morecambe's investment in local cycling infrastructure means that the city is on course to become a cyclist's dream,'* said Transport Minister Rosie Winterton at a national transport conference on November 21st.

So there, it's official. Dynamo can soon stop campaigning and ride the dream. A dream that can be shared by even the most timid souls, for, as Rosie assures us, *'It will soon feel a lot safer to be travelling on two wheels in the area'*. Great, we can all relax.

It's not just central government that is so upbeat about local cycling. Lancashire County Council recently published its Cycling Strategy for the next 5 years. It beacons Lancaster as the shining example of the how *'substantial investment in cycling infrastructure'* transforms a town into a cyclist's dream.

When you look behind the rhetoric at the county's targets you see just how empty it is. For example, its target next year for reallocating road space with cycle lanes is 4kms, and that is for the whole county – the fourth biggest in England and Wales. Its target for cycling contraflows is 2 per year – again for the whole county. It really is the most unambitious cycling strategy imaginable.

As a consequence of the hollow rhetoric and miserable funding coming out of Westminster and the County offices, Dynamo is making a strategic change to its policy. Essentially we will initiate a co-ordinated campaign, together with other CDT towns, to lobby central government for serious funding and

effective action. The full details follow in the 'Campaigning Section'.

This does not mean Dynamo will stop campaigning locally. Indeed, we are currently campaigning to extend 20mph zones throughout the urban areas of Lancaster and Morecambe, to access the canal towpath via Rushley Drive in Morecambe and, through our presence at CDT meetings, to extend contraflows on one-way streets throughout urban areas. Please see the Campaigning in Brief section if you wish to be involved in any of these campaigns.

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### CAMPAIGNING SECTION

#### 2 Years In: Dynamo's assessment of the CDT project

1. As a Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) we're clearly not doing very well - considering what could've changed, very little actually has changed. We're meant to be achieving a major impact on cycling levels; but we think that, at best, the current impact of the CDT project is minor.
2. Accepting point 1 does not mean the CDT team is doing a bad job. To the contrary, Dynamo recognises the hard work of many people, and applauds the efforts that have so far been made. We include council officers, council members, everyone on the steering group, and the many people who have been volunteering in many different ways.

People are doing the best they can, and some progress has been made. To give some specific examples, the improved signage along the Lancaster/Morecambe Greenway is great; the canal's obvious potential as a wonderful cycling corridor is gradually being realised; we've got a couple of new cycling contraflows; Morecambe Prom is now open to cycling; the Go Ride club is pulling lots of young people into cycling. Then there is the undoubted success of cycle training in schools by Bike-it and Pedal Power, who have both received support from the CDT. Moreover, we've still got one year to go, a year in which further improvements can, and we think will, be made.

That said, some of what is happening in the name of cycling promotion is counter productive (such as encouraging shared use of pavements rather than reallocation of road space to cycling; and inserting 'cutting edge' features, such as the new 'magic roundabout' outside The Platform, which exposes cyclists to danger from left turning motorists. The squandering of resources on expensive consultants who have produced city centre plans that do nothing to improve conditions for cyclists and are way over budget. Most importantly, all the changes which have so far taken place under the CDT project, are both piecemeal and inadequate.

3. Dynamo believes we need to put point 1 into a wider context: all the CDTs are failing. None of the 6 towns is doing well. That, Dynamo believes, is because we all face similar obstacles.
4. Our point, put prosaically, is that we have been sold a lie. Perhaps we were a little naive 2 years ago - to believe that we could really boost cycling with a little bit more money and a little bit more status. We all wanted to believe that, it was in our

interests to believe that; Cycling England wanted us to believe that; and it's very convenient for central government if people believe that. But it is simply not the case.

5. We are now all more aware of the very real barriers to boosting cycling at the local level. We have finally woken up to the impossibility of promoting cycling in an 'anti-cycling' policy environment. Central government, via a woefully under-funded Cycling England, has passed responsibility for promoting cycling onto local actors without the power and ability to deliver.
6. Dynamo believes we should now seek to pass that responsibility back to where it properly resides, to central government, including the Department for Transport. We therefore invite Lancaster City Council's CDT team, the 5 other CDT teams, and the cycle campaigning world to join us in lobbying Cycling England, the Department for Transport and central government to institute the changes which will enable genuine, effective cycling promotion at the local level.
7. To reiterate, Dynamo applauds the efforts of Lancaster City Council's CDT team, the other CDTs, Cycling England and hard working campaigners everywhere. It is not easy to remain motivated and keep working hard in an unforgiving political environment, yet people are continuing to give their best even when the odds are stacked against them.

But Dynamo calls the CDT project a sham. Dynamo believes we must recognise and advertise this sham in order to apply pressure for real change, changes in transport policy that will genuinely enable people at a local level to promote cycling and achieve substantial increases in levels of cycling.

8. Dynamo believes this is how the CDT project could be most effective. If all we CDTs join together and proclaim loudly that we've been set up, our hands are tied, and to boost cycling we need policy changes at a national level, then we can have an influence and - just maybe - we can effect genuine change for the better, and change which will have much broader effect, well beyond the 6 current demonstration towns. So we need to demand a policy environment which:

- allocates vastly more money than hitherto to cycling. Cycling England is requesting a budget of £250 million from central government, and it is seeking to expand its CDT project. Last time it requested £70 million, and it was given £5 million. But we say that £250 million is still way too little;
- positively encourages and facilitates mandatory speed restrictions;
- makes cycle contraflows the norm rather than the exception;
- always prioritises cycling over the movement of motorised vehicle (this entails specific interventions such as cycling always having right of way at junctions);
- changes the cost structure of motoring, so that variable costs become an ever greater proportion of total costs;
- changes the law, to put the burden of responsibility for accidents onto drivers of motorised vehicles.

This, Dynamo believes, is the politically astute move which we 'first-wave' Cycling Demonstration Towns should now be making. We must use what media attention and collective muscle we might

possess to apply pressure where it's really needed. This is not about giving up on the CDT project, but about using our role in this important project to effect change where it's really needed. Moreover, it's about pushing for similar things, in a similar direction, to other groups and organisations in the field of sustainable transport promotion. None of the above suggestions have come from nowhere; they are all in line with what other groups, and sometimes even government guidelines, are proposing. We are in a uniquely and strategically good position. With others, we should be pushing for central government leadership on promoting cycling in Britain.

However, to be listened to, we need to develop a collective voice, and act in solidarity, together with others in a similar position.

To this end, over the next few months, Dynamo will draft a statement about what we think needs to change. We then intend to invite key stakeholders from each of the six CDTs to contribute to this process, with the aim that we reach a set of demands to which all CDTs are willing to sign up to. We then aim to use this as a tool to lobby - both directly with relevant institutions and indirectly via the media - for those political changes required to generate a real step-change in cycling levels, everywhere.

**Dave Horton**

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## **CAMPAIGNING IN BRIEF**

### **20mph zones**

An idea whose time has finally come? Well, the Parliamentary Advisory Committee for Transport Safety has called for 20mph to be the default speed limit in all urban streets. If you belong to, work for, or know of an organisation that would support mandatory 20mph zones around all our 68 schools and a voluntary 20mph zone throughout the urban area, and that might be willing to sign a campaigning

letter of support to the media, please forward its email details to Dynamo.

### **Rushley Drive, Hest Bank**

Opening up Rushley Drive onto the canal towpath would offer a safer and quicker route from the north of Morecambe to Lancaster and Carnforth. There is opposition to this move from local residents on grounds of car parking in Rushley Drive. If you would like to support Dynamo's negotiations at the next meeting of the Lancashire Local-Lancaster District please write to your local city and county councillors who sit on that committee. If you want to know which councillors to write to, see the Lancaster City Council website at <http://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.asp?ID=636&J=2>.

For further information, contact us.

### **New infrastructure**

#### **Deep Cutting Spur**

The short new spur to the canal towpath has been tarmacked between Aldcliffe Road and Ashton Road. It fails however to link up with any cycle lane on Ashton Road. The city council regards this as a new route to Lancaster University, now that the planned route up the east side of Ashton Road has collapsed. However, before it could be considered a safe route, cycle lanes would need to be built on both sides of the ever busy and fast Ashton Road. Until then it remains a short cul-de-sac going nowhere.



*Newly surfaced towpath by Aldcliffe Road*

The building of a contraflow on **Phoenix Street, Lancaster**, is at last due to start in January. But don't hold your breath; Dynamo was promised this four years ago.

Work on a shared cycle pedestrian lane along the north side of Caton Road out of Lancaster should commence in the New Year.

The following routes are in various stages of completion or disintegration and will not happen in this financial year, or possibly ever.

#### **Hospital route**

Objections by the Hospital Trust on grounds of safety. Under renegotiation.

#### **Church Street, Brook Street and Penny Street contraflows**

The process is stuck somewhere in the bureaucratic maze and should it ever see the light of day it will certainly encounter stiff political opposition because it challenges the sanctity of parking and loading bays.

#### **Central Drive link to Greenway**

Council negotiating with Morrisons and Burger King over access to land and planning gain obligations.

#### **Cyclists' A6 needs ignored**

In the autumn of 2007, the highway authority resurfaced part of the large roundabout in the centre of which stands Our Lady's High School and Lune Street. This resurfacing even extended a few metres northwards along the A6. What the highway authority failed to do was resurface the most dilapidated and potholed section of the A6 as it passes Ryelands Park, through Skerton and northwards to the hospice in Beaumont. This section of road shakes both cycles and cyclists making it difficult to steer a straight course, while traffic-jammed motorists get impatient along this narrow stretch as cyclists wobble past them.

What the highway authority has done along this stretch of road is to repaint the white lines that delineate short sections of on-road cycle lane. Most of these are across the junctions with side roads. Motorists tend to regard them as advance stop lines; that is they advance the extra metre from the side road before stopping. In doing this they make the main carriageway narrower and create pinch points, which add another unnecessary and unwanted frisson when cycling. There are some longer sections of on-road cycle lane north of St Luke's School, Skerton. Motorists use these as somewhere to park.

Now if we had had the road resurfaced and the sections of the Highway Code enforced that relate to parking, fewer cyclists would feel the need to cycle on the pavement.

If enough cyclists report these dangerous potholes to the County's highway authority then we might just get some action. Contact Alasdair Simpson on 01772 534609 or [trafficansafety@env.lancscc.gov.uk](mailto:trafficansafety@env.lancscc.gov.uk)

## **CDT Evaluation**

The evaluation by Sustrans and Cycling England of Lancaster's CDT progress will be presented and discussed at the next CDT Steering Group meeting on 25 January. We should learn whether Cycling England is prepared to extend Lancaster's CDT status. Any future funding from the DfT would need to be match funded. So far the County Council has earmarked £125,000 for this purpose. Just how far can you go with £250,000? Watch this space.

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## **OPINION PIECE**

### **Cycle Parking**

Much infrastructure needs to be in place for cycling to establish itself as a mode of transport. One of these is cycle parking. This is low key and not immediately obvious to many people but as cyclists we

notice when it does not exist, as do non-cyclists when they see bikes chained to fences and street furniture.

Progress is being made. Cycle parking in the village of Lancaster is relatively easy. Sometimes all the Sheffield stands in one location are full but there is usually space nearby. Sometimes the space is occupied by motorcycles and these are often large impressive beasts but I suspect that secure parking is as much an issue for the owners of these machines as those of us who rely on pedal power. The other misuse of cycle parking in Lancaster is at the junction of Market Street with the gyratory road, opposite Waterstones book shop. These are often cluttered with sacks of refuse that the traders in the vicinity have left for collection.

It is away from the urban centre that cycle parking becomes more of an issue. When I go to Bare I shackle my bike to a tree, lamp post or fence. However in Slyne-with-Hest the parish council installed cycle parking outside the Memorial Hall and on the foreshore over a year ago, and during the summer the city council has placed cycle parking outside the post office in Hest Bank and the Londis shop in Slyne. These stands are on land owned by the shopkeepers and cycle parking is there with their agreement. Two of the churches in the village, the United reformed Church and St Luke's, that now share the same buildings have asked how they could get cycle parking outside the church hall as several people cycle to the youth club.

Carnforth is a relative desert for cycle parking. There is some at Tesco, outside the health centre and at Booths. The two Sheffield stands at Booths were adequate for the volume of cyclists but were not well positioned. By early summer it was becoming difficult to park. Filling in a comment card prompted a telephone call from the manager a week later. He had looked at the cycle parking several times during the week and agreed that more parking was required and he would initiate the process to increase the secure parking. It did get worse before it got better. In early October I could get

nowhere near the Sheffield stands as there were so many bikes around them and I resorted to a lamp post. However by early November there were another three stands and parking is now relatively easy.

Both the city council and Booths should be commended for the improvements they have made in cycle parking this summer.

**John Leach**

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## **SOCIAL EVENT**

### **Talk the Ride & Saddle Bag Sale**



*You have 5 minutes on the subject of . . .*

- Gott' a favourite ride, or cycling moment?
- Gott' an image or two of it?
- Wanna share it with kindred spirits or even other cyclists?

Come along to the **Gregson Centre, Moor Lane, Lancaster, on Thursday 31 January from 7.30 pm** and talk the ride in 5 minutes max.

Put your images on a CD, or just bring an old photo and our techno-wizard, alistair.kirkbride@talktalk.net, will enlarge and project you through the time-space continuum.

So please get in touch if you'd like to 'Talk the Ride', or just come along with any cycle bits you want to recycle, and browse through other saddle bags.

All on two-wheels or two-legs welcome.

Entry free.

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### **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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## **PRIZE COMPETITION**

### **Violate your vest contest**

Have you got one of the CDT high-visibility vests? Thought about personalising it? Think you can tailor your tabard better than the one in the photo overleaf? Then win a year's free supply of tyre gas – as used in Tour de France and other major races - by simply sending your material mutilation to our email address.

Winners announced in next issue.

Tick box for anonymity.

Judge's decision is final.

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



*All very true . . .*

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## **ANNUAL REVIEW FOR THE DYNAMO AGM, OCTOBER 2007**

Once again, the last twelve months have been dominated by the Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) project.

Before I launch into a list of Dynamo's own activities, I would like to urge members to become involved from time to time. Being able to contact members by email for their suggestions on a cycling matter is always useful. Even if you don't want to commit yourself to regular involvement, it's good to have someone who can come on a ride or suggest an idea for some improvement or write to the local paper about a cycling matter. So do think about it.

In the year under review Dynamo has been busy with the following:

- We submitted detailed proposals for turning Lancaster city centre into a cycle-friendly place as consultants Mayer Brown were engaged to carry out a review.

- We campaigned for 20mph zones in the district's residential areas and outside schools.
- There have been two packed Dynamo newsletters.
- Although family illnesses cut down on the number of cycle rides, we have led some during the year.
- We met the city councillor with the new engineering brief to present her with arguments in favour of a cycle-friendly district.
- We are following up the months-long closure of the cycle access gate to Lancaster railway station.
- We presented proposals about where to site cycle parking to the City Council.
- We presented a cyclist's perspective on cycle-friendly workplaces to those employers who have been targeted by the CDT.
- We continue to attend meetings of the Lancashire Cycle Liaison Group in Preston.
- We continue to attend meetings of the CDT steering group

Not all of this activity is successful. I am reminded of the sigh I heaved as I viewed the newly re-opened Shaw Street bridge earlier this year – the Council still hadn't bothered to put a little cycle ramp down the steps despite frequent pestering. However, to console myself I look forward to being able to cycle down a Phoenix Street contra-flow lane at some point in the next 3 years.

You win some, you lose some . . . and you keep on pedalling.

**Patricia Clarke**

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## **TOURING SECTION**

### **The Netherlands: the top 10 things about cycling there**

This summer we enjoyed our first family cycling holiday. Starting and finishing at Europoort, we spent 3 weeks pedalling a 700 km loop around the top two-thirds of the Netherlands. Sue and I rode our

ordinary town bikes, with Bobby and Flo following behind on trailer bikes. Most days, we rode around 40 km. We camped almost every night. It was a fantastic holiday, which worked partly because we had good weather. But we think there's also much about the Netherlands which means it'd be hard to go wrong in taking a cycling holiday there. Pedalling along, I often wondered why it took us so long to find this perfect cycling destination. So here's our top 10 of things we liked about cycling in the Netherlands:

1. Cyclists have priority! You don't quite believe it until you've experienced it again and again and again. After 3 weeks, I still didn't quite believe it. But it's true – as a cyclist you have priority over motorised vehicles. As we pedalled away from Europoort, huge trucks would wait for us to ride across a side road before turning into or out of it. But cyclists' priority extends beyond other road users waiting for you – the principle has been so imbibed that it's turned into an ethos of the road: 'watch out for, take care of, and be kind to cyclists'. It feels like political emancipation.
2. Trekkershutten. Arrived at a campsite wet and bedraggled? Can't face the prospect of putting up the tents again? Kids want a change? Go for a trekkershutten. Many campsites have these little cabins, which contain two sets of bunk beds and don't cost much more than a night's camping. They provide shelter from the rain, a mattress, heat and cooking facilities. So you never feel consigned to spending the night under canvas as there's usually another option.
3. Freedom from cars. Why pay a fortune to go to Centerparcs when you can go to the Netherlands? One of the main reasons this country feels so civilised is because the Dutch have learned how to tame the car. They are, it seems, never ruled by cars. At most campsites people leave their cars at the edges and use hand-pulled trailers to move their gear about. This probably improves the camping

experience for everyone, but perhaps especially parents and kids. We found the pinnacle of car free space on Vlieland, a small island where visitors' cars are not allowed and where bikes consequently reign supreme. The island's only town demonstrates what large scale velomobility would be like – a place in which almost everyone is moving around by bike. It looks and feels spectacular, and sounds astonishing – so many people, so little noise!

4. Feeling normal! And therefore anonymous. Everyone is cycling. The numbers of people riding is sometimes staggering. When the rain came down towards the end of a sunny Sunday on the coast in Zandvoort we became part of an exodus, cycling inland. Part of a mass, you are strangely inconspicuous. That said, many people were interested in our machines, because for all the cycling, trailer bikes are still relatively unusual in the Netherlands (children of a similar age to Bobby and Flo are generally riding their own bikes, and if the ride is long and the child wilting, the pace is maintained through an adult's helping hand on the shoulder). But interest in the trailer bikes was genuine, not the gormless gaping we often seem to provoke in the UK.
5. Nothing's far away. It's never more than a few kilometres to the next village or town (and possibility of food, drink, ice-cream and playground). There's never a fear of being stranded miles from anywhere without food or water. And there always seems to be something interesting to head for: windmills, museums, beaches, ferry trips, lakes, woodlands. (Also, although this didn't apply to us, if the weather turns really bad, you're never far from either a city or a train to a city, and the different, drier, experiences which cities offer.)
6. Bikes get you places cars cannot. Whilst there's an element of 'naanaa, na naanaa' about this, the real pleasure is that you spend so much

time away from the aural, visual and emotional pollution which cars create. Many cycle paths are far away from the nearest motor road - the cycling routes through the dunes along the whole of the west coast being particularly good. There's something spiritually refreshing about pedalling for miles through beautiful countryside, along roads designed specifically for bikes.

7. Pancakes! Our favourite Dutch food. Kids love 'em! With both savoury and sweet versions, pancakes have the happy knack of managing to satisfy adults and kids equally. Moreover, they're available pretty much everywhere, so you know that wherever you eat, the kids will never go unsatisfied.
8. Navigation is a cinch! If you're following one of the many numbered cycle routes, it's hard to go wrong. Of course you need maps, but map-reading is rarely the effort it can be in other countries.
9. Goats! Yes, really. They're all over the place, and often accessible to children, who love them (apart from when the goats decide to be naughty and start head-butting them!). Bobby and Flo spent hours in paddocks, feeding goats and cuddling the smaller ones. Larger towns and cities tend to have animal parks, where kids can interact with all kinds of animals, including goats. But our favourite goat place was a restaurant just outside Delft, where we could sit, eat and drink in a shady courtyard whilst the goats and children played.
10. The unexpected. What will the next playground be like? What will tonight's campsite be like? Swimming pool? Canoe hire? Big and brash, or small and simple? A bit of a cheat, this one, because openness to the unknown is one of the great pleasures of all cycle-touring. I guess the specific pleasure of the Netherlands is that you can pretty much guarantee the standards of that unknown. The unknown is

invariably well organised, clean, and speaks English!

So there you go. Ten reasons you might like to add the Netherlands to your list of places to go for a cycling holiday, perhaps especially if you've got children or don't go a bundle on hills, or like people to both speak English and not make you feel rude for not speaking their language. Highly recommended.

**Dave Horton**



## **Belgium: Pratfalls & Pitfalls of a Cycling Holiday**

### **Getting there**

- Watch out for the unhelpful Virgin train manager who disappears at Euston when you need him to liberate your bikes from the locked bike vault, especially if you've a tight connection from Charring Cross to Dover .
- Give yourself plenty of time to navigate around the sunken drain covers, as deep as bear traps, as you pedal up n' down London town.
- Check your train connection to Dover is not in the, 'no bike slot' from 7-9 or 16-19hrs, and you're settled in the right half of the train before it divides at Ashford International.
- Don't anticipate staying at the charming, if dilapidated, Georgian Dover YHA as it was flogged off in September 2007. Thus denying you the chance to see the final resting place of one of Scott's North Pole

huskies, who lies in a shallow grave in the back garden.

- Avoid the one way drag-strip that strangles the centre of Dover. Why a young Dutch family with two young lads should choose Dover YHA as a centre for a cycling holiday in the SE of England still puzzles me.
- Don't expect to meet any kindred travellers on the Norfolk Lines ferry to Dunkirk – small print on ticket says, 'Sorry, no foot passengers'. All the passengers hang out in the exclusive 'Road Kings Bar' - HGV licence holders only . There didn't seem to be a 'Road Kill Bar' for two-wheelers.
- Don't expect Dunkirk (Church on the Dunes) to be where it is located on any reputable map. Norfolk Lines berth some 20 kms south of the town, on the edge of a giant and dusty lorry/trailer park. Be prepared to be passed for 5kms on a narrow exit road by a chain of truckies recently disgorged from the Road Kings bar.



*The cycle lane starts here:  
Franco-Belgian border*

### **Belgium: the country**

- Our route. We followed the Vlanderen Lang Fietsroute, the Flanders Long Distance route, east from Dunkirk for 520kms. Just because it's called Flanders (Flooded Field) don't expect soggy greensward. After only 60kms, somewhere between Diksmuide and Ypres, we were startled by the sight of a couple in a cable car ascending a particularly steep ridge on their lazy ride up to the Belgium Alps. From

there on, all the way to the Dutch border, it was rather uppy downy with short sharp climbs enough to race the pulse.

- Flander's fields are ossuaries. Be prepared for deep melancholy as you pass yet another WWI cemetery. Be prepared to be shocked by WWI museums such as Totengang (Death Trench). Be prepared to blubber as you listen to the Last Post at 8pm under the Menin Gate in Ypres.
- Roads. Plenty of quiet country roads but take care on rural pavé, which when dry is bone shaking, and when wet is unseating. Contra-flow cycling is widely permissible, especially in cities, but often comes without any cycle lane or traffic calming, so watch out for those zoom town rats!!
- Other cyclists. Belgians are into racing big style and the roads are packed with both boy and elderly racers at the weekend. If you're fully panniered and moving at donkey pace – as we were - it's best to pull over and admire the bronzed and oleaginous musculature as the peleton purrs past. Wednesday afternoons mean cycle racing. Our route inadvertently took us through the controlled zone of the start of the Brabant Classic. Fortunately the riders were only warming up as we pedalled innocently against the technicolour blur.
- Eating and Drinking. Watch out for the 3-day weekend. Key shops such as bakeries don't open on a Monday and you can find yourself eating emergency Mars bars and couscous for supper. Be warned, mayo' is default on everything. Lots of rural bars are virtual shrines to Eddie & son Axel but even these often have the door sticker to avoid, 'Ja fur Rauchers'. Smoking in many eateries is still acceptable. Belgian beer, brewed by monks drunk by monkeys. Therein lies the road to madness. Imbibe sparingly or under strict medical supervision.
- Accommodation. Campsites are ubiquitous on the maps, but on the ground many, especially in resorts, admit only permanent marquees and caravans. Quiet Youth Hostels can suddenly become swamped when a

party of 55 Polish teenagers, their two cooks and a trailer stacked high with beefburgers the size of Gdansk and enough pickled gherkins to tarmac the M25 arrive in a stretch-coach. Hotels: be careful when booking ahead, even, or possibly especially, from the official local tourist guide. The two star 'Interchange Lodge' in Brustem, was a flop shop for brothel punters.

- Phoning the UK. Belgium doesn't do regular phone cards. You use a till receipt, bought from a Post Office, on which is printed two 15 digit codes that need to be tapped in before you dial your number.
- Finally, language. You need at least two languages; Flemish and French. But make sure you use them in the right location: Flemish in the north and French in Wallonia in the south. Only Brussels is officially bilingual, where all the street signs are in both languages.



*Hire bikes in Brussels*

Now, my aim has not been to discourage cycling in Belgium. Far from it. Belgium comes highly recommended. The well-signposted Flanders route passes through a pleasant, if at times mournful, landscape, punctuated with towns of great historical interest. The motorists, most of whom will probably be cyclists as well, are generally courteous. Above all there is a definite feel that Belgium welcomes cyclists.

While it is not quite the Netherlands, visit Belgium, and soon, before it fragments and becomes history.

**Dick Follows**

## **WANTED: CYCLING GUINEA PIGS**

During the summer there was an appeal in the Celebrating Cycling newsletter and on the web site for cyclists to participate in a research study. It is hoped that the results of the research will help in infrastructure design and demand modelling for cycling.

The call for participants stated that local cyclists are required to take part in a study of cycling being conducted as part of a Research Degree in the Department of Built Environment at the University of Bolton. The study involves participants collecting data, using a GPS recorder, during any normal cycling activity.

Participants will not be required to complete a rigorous cycling routine for this study, it is a study of their everyday cycling activities. Therefore, if a participant is very active, they may only need to record their activities for a couple of weeks. If they are a less frequent cyclist, they may need the recorder for a couple of months.

The University has purchased five GPS recorders and heart monitors for the study and would meet with all participants to set up the recorders on their bicycles and show them how to use the equipment (this would take about 30 minutes). Participants would also be required to complete a paper diary to record the purpose of the trips, e.g. commuting, shopping, leisure, etc.

Data will be collected over the next two years, including the winter months for those dedicated cyclists.

We volunteered to take part. The process is not arduous, though we had to remember to put on the heart monitors before we set off, ensure the GPS is charged, it is attached to the bike before we set off and that it has "acquired" satellites before setting off. The most challenging part was to ensure that we did not get the two GPS units confused as

they are calibrated to each of us and each of our bikes.

Jane Hunter who is undertaking the research still needs more volunteers. Do get involved by contacting Jane on (0161) 827 1890 or by email at [hunter.jane@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hunter.jane@tiscali.co.uk).

**Liz & John Leach**

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Off-Roads Trails and Quiet Lanes by Keith Bradley, ISBN 0-9548131-7-0; £12.95**

This book describes 20 routes in the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales. It is aimed at the cycling enthusiast, family riders and mountain bikers.

The first section covers topics such as your bike, clothing, helmet, gloves, other essentials, maps, points of safety, off-road rights of way and rules of the (off) road. This is nothing spectacularly exciting but provides a useful checklist; particularly for those new to this type of cycling.

For each ride there is a description of the route including its length and a cross-section, so the reader has an appreciation of the ascent and descent for each ride. There is a map and a description of the route.

It appears to be a useful present to anyone who goes, or wants to go, off-road riding but has not got a repertoire of routes.

**John Leach**

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## DYNAMO RIDES

**Friday 11 January 2008  
FRIDAY FEAST**

A ride to a local inn for a bar meal and a drink. Venue to be decided on the night, but will not exceed 25km. Remember

your lights. Meet at 6.30 p.m. on the steps of Lancaster Town Hall, Dalton Square. Phone Claire Duplock on 33146 if you are coming.

**Sunday 17 February 2008  
NORTH OF LANCASTER**

A ride of 25-40km (depending on weather conditions) to Carnforth or Capernwray. There's bound to be some hills somewhere. Meet at 10.30 a.m. on the Skerton end of the Millennium Bridge, Lancaster. Phone Patricia Clarke on 63641 if you are coming.

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Annual membership  
£5.00 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.