

EDITORIAL

Map-making is a first step on the road to war.

Dynamo recently received three maps detailing the proposed changes in and around the Lancaster gyratory to improve cycling conditions. They were sent by Mayer Brown the consultants who have been employed, at a cost to CDT funds of £10,000, by the County Council.

The smaller scale map shows all the proposed routes in eight different colours, which describe a seamless web that would facilitate real ease of movement through and around the city. Just the job.

However, the devil is in the detail. The larger scale reveals anything but a seamless web. If you join the gyratory from Chapel Street, then you are thrust into the confines of Rosemary Lane without any cycle lane. This absence of a lane returns half-way up Thurnham Street, just as it narrows outside the Town Hall. To make matters worse, the existing current cycle lane on the opposite side of Thurnham Street is to be removed. So just where you need protection most: at pinch points, there is nothing.

Another serious flaw with the new and incomplete cycle lane around the gyratory is that it is only of advisory status, rather than mandatory, thus allowing motorists and van drivers to ignore it and even park in it. If they can, then . . .

Moreover, the vital West to East crossing has been badly bodged. Dynamo has campaigned for, and indeed the CDT committee has supported, a two-way, contra-flow on Common Garden Street. A highly visible and useful piece of cycling infrastructure along a main artery of our

city centre would send a very positive message about the city's status as a cycle friendly city. Instead Mayer Brown have proposed a short stretch of cycle lane outside the Indoor Market that runs between the bus bay and the traffic flow – a recipe for flattened cyclist sandwich. There again perhaps Mayer Brown do not intend cyclists to use Common Garden Street at all, since access from the current cycle lane on the east side of King Street is to be removed in order to allow delivery van loading from the existing double yellow lines. In future cyclists will have to stop at the pedestrian crossing on the west side of King Street to cross over into Common Garden Street. These proposals will make east to west crossing more difficult.

The third map showed the so-called Orbital Route around Lancaster, which is designed to link the city centre with schools, work and home. If implemented it would do the job, but to be quite frank most of the infrastructure is already in place, or soon will be under existing schemes. However, Mayer Brown did propose some innovative and expensive engineering works on the Orbital Route: such as cycle path under the Greyhound Bridge - yes under it, and at high tide, too.

Irrespective of their flaws, these remain expensive engineering schemes which are chasing scarce funds. The Gyratory scheme alone would cost £1.6m. The remains of the CDT funds amounts to only £0.6m, all of which is already earmarked for other schemes. At best these are post-CDT dreams that might be realised in a more pro-cycling zeitgeist than the current one

Should Mayer Brown take all the flak? Well, to be fair, they have had to work

within the following remit from Lancashire County Council:

'The implementation of the cycle strategy should not adversely affect the operation of other modes of transport within the city centre.'

Do Mayer Brown and County seriously believe the city centre can be made cycle friendly without restricting car movement and reallocating road space to cyclists?

Mayer Brown, then, have to a degree had their hands tied by the County, who have dilatorily commissioned this consultation so that there are now inadequate CDT funds to cover its recommendations. We have to ask why County did not tackle the gyratory themselves at the start of the CDT process? They have a big and expanding engineering department. Perhaps they should spend less time on promoting unsustainable major 'relief' road schemes and more on sustainable ones.

All Dynamo's surveys of local cyclists' views have shown the gyratory to be the greatest barrier to cycling in the district and a number one priority. Results that both City and County Council have been made aware of. What ever happened to consultation and government that listens?

According to a comment from Phil Darnton of Cycling England, Lancaster currently lies bottom in the league of the seven cycling demonstration towns and must be judged a failing CDT.

So a huge task lies ahead for all those involved in the CDT process if this failing trend is to be reversed, especially Cllr Blamire who has recently been elected as the City Council's cabinet member with responsibility for cycling. Dynamo wishes her every success and offers all its support and experience.

Finally, to return to maps. They may be the first steps to war, unless of course the makers can be persuaded to redraw them. Our dilemma is, whose hands really drew these maps?

Ed'

PARTY ON THE PROM

Hats off to the Celebrating Cycling team at Lancaster City Council for putting together a great 'party on the prom' on Sunday 29th April. The weather was good, there was plenty to see and do, and all kinds of interesting people to talk to. Mind you, it also felt a bit surreal. My family and I have been cycling along the prom since moving to the district over ten years ago. And here we were, at a party to celebrate the opening of the prom to cycling!



That said, it *did* feel good to join perhaps a hundred people pedalling up and down the prom, and to the end of the stone jetty and back. Something about which I've always - if only slightly, at the back of my mind - been apologetic about, I could now do with an easy and happy heart. The prom has become a legitimate part of our district's cycling infrastructure, and *that* is worth celebrating.

So well done to everyone who made it happen. And a special mention to Paul Andrews, who - with his family - worked tirelessly all day, giving youngsters the chance to test and extend their cycling skills (and a British Cycling Go Ride club is now up and running, every Saturday

morning at Salt Ayre). Finally, just who was that man in lycra on the Chopper? We must be told.



An unfortunate PS. If riding out to the prom from the Lancaster-Morecambe Greenway, there are new cycle lanes on and around the traffic roundabout by the prom/Midland Hotel/Platform. My personal opinion is they are worse than terrible, potentially lethal, and in a sane world whoever was responsible for them would be prosecuted. Use them at your peril.



Now you see it, now you don't (see centre right)

Dave Horton

YOURS SINCERELY

Dynamo campaign letters - a selection

Three letters written to people in powerful executive positions, who could make decisions that really would make cycling double or even more – the CDT aim - in Lancaster & District.

Their contact details are included so that Dynamo members can write as concerned cyclists/citizens.

1)

Mr Tony Halsall

Chief Executive

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay

Royal Lancaster Infirmary

Ashton Road

Lancaster LA1 4RP

20-07-07

Dear Mr Halsall,

Improving the health of the population

Dynamo is keen to see Lancaster succeed as a cycling demonstration town. We understand that a successful cycling demonstration could help you meet some of the objectives of the NHS locally.

The Department of Health publication "Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier" advocates increasing exercise and there will be cross government action to achieve this. One way of achieving this is for people to cycle rather than drive. However many people prefer traffic free cycle routes. Our understanding is that Lancaster city council has proposed two routes for traffic free cycle routes onto the site of Royal Lancaster Infirmary. Both of these suggestions have been blocked by the hospital management.

These routes would provide access for hospital staff travelling to and from work; visitors to the hospital and pupils go to and from Ripley St Thomas School and link to an inner orbital traffic free route around Lancaster. Encouraging hospital staff and visitors to cycle could alleviate car parking problems at the hospital.

We ask that you encourage your managers at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary to work with the engineers at Lancaster city council to devise a traffic free route from the proposed orbital route onto the hospital site within the next month.

Yours sincerely,
Dynamo

2)

Mr Stuart Wrigley
Director of Strategic & Corporate Planning

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 9 Guild House
Preston PR1 8RD

5-07-07

Dear Mr Wrigley,

I am responding to your letter in which you asked Dynamo to, 'acknowledge that Lancashire County Council has made an enormous contribution to promoting cycling in the district of Lancaster'. Moreover, that a 15% increase in the number of cycle journeys over the last 5 years was evidence that, 'the county's efforts have proved successful'.

As you know I am the editor of the Dynamo newsletter, which will be published at the end of July, and I am happy to make the acknowledgement in this issue if I can justify your claims to our readers. So would you kindly supply explanations and data to the following queries.

While Dynamo appreciates your support for various funding bids for sustainable schemes such as EDZ, CDT, etc. could you please itemise the cycling budget for Lancaster & District over the last 5 years, and also perhaps comment on its weight when set against such unsustainable projects as a new bypass for the district, for which £156m is earmarked, plus of course the millions that have been spent on promoting it over the years, and the cost, in excess of £10,000, for the latest public enquiry.

Secondly, in order to explain and justify the claimed 15% increase in cycle journeys to our readers, could you please itemise the modal share of cycle trips, plus the number of cycle trips in the district, over the period 2000 to 2006.

Thirdly, several months ago Lancashire Locals and CDT steering voted unanimously for a 20 mph scheme that would do an enormous amount to

promote road safety. Could you explain why an authority that is so keen to promote road safety has not implemented this vital scheme.

Fourthly, could you explain why a county so committed to cycling has taken almost two years to advertise for a replacement cycling officer for Pat Strachan to support Alasdair Simpson.

Fifthly, while Dynamo applauds Pedal Power and Kathy Bashford's work as Bike-it officer, particularly with regard to local primary schools, do you have the modal share figures for the local secondary schools for which county is responsible: Central Lancashire, Skerton High, Morecambe and Heysham High?

Sixthly, the appointment of a workplace cycling officer by the CDT was welcomed by Dynamo, but as is evidenced by the City Council's recent survey of its employees, which showed a decline in cycling journeys to work to a miserable 2.8% for 2006, could you please provide the figures for cycling trips to the county's main workplace at White Cross. Moreover, as somebody who cycle commutes five days a week my impression is that apart from cycling between Lancaster and Morecambe on the Lune path, which does seem to have increased, this is not true of the city centre. So could you please supply cycling figures for Lancaster's 10 major workplaces where work travel plans have been set up so that we can draw meaningful conclusions about the plans. Dynamo applauds your personalised travel plan survey and we are very interested to see how its results inform your strategic planning.

Finally, please let me apologise for the lack of a prompt response to your original letter but I do hope you appreciate we are a volunteer, campaign group.

I look forward to your reply, with a view to making your desired acknowledgement.

Yours sincerely,

Dynamo

3)
Mark Cullinan
Chief Executive
Lancaster City Council
Town Hall
Lancaster

17-07-07

Dear Mr Cullinan,

Dynamo is writing regarding the city council's policies and performance with respect to encouraging cycling to and from the work place.

The results of the city council's own survey of staff travel conducted in March 2007 are, I think you will agree, very discouraging. You will recall they showed a decline in staff cycling to work from 6% in 2003 to 2.4% in 2006. Even accounting for the different survey methods 2.4% is poor for any authority wishing to set an example of sustainable travel to its constituency, in a CDT it is abysmal. Clearly these figures are a sad reflection of a current policy that is failing despite the hiring of a workplace cycling officer.

Regarding the wider context, what measures have the council introduced to promote cycling to and from the workplace in Lancaster, Morecambe, Carnforth and other parts of the district? We would hope that these would be at officer to officer level, where strategy, technical details and running campaigns are worked out. Moreover, we would expect some contact with the chief executives of employers so there are high profile senior champions of cycling within each workplace.

Dynamo's members would like to hear your response to the above and learn what measures the city council has put in place in the three months since the report's publication to reverse the trend.

Yours sincerely,
Dynamo

Footnote: Dynamo is still waiting for replies to these three letters.

Lancaster's official CDT website:
www.celebratingcycling.org

**VELOLUTION; WHAT CITY
COUNCILS WHO TAKE
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL
SERIOUSLY DO.**

Paris is launching an ambitious programme to make bicycle commuting as easy as possible. Called VELIB, and starting in mid-July, over 10,000 rental bikes at 750 rental stations will be available with the swipe of a card - and the first half-hour is free. Similar programs have been launched elsewhere with varying success, but Paris is doing it in a way that may be too big to fail.

Just what did happen to such earlier and similar 'free-bicycle' schemes?

The success of the pioneering White Bicycle Scheme of the 1960's in Amsterdam was dependent on the community spirit of the Flower Power generation. It didn't survive for long and bikes quickly disappeared, some even being relocated in Moscow and the USA.

Cambridge's 1993 'Green Bike Scheme' also somewhat overestimated the local integrity, and all 300 bicycles disappeared on the first day.

Thieves are clearly indifferent to colour coding as the 10 bikes put on the streets of London under last year's 'Orange Bike Scheme' also all vanished rather quickly, despite being destined for African charities after the promotion.

One scheme apparently bucking the trend is London's privately run 'British OYBikes'. Its success, apparently, is down to a secure mobile phone unlocking system, and unattractive bikes with almost zero resale value. So far only three out of a hundred bikes have gone missing.

In an age when mass bike production is so cheap it would be a great green investment if all city councils introduced a secure, free bike scheme. Then, as is the

case with cheap biro, bicycles would become a free good that people just picked up, used and left for the next rider.

Ed'

OPINION PAGES

Pet hates

There are some things that I strongly dislike. Many of them have something to do with cycling but not all of them do.

One is waiting to turn right from a side road only to realise late in the manoeuvre that the driver of the car who has to turn slightly to his right to stay on the main road is travelling too fast for the car and his driving ability plus he is using his mobile phone. I felt the adrenaline rush in my increased pulse rate as he narrowly avoided driving over the grass verge and into the woods that were to my left.

Having to walk in the road because there is not enough room left to walk along the pavement as cars are parked on it. The best efforts, of the highway engineers to separate pedestrians and motorists, are obliterated in one thoughtless (or is it slothful) moment.

When I am slowly cycling up to red traffic lights for a car to squeeze past me and stop at the traffic lights right next to the pavement. I either have to stop or go on his outside. Such drivers invariably stall as they try to pull away. It is a great opportunity to demonstrate the virtues of pedal power but makes life feel so much more fragile and difficult.

Unresponsive pedestrian and toucan lights are annoying for all road users. The pedestrian lights on Coastal Road at Hest Bank are so unresponsive that all the motorised traffic that can be seen in both directions has passed the crossing before the lights change. If a break occurs in the traffic before the lights change, pedestrians cross the road. They are long gone when the lights do change and stop other vehicles. This annoys the drivers

who believe that some prankster has been activating the lights unnecessarily. The pedestrian lights in Carnforth, Morecambe and Lancaster appear to be even less responsive.

Drivers who fail to indicate their intentions at road junctions. I have lost count of the drivers who get annoyed because I am alongside them at traffic lights when they wish to turn left. They only started indicating when they saw me at the front left of their vehicle.

Drivers who insist on overtaking only to turn left in front of me and causing me to brake or even worse swerve. Would they do this to other cars and lorries?

Drivers coming from the opposite direction, who stop in the middle of the road indicating to turn right, then pull out in front of me. This causes me to brake and swerve; should I wear black clothing instead of a hi-vis tabard?

Councillors who tell me they get lots of complaints from voters about cyclists on the pavements but glaze over when I ask about cars parked on pavements.

Policemen who find it difficult to believe that the reason cyclists are on the pavements is because they have been intimidated off the roads. This is in spite of press reports that they were surprised to catch more local drivers when they set up speed traps for the visitors to the TT races on the Isle of Man than tourists.

Having horns blown at me in the pedestrian zone in Lancaster and then hearing that cyclists have been admonished for cycling in there. Hello - is this area for pedestrians or does the concept of "pedestrian zone" mean something else?

John Leach

Changing Lifestyles

An Ipsos Mori poll at the end of June found that more than 56% of adults interviewed believed that scientists are

still questioning whether climate change is a result of human activity. With this general belief prevalent in society what are the chances of doubling cycling participation in Lancaster during the three years of it being a cycling demonstration town?

It is three decades since the publication of, "Limits to Growth" yet the demand for raw materials continues to rise. Even the *Financial Times* reports that the International Energy Agency is forecasting that the world will face an oil supply "crunch" within a quinquennium, see <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2d97d75a-2e0c-11dc-821c-0000779fd2ac.html>. Yet even people who claim to care about the environment continue to fly, which is the most polluting form of transport per mile travelled.

Ken Livingstone, when he was interviewed before "Le Grand Depart" of the Tour de France from London, said that cycling participation had almost doubled in London. This is with the introduction of the congestion charge and much cycle infrastructure.

We need to do more to encourage people to cycle. The travel times are predictable. I know that when I give blood it takes 15 minutes from my house to the donor suite at the RLI; I have to cross Lancaster to arrive there. If I travelled by car the journey time would be unpredictable. Other people could cycle faster while other travel slower; but the journey time for each and every one of them is predictable.

The public health agenda, as described in "Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier" advocates including exercise in our daily routines. Cycling to and from work and to the shops can help achieve this. Is this made easy for people? Are there changing and drying facilities at their work place? Is there cycle parking at workplaces? Is there cycle parking outside local shops?

Where does this leave Lancaster as a cycling demonstration town? It depends on whether I am feeling positive, in which

case I notice all the cyclists in the village, on the roads and the shared use paths. Yet I feel negative when I see the cycle counts that show an imperceptible increase in the number of cyclists.

My view is that we need more dedicated cycle space; that is space on the main arterial routes into Lancaster and Morecambe for cyclists. The A6 is the most direct route into Lancaster from the north and south. The canal towpath (NCN 6) is a useful addition but it will never be able to accommodate large numbers of cyclists travelling to work. Lancaster and Morecambe need to become more permeable. Both of them have gyratory systems and personally I find the one in Morecambe more terrifying than the one in Lancaster.

We need some fiscal measures put in place. Increasing the tax revenue on motor fuel and increasing the cycling infrastructure would be a start. Introducing 20mph zones in towns would also help. There could be some arterial routes that had speed limits of 30mph or 40mph (some do at present) which would speed the flow but once the traffic is in residential roads or in city centres the average speed reduces to the range of 10 to 15mph. Making the maximum 20mph will not increase the total journey time by very much whilst making the streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

We also need to concentrate on making the modal shift from motorised transport to cycle. Getting people to switch from walking to cycle might encourage them to continue to cycle for slightly longer journeys when they would have used a car. However the switch from pedestrian to cyclist is not going to free road space for cyclists nor is it going to reduce traffic congestion. The Mayer Brown study of Lancaster city centre illustrated that the main potential cycle flow is north - south with some from the north and south to the west and to the east. There is also a potential east - west flow but the number of people living to the north and south of the city centre indicates that these areas will be the source of the majority of cycle

flow. We need an infrastructure to accommodate these flows.

We also need an attitude change with those people who have gained leadership roles. The large employers, particularly the health trust, must examine ways to make it easier for people to cycle to work. Some of the managers of these concerns should lead by example and thus encourage others. However we also need the small things such as cycle parking outside local shops. The city council now has an outline agreement that can be used with local shop keepers to erect cycle stands at the expense of the council on the forecourts of shops. This land is usually privately owned. Getting cycle parking outside village shops would provide peace of mind for cyclist whilst they were in the shops. Every cyclist and potential cyclist should ask their local shop keepers if they would have cycling parking outside their shops. It could bring them more business and free up local parking space for even more customers.

There is much to do but some of the most obvious actions are in the blind spot of those most intimately involved. All of us should press for the changes that are needed and not assume someone else will do it.

John Leach

DYNAMO INTERVIEWS AN END TO ENDER

Ride: a journey through cycling

Dynamo's Dave Horton recently rode from Land's End to John O'Groats. When he got back to Lancaster, we asked him some questions about his trip.

So, how was it?

Really amazing! I got very lucky with the weather. I think April was the driest on record, so I barely got wet. The rain and wind finally got me in the far north of Scotland, but by then I was nearly there, so didn't get despondent about it. It was an excellent time of year to do it; I felt

like Spring was perpetually springing as I rode north. The countryside was verdant, the scenery superb. And I met very many warm, wonderful and deeply inspiring people.

How come? Weren't you cycling all day?

No, most days I met up with people connected to cycling. Sometimes I'd talk to them early in the day, sometimes in the afternoon or evening, and some days I spent pedalling between two or three interviews. So I had to fit the cycling around these different appointments.

What were you doing that for?

Research for a book I'm writing, *Ride: a journey through cycling*. Land's End to John O'Groats is a legendary journey in British cycling, and one which ought to be celebrated. Every year, thousands of people rise to its out-of-the-ordinary challenge. The route also makes a great narrative for a story, exploring the tremendous energy and diversity in British cycling. I want to tell a story about cycling made up of lots of little stories about cycling. So I pedalled between inspiring people and places to get at those stories.



With a Penzance wheeler

Can you give us a taste for some of them?

Well, there are stories which centre on riding. I rode to Land's End with the Penzance Wheelers and was struck by how they spoke about cycling as something they did away from their families, but which was vitally important

to family life. The competitive camaraderie of club riding was an escape from life with a young family, which enabled them to return more happily to that life.

But other cyclists tell very different stories, whether it's fifty-something Warren from Edinburgh whose goal was to retire and spend as much of his life as possible on a bike, 'it's the only time I'm truly happy', or 7 year old Byron learning about the world through riding alone around the sea-front car park in Portreath. Then there's Lynne Taylor, women's end-to-end record holder, in a tad over 2 days, who was clearly keen to take the record below 2 days, 'you just need the right weather'. Cycling touches so many people's lives in so many different ways, it's astonishing.

But I also traced stories about making bikes, selling cycling, promoting cycling. For example, I talked to staff at Sustrans HQ in Bristol, professional cycle planners who work for Cycling England, and grassroots campaigners in cities such as Manchester and Edinburgh.



When unicycling in the city, it's good to have a shoulder to rest on – Manchester Critical Mass

Hold on, you rode through Manchester and Edinburgh?

Yes, and Exeter, Bristol and Birmingham. I wanted to ride through big cities. After all, that's where we need people to get on their bikes. So I was keen to get a feel for what it's like to ride a bike in those different places, and to talk to people

about cycling there. Much of the cultural vibrancy around cycling is centred in the cities too.

What do you mean, cultural vibrancy?

Well in Manchester, for example, there's a real buzz around cycling. That's reflected in the recent opening of a huge Edinburgh Bicycle Co-op store there. But it's also reflected in people riding fixed wheel and single speed bikes, turning up to Critical Mass on unicycles, stuff like that. Edinburgh also has all kinds of stuff going on; I went for a recumbent bike tour of the city, which was great! I also got a guided tour of Exeter, which - like Lancaster - is a Cycling Demonstration Town. The guy in charge of Exeter's project, Zsolt Schuller, showed me round.

What were your impressions, compared to Lancaster?

I was only there an afternoon, but I was really hit by Zsolt's obvious commitment and huge enthusiasm for the project. He's clearly a man on a mission, and has been allowed to assemble a dedicated team around him. They're also being bold down there, taking the 'demonstration' part of the project very seriously. Zsolt sees that Exeter's been given the chance to try new things, and he's going for it. My own feeling is some of what they're doing is misguided; for example, there's too much emphasis on converting pavements to shared-use routes, and - as here - far too little emphasis on taming the car. I suspect Exeter is likely to go down as 'the CDT success story', but I also suspect that in the cycling future, when the long history of attempts at cycling promotion is written, the CDT project as a whole will be seen as one of the final attempts to fiddle as Rome burnt.

Back to your ride, it sounds like you strayed well away from the traditional end-to-end routes?

Well, I tried to take a reasonably direct line, but one dictated by key issues, ideas, places and people. I rode lots of off-road trails, like the Camel Trail in Cornwall and the Tissington Trail in Derbyshire. I went over the Cotswolds, the Peak District, the Lake District, none of which is 'normal'. But I followed one of the standard routes

through much of Scotland, albeit with various detours to get some good stories around mountain biking, which has quickly become central to the rural Scottish tourism economy. All up I rode around 1200 miles, which is a bit more than most.

How long did it all take?

16 days of riding, a day for travel at either end, and a rest day in Lancaster to celebrate my 40th birthday and to enjoy the Party on the Prom, marking its official opening to cyclists! That was great, having that at the half-way stage.

Longest day?

Umm, in terms of distance covered, it was probably the day between Exeter and Bristol, which was around 90 miles over sometimes tough terrain. But other days felt longer. The next day, I spent all morning talking to people from Sustrans, rode out of Bristol to meet an old friend, and didn't really get going to my night's destination at Stratford-upon-Avon until mid-afternoon. So the 80 odd miles over the Cotswolds felt hard. Other days I went for a ride after my day's ride; a tour of Exeter with Zsolt, Critical Mass and bicycle polo in Manchester, a ride up Cairn Gorm mountain after reaching Aviemore. And my shortest day was from Peebles to Edinburgh, but I started it mountain biking in Glentress forest and finished with a recumbent lesson and ride. So riding between places often felt the easy part!

You must've got a lot fitter by doing the ride?

That was the idea, but I got home feeling totally wasted! Mind you, I've been getting out on my bike a lot more since coming home, so I think I'm joining the growing legion of 'born-again roadies'!

What were the best and worst bits?

From a raw cycling perspective, I loved descending off the Peak District, down through Stockport into central Manchester along the A6. There's a real buzz to mixing it with cars, trucks and buses at 25 or 30mph. And I loved riding around Rusholme, especially the curry mile, with its smells, sights and sounds. I think we

could make a lot more of the pleasures of urban riding, rather than always banging on about how unpleasant it is. From a campaigning point of view, cities like Edinburgh and Manchester give me considerable hope for cycling's future, because it doesn't feel too outlandish to imagine the bulk of journeys being made by bike there. And somewhere like Stratford-upon-Avon feels like it could easily attain 50% of journeys by bike. In terms of scenery, I feel very parochial in saying north Lancashire and Cumbria, but there's really nowhere I'd rather live when it comes to cycling.

As for the worst, a couple of times I ended up on really fast, straight stretches of busy roads, and for me there's nothing worse. Crossing a couple of the firths in Scotland was nerve-racking. And the place I'd least like to live, as a town cyclist anyway, is Buxton. It felt like the place was being choked by trucks and 4x4s. My least favourite city was Birmingham.

And finally, having taken the temperature of cycling so-to-speak, what's your overall assessment? Are you more or less optimistic about prospects for cycling after your ride?

Optimistic because I'm more aware that cycling is full of deeply committed and hugely inspiring people who are working hard for its future. There's also clear signs of a cultural revival of cycling in cities. In Bristol, Manchester and Edinburgh, cycling is undoubtedly becoming cool. I'm not sure whether I like it, but bike shops are also getting bigger, brasher, more savvy. And across Scotland, mountain biking is really big. I'm also more optimistic because all along my route I was treated really well by other road users. Beforehand, I was wondering whether such a journey might soon become a historical curiosity, as road conditions worsen. So I was relieved and pleased to discover that the vast majority of drivers treated me as a cyclist very well, and that it's still intensely pleasurable to ride the length of Britain.

But at another level, all that's irrelevant. What matters is whether we can force

government to get serious about cycling. That's still far from happening. Government-financed promoters of cycling are everywhere still tinkering around at the edges. I think it's definitely the case that we've yet to begin the serious work of boosting cycling. That's the big issue, lobbying central government to sink hundreds of millions of pounds into creating a cycling future.



End of the road

And really finally, would you do it again?

At the drop of a hat, but I think Sue, Bobby and Flo would insist on coming with me next time!

DYNAMO RIDES

The May cycle-ride was a select affair. I led the ride as the planned leader had family matters that required attention. The previous Sunday I had led the ride from the Millennium Bridge to the Party on the Prom in Morecambe. There had been 21 riders set out but they had increased to 25 by the time we arrived at the Dome! The training in leading cycle rides did not cover the eventuality of the number of riders increasing; only of ensuring that nobody was left by the wayside. It occurred to me that if some people join the ride and others drop out the leader could leave riders strewn abandoned around the countryside even though the head count remained constant.

However the number of people who participated on the previous Sunday

prompted me to reconnoitre the route, which I did on the Saturday. Admittedly I did not check the section from the Millennium Bridge to Halton as I had ridden that earlier in the week. The idea of having a score of riders who would disappear into the countryside prompted the preparation.



The leader of the pack

The Sunday ride went along the banks of the Lune, over the bridge at Halton and along the Low Road until we turned left into Halton Hall Park. This provides an interesting climb until we were able to look out over the Crook o' Lune and further upstream. After that there is a short steep climb before turning right onto the Halton to Arkholme road. We made the detour to Aughton. I had checked the road closure notices for this road and found reassurance that they would not start for over a week. However it did not prepare me for cycle race that was taking place. I certainly felt the need to get out the way!

On towards Gressingham, then towards Capenwray and Borwick; however we avoided all these villages as we made our way alongside the railway line, over the

River Keer before turning right where we stopped for some refreshment. We continued through Dalton and down the hill to Burton-in-Kendal where we stopped at The King's Arms. The return route was via Tewitfield, the Kellets and along Kellet Lane into Halton Lane and Skerton.

The participants enjoyed the ride. There was the site of a massive pile of pipes as we approached Aughton. There were many goldfinch, several pheasants, at least two buzzards, one of which was mobbed by a lapwing and some wonderful views. The ride was advertised as 40km north of Lancaster, hilly with some of it along the canal. It was north of Lancaster and it was hilly. However it was some 50km and did not feature any section along a towpath; fortunately this did not concern the participants.

John Leach

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.

DYNAMO AGM

The Dynamo AGM will take place at 7.00 p.m. **on Tuesday 16 October** at the Gregson, Moor Lane, Lancaster.

- an illustrated talk by a local family who cycle where others fear to go
- what's it like to ride the length of the island?
- come and get elected, or just drink and chat cycling

Treasurer of Dynamo sought

By the time of this year's AGM I will have been the treasurer of Dynamo for 12 years. I have been happy to make a contribution to the campaign for more and better cycling facilities in the area in which I live. This has been the second time I have been involved in a cycle campaign; the first was in the mid 1980s when I lived in Manchester.

I have steadily become aware that I have clung to the position of treasurer for a long time. This could be to the detriment of the cycle campaign, as all organisations need to refresh and gain new ideas and impetus. Therefore I propose not to seek re-election as treasurer at this year's AGM. During the next three months I hope that several people will put themselves forward as the potential treasurer so we can have an election and re-invigorate Dynamo.

John Leach

Dynamo committee 2006-07

Rob Bee, without portfolio		
Patricia Clarke, membership sec	63641	patricia.clarke60@btinternet.com
Claire Duplock, without portfolio	33146	
Dick Follows, newsletter editor	63641	dick.follows@btinternet.com
Dave Horton press officer	845448	d.r.horton@lancaster.ac.uk
John Leach treasurer	822398	john.leach@zetnet.co.uk
Alistair Kirkbride, without portfolio	847938	alistair.kirkbride@talktalk.net
Ian McCulloch, without portfolio		
Matt Wilson, without portfolio		

Write to Dynamo at c/o 123 Scotforth Road, Lancaster LA1 4JN

Email Dynamo at dynamocycle@btinternet.com

Website
uk.geocities.com/dynamocyclecampaign

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.