



Cycle-Aid

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IN THE FRAME

Newsletter August/September 06

[extract]

And so onto the Cycling Demonstration Towns, the projects that are continuing or planned and the huge input made by some of the local interest groups.

Up in **Darlington**, the local cycling campaign's site (www.bikedarlington.blogspot.com) has, amongst many other erudite contributions, a link to <http://crazybikerchick.blogspot> and a piece entitled 'Things a non-cyclist might not understand'. If you only read one cycle link this month, make it this one...The cycling forum last met in a new venue, the Friends Meeting House, on the 19th September and will convene again on 5th December. The forum makes a really valuable input into the design and implementation of proposed new cycle routes and deserves support. Working in close liaison with the local authority and their promotional scheme Local Motion, there's much happening in the North East, not least the guided rides along predominantly car free routes as a means of restoring confidence. Several local employers-AMEC, Argos, B & Q and the local primary care trust are all subscribing to workplace travel plans; Local Motion's membership is approaching 4000, the marketing team having visited 11000 households. Visit www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk

We mentioned Oli Lougheed's departure from the post of cycling officer a while back; the enthusiastic former school travel plan officer Louise Neale has taken up the reins with relish-thanks to Owen Wilson for pointing this out.

Across the northern Pennines **Lancaster** was recently congratulated by Cycling England's chairman (along with Exeter) for its progress in the first year of CDT status. Here is another example of the local group, Dynamo, working with City Hall. The Steering group meetings are invariably well attended- up to twenty bodies including University, Council and County Council contributions. Displaying commitment to disseminating knowledge, there's a PTRC training module for the Councillors on October 18th.

There's understanding of the project across departments; the effectiveness of Section 106 agreements has not been lost on the planners; cycling provision is now a key element in considering and determining applications. A major residential development upon the late and unlamented bone rendering site- Nightingale Hall Farm (from which emanated an aroma that generations of LRGS pupils whose playing fields were next door won't forget in a hurry)-is hopefully going to include specific provision for the installation of defined cycling facilities, courtesy of a 106 agreement.

The other major subject of discussion, received with almost universal approbation, was a 'clean up' of the highway system. If the CDT project is to fulfil its promise an assessment ought to be undertaken of each and every location where there is potential for conflict between car and cyclist. A start could be made with the adoption and enforcement of a blanket 20 mph speed limit, following Portsmouth's example.

Such a measure could not help but assist implementation of school travel plans due to the reduction, if not removal, of an oft perceived obstacle or barrier to cycling take-up- the safety issue.

Consultants are to be commissioned to assess the viable options for routes across the City centre and improvements to the current gyratory system.

Kathy Bashford, the Bike It officer, now has eleven schools on board with a variety of plans and infrastructure improvements identified. Training will be shared between the local provider, Pedal Power and Lancashire County Council, which has now embraced the National Standard and is currently advertising the post of Cycling Instructor.

Finally, Lancashire Constabulary (which hasn't exactly been conspicuous by its constructive contribution in these meetings) boasts of its operation Clean Sweep: "There have been numerous tickets given out for littering, cycling on pavements, etc." Please, chaps, why not have a look for drivers using mobile phones, not wearing seatbelts, speeding, lack of tax, etc rather than cherry picking soft targets.

The key sites are <http://uk.geocities.com/dynamocyclingcampaign> and www.celebratingcycling.org.

Registration at either will ensure a regular e-update of projects and activities. Moving further to the south, **Derby** has also forged a constructive relationship between the local interest group and the Council's cycling team. Derby Cycling Group (www.derbycyclinggroup.org) has been instrumental in organising a regional campaign. The inaugural meeting was on 6th May in Derby, the next 11th November in Nottingham at the Globe Inn, London Road. Hugh McClintock will deliver a presentation of cycle campaigning in Nottingham.

Nottingham County Council was the innovator of Workplace Travel Plans, recently hosting a workshop on the subject co-hosted with the Association for Commuter Transport (www.act-uk.com) to advise the newcomers in this burgeoning area. The ACT site will provide regular updates on similar events that are planned upon registration. A vital resource for the novice (and experienced) travel planner.

At the same meeting Derby Council's cycling officer and the driving (cycling?) force behind the City's successful CDT bid, Bella Stewart, will give an update on the initiative.

There seem to be some ripples down on the South coast in **Brighton**. The fantastically professional interest group (Bricycles) publishes quarterly newsletters; the October-December edition has just hit the net.

The gist can be gleaned from the web site (www.bricycles.org.uk) but subscription will bring the full story, including a breakdown upon how the CDT money is being spent. The biggest application of funds thus far (close on £300,000) appears to be

upon the individual travel planning scheme involving the Portslade district. Clearly this must be allowed to run its course before passing an opinion, but an example of the information provided to one resident appears superficial.

Curiously, the Local Authority's site (www.brighton-hove.gov.uk) suggests that Bricycles are offering route planning (which in fact they have done for years).

The way it seems to navigate around the Local Authority's site is by means of the site map where cycling, cycle training and cycle routes are all listed. There's clearly many cycling projects live but establishing exact details can be time consuming, although the cycle strategy is published.

Two representatives of the Council attended Nottingham County Council's workplace travel plan workshop, so clearly the motivation is there, although budgetary constraints were apparent in this area.

Exeter was the other CDT to receive plaudits from Philip Darnton at a conference in late September in Brighton. The unforgettably named Zsolt Schuller has been joined by a Bike It officer. The comprehensive site, cycle Exeter, a link from www.devon.gov.uk sets out the plans, ambitions and measures in place.

We have not been able to make contact with a local interest group in Exeter itself (if you're there, please tell us) but the adjacent Newton Area cycling group (www.nacg.org.uk) covers the wider area.

Similarly in **Aylesbury**, the Town's site (www.cycleaylesbury.co.uk) is extremely user friendly but events past the end of September do not appear to be currently listed. Aylesbury was the first of the CDTs to organise free training to the new National Standard; links to trainers from the site are easy to access, but unfortunately the South Bucks branch of the CTC site is currently listed as inactive.

It seems that the three Northern conurbations with their focussed local interest groups have a really vibrant discussion going- Lancaster publishes minutes of Board and steering meetings on line. As the first anniversary of the CDT initiative approaches it would be excellent if interest groups elsewhere could emulate the activities of Dynamo, Bricycles, the DCG and the Darlington Cycling Campaign.

Forthcoming events include the Cycle exhibition at ExCell (www.cycleshow.co.uk) between 5th and 8th October and the CTC/CNN conference in Cheltenham on 25th November. See also www.cyclenetwork.org.uk.

Outside the CDTs there is a host of activity, much again in the North West. Blackpool makes many cycling commitments in its new local transport plan, hosted the start of a stage on the Tour of Britain and closed off the promenade at the start of the illuminations to host 'Ride the Lights'.

At the Bikeability launch at Aintree the extent of cycling development on Merseyside was readily apparent. A consortium which includes Sefton, Wirral, St Helens and Knowsley makes up Merseybike.