



Newsletter February 2008

=====
||| I hope all Campaign members had a good Christmas and New
||| Year and had time to get out and about on their bikes.
||| =====

December Meeting

There was a good turnout for the December meeting at which Pete and Dale updated us on forthcoming improvements to cycling facilities within the City. Dale demonstrated his fluorescent jacket with flashing "CYCLIST" on the back. Could be a good idea but needs batteries, which adds weight to the jacket. If you are interested in purchasing one I suggest you contact Dale at the Council for details. Pete and Dale are working hard to raise the profile of cycling in Southampton and hopefully attract extra funding for cyclists. Thanks to all those who brought along seasonal food to share.

Helmets - a controversial issue



LOVERS WALK

The latest news on Lovers Walk is that the trial period without lights has been postponed and is not likely to take place until the spring. This was the result of the many emails and letters sent to Lin Hands at the Council by Campaign members and other local cyclists opposing the proposals. Neither Pete Brunskill nor Dale Bostock were consulted but have since met with Lin Hands and expressed their concern at the proposals. According to the Echo Councillor Hannides has expressed opposition to the proposals. At least one good thing has come out of this fiasco - in future the Cycling Officer (and hopefully Southampton Cycling Campaign) will be consulted on issues having a major impact on cyclists before decisions are made.

FLOURESCENT VESTS

As promised in the last newsletter the fluorescent vests are now available in red or yellow at a small cost of £12. The vests will be on display at Campaign meetings. These vests are useful as they are highly fluorescent and promote the Campaign. They will be available from meetings or contact Dilys or Lindsy. We have already gained one member from the vests; let's see if we can keep the good work.

SOCIAL RIDES

During these cold winter days it is good to have some spring/summer rides to look forward to. If you are aware of any rides taking place that members could join, please let me know so that they can be advertised in the newsletter. If any Campaign member would like to organize a weekend or evening ride, suitable for all abilities, that would be much appreciated.

Volunteers needed to help run the Cycling Campaign

We are in need volunteers for various roles in order to effectively campaign for better provision for cyclists in Southampton. There are currently vacancies for assistant minutes secretary (to take minutes when Jennifer Bourdillon is unable to attend) and newsletter editor. It would also be helpful to have someone responsible for publicity and liaising with the press. Please let the Chairperson know if you are able to help or come along to a meeting.

WOODMILL BRIDGE

Many of you will have noticed the temporary lights that have been in operation at both ends of Woodmill Bridge for some time. It has now been announced that these will be replaced by permanent lights, at a cost of £100,000! Unfortunately cyclists are often joining the bridge from Riverside Park, and will merge with the road in between the lights, possibly causing problems with the traffic flow and timing on the bridge.

CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Government has released a new version of Cycle Infrastructure Design, its guidance to local authorities on re-designing roads to encourage cycling. The Cycle Touring Club (CTC) has responded to this by releasing a consultation response. This, and details of the guidance can be viewed on the CTC website, <http://www.CTC.org.uk>

Cycling Study Tour 2008

I have received an email, from David Hembrow, a keen cyclist, informing me of a cycle study tour to the Netherlands, which he organised in 2006 for the Cambridge Cycling Campaign. He is organising another 3 day cycling study tour, of Assen in the Netherlands, in 2008. Assen is a small town, of 63,000 people, who make 70,000 journeys by bike, each day. I hope to join this tour – is anyone else interested?

Decapitating cyclists - a great idea?

On 27th December a truly shocking column appeared in The Times written by Matthew Paris in which he suggests decapitating cyclists by stretching wire across cycling lanes!!! Apparently he has been (quite rightly) hauled over the coals and forced to apologise. Perhaps a boycott of the Times is in order. Below is the offending section of the column.

What's smug and deserves to be decapitated?

A festive custom we could do worse than foster would be stringing piano wire across country lanes to decapitate cyclists. It's not just the Lycra, though Heaven knows this atrocity alone should be a capital offence; nor the helmets, though these ludicrous items of headgear are designed to protect the only part of a cyclist that is not usefully employed; nor the self-righteousness, though a small band of sports cyclists on winter's morning emits more of that than a cathedral at evensong; nor even the brutish disregard for all other road users, though the lynching of a cyclist by a mob of mothers with pushchairs would be a joy to witness.

No, yet another cyclist-generated horror – and a new one – has come to my attention this Christmas. They're chucking their empty cans of hi-energy drinks into hedgerows as they pass.

Bin-liners in hand, a group of us, infused with the seasonal goodwill that illuminates this column, of course, decided to walk a mile of a pretty and winding lane that had become particularly badly littered this winter, and collect it all. It's amazing how much of the stuff there is when you start looking, and we ended up with a whole sackful. And what was the principal offending item? Plastic bottles and empty cans of Lucozade, Gatorade and other blood-sugar-boosting products were lodged high in hedgerows at cyclist level. Forgive me, but pedestrians were not the culprits here.

What is the carbon footprint of a panting, sugar-gulping, chocolate-chewing, Lycra-clad leisure-cyclist? a) His or her journey is totally unnecessary; b) whole convoys of cargo boats steam the Atlantic to bring the molasses to be energy-intensively refined for them; and c) the chemical processes that generate the vile materials that clothe, shoe and helmet a cyclist – not a man-made fibre among them – will be poisoning entire provinces of China.

But it's the bad manners one cannot forgive. Driving or walking, don't you just hate the way that, riding two or three abreast, they shout and curse at you or whirl their angry little bells, as though it's your problem that they need to clear the way? In just one little posse of these monsters there are levels of self-satisfaction that could power a small religious crusade. Does cycling turn you into an insolent jerk? Or are insolent jerks drawn disproportionately to cycling?

NEXT MEETINGS: 11th FEBRUARY, 10th MARCH, 14th APRIL (AGM), 7.30pm
Meetings are held at the Friends Meeting House, Ordnance Road



You will all probably be aware by now that the Sustrans bid for £50 million lottery money to fund a number of projects around the country was successful. Here in Southampton it will enable work to go ahead on the boardwalk linking Northam and Horseshoe Bridges for the benefit of walkers and cyclists.

CEMETERY LANE

The following piece appeared in the Council's Rights of Way newsletter:

Since the last newsletter was produced, we have now received the final decision from the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Council's application to record the route between Cemetery Road and Hill Lane as a public right of way.

We made the original legal order to record this route as a public footpath. Based on user evidence from cyclists, the Planning Inspectorate modified the order to record the route as a restricted byway. This order was then re-advertised and an objection was received based on the order map not showing the bollards at the Hill Lane entrance. The Planning Inspectorate decided to confirm the order with their modifications, although the word 'posts' was removed from the order to avoid any ambiguity.

This means that the route is now recorded on Southampton's Definitive Map as a restricted byway (Number 91), with a length of 240 metres. As a restricted byway, the public has a right of way on foot, horse, cycle and horse drawn vehicles (subject to the width of the bollards).

Contacts

Chairperson: Lindsai Bluemel; 17
Whitworth Road,
Bitterne Park,
SO18 1GE

02380 332926

Website Coordinator: Mair
www.southamptoncycling.org.uk