

Southampton Cycling Campaign Newsletter

October 2009

Welcome to the **October 2009 Southampton Cycling Campaign Newsletter**.

Thanks to contributors Lindsy, Dilys and John! If you spot something that you think would be of interest in the Newsletter please send to me – contact details at back.

Angela

Forthcoming Events	page 1
Cycling in Above Bar, Members discount, Cycle Forum	page 2
Southampton Rights of Way	page 3
Cycle lanes can make roads more dangerous for cyclists	page 4
Going against the flow	page 5
Sustrans “motion for women” petition, Stop ‘Smidsy’, Car free day	page 6
Bikes on trains	page 7
Contact Information and Membership application	page 8

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

12th October 7.30pm Campaign Meeting, Friends Meeting House

9th November 7.30pm Campaign Meeting, Friends Meeting House

14th December 7.30pm Campaign Meeting, Friends Meeting House



CYCLING IN ABOVE BAR

Southampton Cycling Campaign submitted an objection to a Traffic Order introduced in May which closed Above Bar (between Civic Centre Road and Commercial Road) to ALL vehicles after 10 pm on Friday and Saturday evenings, on the grounds that alternative routes were dangerous or inconvenient for cyclists. You will be pleased to know that our representations were accepted and a new Traffic Order has been drawn up which closes Above Bar after 10pm on Friday and Saturday evenings to all vehicles EXCEPT PEDAL CYCLES.

We often think that no-one at the Council listens to us, but clearly they do take notice when we have an overwhelming case. A small victory, but encouraging, none the less. I suspect that cyclists were not considered at all when the first Traffic Order was drawn up.

MEMBERS' DISCOUNT

Don't forget to take your membership card when you buy a new bike or accessories as the following shops will give you a 10% discount: The Hub, Portswood Cycles, Cycle World, The Bike Shop (formerly Action Bikes) and Hargroves. Support your local bike shop where you can; you will get good service and the expertise, which isn't always the case at the large chains.

Also - if you know someone about to purchase a new bicycle, tell them about Southampton Cycling Campaign as they might like to join and help promote cycling in Southampton - and get 10% off their new bike of course.

CYCLE FORUM

The first meeting of a newly constituted Cycle Forum took place at the Civic Centre on 12th August. Present were campaign members Mark Brummel and Lindsy Bluemel, Carol Bagshaw (Sustainable Transport), two senior highway engineers and Dale Bostock (Cycling Officer). This was a preliminary meeting to discuss membership, format, frequency and timing of meetings. We are pleased that Dale has accepted our request for four meetings a year rather than two. Membership will be by invitation - you will not be able to attend as a member of the public - and will include representatives of the police, NHS, community and environmental groups. If you would like to be a member of the Forum and belong to a group which has an interest in transport, such as FoE or a neighbourhood action group, you could volunteer to represent this group. Two members of Southampton Cycling Campaign will attend the Forum and report back to members via Campaign meetings and the newsletter.

Lindsy Bluemel, Chairperson

SOUTHAMPTON RIGHTS OF WAY

Southampton City Council are obliged by law to maintain a Definitive Map and Statement of local rights of way. They started a review in 2005, at which time they proposed to record the bulk of routes as footpaths. Southampton Cycling Campaign and South Hants CTC objected to some of these proposals on the grounds that the routes (some of them tarmac paths wider than many country roads) should have a higher status. Eventually the disputed routes came to public inquiry; one of the results was that Cemetery Road became the first urban route in the country to be reclassified as a Restricted Byway, that is, a route open to all non-motor traffic. The City have now started a more detailed examination of potential rights of way, starting with Bassett ward. Full details are available from the City Council, but members of the Cycling Campaign should keep an eye open for public notices on paths which they use, then write or e-mail the Council (see below for details). Your letter should include information on how long you have used the route (cycling, walking, horseriding or even driving), how often you use it, whether you have been challenged or stopped from using it, and if you have seen any notices on the route restricting its use.

Routes we are particularly interested in are:

1. Sherwood Close (link between the Toucan crossing at the top of the Common and Pointout Road / Winchester Road)
2. Roman Road, Chilworth (from Chilworth Roundabout to The Clump, Chilworth)
3. The track from the North end of Coxford Road to The Clump, Chilworth.
4. The track running North from the Golf Course at the Sports Centre to Roman Road.

The last three of these have also been examined by Hampshire Countryside Access Forum as part of the "Discovering Hampshire's Lost Ways" project. This information may feed into Hampshire County's Countryside Access Plans. For this reason, we would like members who use or have used these routes to contact Lindsie Bluemel (see this newsletter), Sue Coles (see local CTC runs list) or myself (John Heath, tel. 80 49 65 07).

Southampton City Council contact:



Lucy Stanley
Assistant Rights of Way Officer
Southampton City Council
Civic Centre, Ground Floor,
Southampton SO14 7 LS

or by email to rights.of.way@southampton.gov.uk

John Heath



CYCLE LANES CAN MAKE ROADS MORE DANGEROUS FOR CYCLISTS (extract from ETA and CTC newsnet)

It will come as little surprise to anyone who rides a bike, but a study by Leeds and Bolton Universities has come to the conclusion that ‘cycle lanes do not appear to provide greater space for cyclists in all conditions’.

The researchers attached a camera to the back of a bicycle and rode along roads that had stretches with and without cycle lanes. They found that when there was no cycle lane, drivers tended to give riders a wider berth. When there was a cycle lane, motorists drove closer to the bikes.

Most of Britain’s cycle lanes do not comply with the width of 1.5m (5ft) recommended by the Department for Transport.

The study suggests that reducing the speed of traffic would do more to improve cycle safety than narrow cycle lanes.

A spokesperson for the Environmental Transport Association (ETA) said: “All too often, cycle lanes end up little more than a cheap and nasty way of promoting cycling – they take circuitous routes, are poorly maintained and often parked in by cars so it is little wonder that most experienced cyclists tend to avoid them.”

The new Winchester Rd cycle lane in Bassett (or is it a parking lane?) is a prime example of how not to help cyclists and especially is not recommended for people who want to take up road cycling. It appears nice and wide as you approach from the north but then - whats this? it becomes a parking lane with the cycle symbols concealed cleverly beneath the parked cars. I guess non-cyclists cannot be blamed as they probably haven’t read a Highway Code since cycling facilities were included and after all there is a disabled bay in the cycle lane so why not just park either side of that bay and leave the road clear from motor vehicles - in fact nothing has changed except motorists feel their parked cars are safer within a marked line. Cyclists - do not be lulled into riding in this lane - you need to stay outside in the primary traffic flow or you will be trapped squashed or even parked over.

Dilys Gartside, CycleWise Southampton



GOING AGAINST THE FLOW

Cyclists will be permitted to ride the wrong way along one-way streets under a change intended to encourage more people to give up their cars or use them less. The Government will announce today that cyclists will be permitted to ignore no-entry signs: a practice already followed by many, including David Cameron, the Conservative leader who was filmed last March cycling the wrong way down a one-way street in Kensington & Chelsea.

The Department for Transport is authorising a trial in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, in which a small plate saying “Except cyclists” will be attached to poles carrying no-entry signs. If the trial is successful, the department intends to extend the policy to the rest of Britain and permit thousands of one-way streets to become two-way for bikes. It believes that long diversions around one-way systems are a significant deterrent to new cyclists, who might be less confident about breaking the rules.

This is the first time that the department has permitted an exception to the no-entry rule. Existing cycle “contraflow” lanes require authorities to build separate entrances for cyclists so that they do not have to break traffic rules. The cost of building these entrances, though, has deterred all but a tiny number of authorities from creating contraflow lanes. Hackney Council in East London pioneered the introduction of contraflow lanes and now has the highest rate of cycling of any London borough.



Sadiq Khan, the Transport Minister, said: “The pilot contraflow cycling system will help to reduce journey times for cyclists while allowing them to travel safely and legally on the most convenient routes. If this pilot is successful then councils across the country could be offered the opportunity to use similar measures on their roads.”

Daniel Moylan, the deputy leader of the Conservative-controlled Kensington & Chelsea council, said that he was persuaded of the need to make the change after noticing that hundreds of cyclists a day were ignoring no-entry signs on Thackeray Street, which his home overlooks. “If this is what cyclists want to do and they can do it safely, then we see it as our responsibility to adapt the legal position to allow them to do it legally ... The alternative of having a policeman standing on the road to catch cyclists would be foolish and unworkable.”

Chris Peck, policy officer of the Cyclists’ Touring Club, said: “We’ve been campaigning to allow two-way cycling on one-way streets for years and we are delighted that finally the Government is permitting a sign that is easy to understand. It is a safe and sensible option that is standard in all other European countries, so we can’t believe it has taken so long to be accepted here,” he added.

SUSTRANS “MOTION FOR WOMEN” PETITION

Sustrans have an online petition to be lodged with Parliament demanding safer cycling options.

“We the undersigned want to be able to choose to cycle for many more of our daily journeys. To do this we need to feel safe when we cycle. We demand that governments prioritise the creation of environments that encourage and support cycling, specifically this must include cycle paths separated from traffic, as a way of enabling many more women to travel by bike.”

To sign go to http://www.bikebelles.org.uk/index.php/sign_our_petition

Dilys Gartside

STOP ‘SMIDSY’

Over the years, CTC has heard many stories of cycle crashes in which the motorists involved have never been asked to account properly for their actions. In response CTC will launch its Stop Smidsy campaign, at the Cycle Show (<http://www.cycleshow.co.uk/ctc>) in October. SMIDSY stands for ‘Sorry Mate I Didn’t See You’ and is far too often the reply given when a driver has narrowly missed or indeed hit a cyclist, revealing a blasé attitude where a crash is only a minor mistake to dismiss with a simple apology. Stop Smidsy will address how the police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts and ultimately the law itself sometimes quite spectacularly let down cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

First, we will launch a simple online reporting tool for cyclists to tell their stories of bad driving. It will link to information about the law and how to deal with the aftermath of a bike crash. Site users will also be able to request help from CTC’s solicitors. By creating a story archive, we hope to bring about change within the many institutions responsible for protecting us against bad driving behaviour.

CAR-FREE DAY



Motorists in over nineteen British towns and cities (but sadly, not Southampton!) will on 22nd September leave their cars at home in favour of bicycles, trains and buses as part of Car Free Day, a now global event that was first organised in Britain by the Environmental Transport Association (ETA).

World Car Free Day, or ‘In town without my car day’ as it is referred to in Britain, takes place every year on 22nd September as an international celebration of environmentally-sensitive transport. The same event last year involved almost 2000 towns and cities in 38 countries around the world.

A spokesperson for the Environmental Transport Association (ETA) said: “The number of cars and urban traffic is constantly increasing, and the associated noise, air pollution and stress is eroding the quality of life of urban dwellers. Car Free Day focuses on highlighting alternatives to car travel, the rights of pedestrians and cyclists, and the need for more and better public transport.”

BIKES ON TRAINS

CTC will shortly be asking members to help campaign for more space on new long-distance trains. They sent a petition to the Government asking:

“We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to require the train operators to provide an integrated system for the carriage of bicycles and ensure there is adequate capacity available. Currently there is no minimum requirement for train operators to carry bicycles and each operator has a different set of rules and booking procedures. This makes the system extremely complex to use, especially where multiple operators are used. Its not possible to book bicycle reservations online and hence one does not know whether there will be room for a bike on a train when a ticket is purchased (note, advanced tickets cannot subsequently be altered to a train with available bicycle carriage space). Some operators have extremely poor provision. The Crosscountry service has reduced the capacity of its trains from 4 bicycles per train to 2 bicycles (so they can provide secure accomodation for their retail trolly). Hence, a maximum of 2 people can travel together with bicycles when you using the crosscountry service (a major element of the national network). Clearly, a national policy is required with a fully integrated booking system (that is available online through the standard ticket retailers) and incentives/requirements for operators to improve capacity.”

The Government has now responded:

Thank you for your e-petition. The Government recognises the importance of improving the synergy between cycle and rail as, used in combination, they provide one of the most environmentally friendly options for travel. The Department for Transport 2007 Rail White Paper, “Delivering a Sustainable Railway”, seeks to address this through development of a modern and sustainable railway system that is accessible and easy for passengers to use. The passenger strategy includes proposals for improving cycling provision to, from and at stations, and to enhance cycle storage facilities at stations. As a result, an industry led working group, the Cycle Rail Integration Task Force, has been meeting since the end of 2007 to promote best practice and encourage train operating companies to improve cycle facilities and services.

In April 2009, the Cycle Rail Integration Task Force launched a competitive fund seeking train operating companies to work with them on a bike and rail programme. This challenges train operators to improve cycle/rail integration across their franchise and to work with partners to improve access, reservation systems and station facilities. The winners, who will be selected in July, will be expected to deliver real improvements over the next 2 years setting the standard for all train operators.



CONTACTS

Chairperson Lindsi Bluemel, 17 Whitworth Rd, Bitterne Park SO18 1GE Tel: 02380 332926 e-mail: lindsibluemel@hotmail.co.uk

Membership Secretaries Barry & Sue Colborne 39 Swift Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9FP.

Newsletter Editor Angela Cotton, 8 Summerfield Gardens, Bassett Green, SO16 3DR e-mail: angela.cotton@suht.swest.nhs.uk

SCC Website www.southamptoncyclingcampaign.org.uk

Membership application

Join us and help make a difference!

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Annual fee (please circle) £10 Waged / £5 Unwaged

Return this form with your fee to SCC Membership Secretary,
39 Swift Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9FP

Cheques payable to **Southampton Cycling Campaign**, please.