



## CYCLISTS BY THEMSELVES!

When new arterial roads were built in the 1930s with parallel separate cycle paths, some cyclists feared it would herald enforced separation of traffic and so opposed such provision. Meantime, our current cycle lanes frequently come to an abrupt end and thrust cyclists back into mainstream traffic in hazardous circumstances. Then and now, cyclists have chosen to assert their right to use roads *as well as* cycle paths. Now the Cyclists' Touring Club has raised its voice against another threat to cyclists' rights, and the text below is from its website:

The Driving Standards Agency has begun a public consultation on a revised draft of the Highway Code – it can be viewed at [www.dsa.gov.uk/highwaycode](http://www.dsa.gov.uk/highwaycode).

The Code ought to play a key role in the Government's efforts to create safer conditions for cycling. Unfortunately, despite CTC's recent efforts to make it easier for cyclists to claim injury damages from drivers who hit them, the revised draft of the Code seems set to take us in exactly the opposite direction.

The major problem is a proposed new rule telling cyclists to 'use cycle routes when practicable and cycle facilities ... where they are provided' (Rule 58). If confirmed, this would open the way for driver's insurance companies to seek to reduce the damages for any cyclists injured by their clients, on the basis that the cyclist's failure to use a nearby cycle facility (in accordance with the Highway Code) represented 'contributory negligence'.

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# BIKE BITS

## RIDE FOR YOUR GRUB

SVCC 'Stroud Occasionals' easy-paced, flat ride to a riverside pub on Saturday 18 March. Meet at Dudbridge, 9.30am. Contact: Sheila Booth, 762233. All cyclists welcome.

## BLOOD MONEY

The Department for Transport has revised its estimates for the value of preventing road casualties. A fatality is now valued at £1.38m, a serious injury at £155,563 and a slight injury at £11,991.

The valuation includes loss of economic output due to injury, health service costs and human costs based on 'willingness to pay' values representing pain, grief and suffering to the casualties, relatives and friends and, for fatal injuries, the intrinsic loss of enjoyment of life over and above the consumption of goods and services.

The total value of all road injuries in 2004 is estimated at £12.9bn.

(Highways Economic Note No.1: 2004). [http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_rdsafety/documents/page/dft\\_rdsafety\\_610642.hcsp](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_610642.hcsp)

## RUSHING TO DESTRUCTION

According to the answer to a Parliamentary Question, 34% of fatal crashes and 13% of all crashes in 2004 were due to excessive speed. Although the role of speed in all crashes has risen only a little since 1999 (from 12%), fatal crashes due to speed have increased in the same period from 29% to 34%.

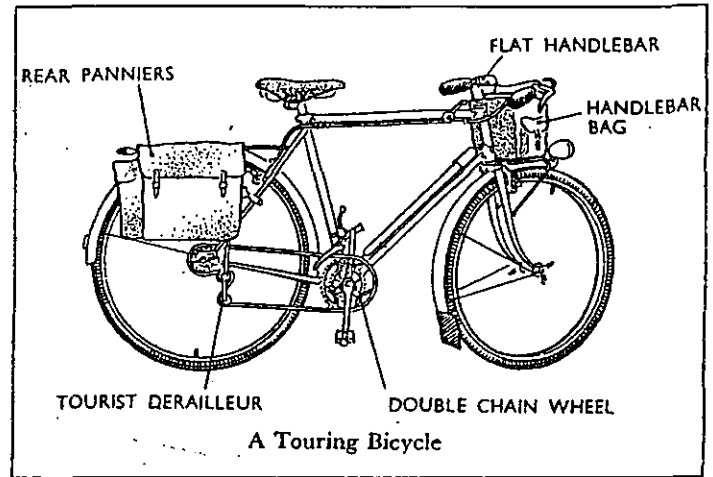
## FREEWHEELING TO REDEMPTION

Bike Week 2006 is 17-25 June and this year's optimistic slogan is 'More People Cycling More Often'. So we hope the nation gets its legover. There will not be a newsletter between now and Bike Week, so anyone wanting details on national events should look at the Bike Week website, [www.bikeweek.org.uk](http://www.bikeweek.org.uk), or phone 0845 612 0661.

## MORE FREEWHEELING: STROUD VALLEYS CYCLING CLUB (CTC) EASY RIDES

There are 'Easy Rides' on the first Sunday morning of each month, usually starting at 9.30am; please contact Sheila Booth (762233) for further information about them, or about other rides.

Stonehouse Wheelers Cycling Club do weekly Sunday afternoon rides, of which quite a large proportion are easy. For information ring Margaret Adams on 763902.



## BIKE SHOPS: DON'T GO LOCO - GO LOCAL

*Whether you want a new bicycle or your current machine serviced or repaired, support your local shop, where you can talk to people who really know their stuff.*

**Stonehouse Accessories Ltd:** 18 High Street, Stonehouse, GL10 2NA, 01453 822881, email [accessories@stonehouse.powernet-int.co.uk](mailto:accessories@stonehouse.powernet-int.co.uk). For servicing, repairs, and all new bicycles and accessories.

**Cytek:** 59 Westward Road, Stroud, 01453 753330. As above.

**Noahs Ark:** London Road, Chalford, 01453 884738. As above.

**Square Deals on Wheels:** Farm Bungalow, Cowcombe Lane, Chalford (by Aston Down airfield just off the A419), 01285 760475, Internet shop [www.sdeals.com](http://www.sdeals.com). As above; lightweight specialists.

**The Cycle Clinic:** The Cross, Bath Road, Nailsworth, 01453 835200. As above; also secondhand bikes.

## **WHEELS OF CHANCE**

2 Raleigh all-terrain bikes – one suitable for an adult, the other for a small adult or tall child. They probably need some attention, not having been ridden for 4 or 5 years (but they've been indoors most of the time).

Free to a good home as long as they are collected.

Contact Carol Kambites on 762258, ckambites@fsmail.net.

## **SVCC TARGETS THE COUNTY**

### **Gloucestershire County Council Cycling Strategy – An Appendix to the Local Transport Plan**

We received a copy of this early in January. In general we agreed with its aims and attitude towards cycling. Unfortunately we thought it was written in the soft, ambiguous language so common to official documents, and was without specific targets; even worse without any targets for Stroud District or the Stroud Valleys.

We sent in a number of suggested improvements to the document, and we understand that the team which drafted it will incorporate comments received in the final document. We asked for a copy of the final draft which we received today (28.2.06) and are about to consider. If anyone would like a copy of it please ring Sheila Booth and she will forward one.

We understand that Woodchester Parish Council and Stroud Town Council, inter alia, sent in similar comments and suggestions.

## **PISS-UP IN A BREWERY SYNDROME STRIKES AGAIN**

As part of the restructuring at the District Council Tiina Emsley, who has acted as the Stroud District Cycling Forum Co-ordinator for several years, has been moved, and replaced by Krista Harris who has had transport regeneration, including cycling, added to her main post as rural officer.

As seems to be happening throughout the District Council, this addition was apparently made without extra time allocated, and consequently, Krista seems to be having difficulties in finding time to produce agendas or minutes, or to do any other background jobs that are essential if the Forum is to be effective. There were suggestions that the members of the Forum should do the minutes, agendas, co-ordinating etc; and that Krista should only do 'intellectual' work. (Our eyebrows raise. Eds.)

Nigel Stanton and Sheila Booth are taking up this charade with the District Council.

## **CANAL TOWPATH TO WELCOME CYCLISTS: OFFICIAL**

You may know that £22 million has been secured by British Waterways to renovate the canal between Stonehouse and Brimscombe. We understand from Andrew Stumpf, the Regeneration Manager, that work will start by 2007, and completion is scheduled for 2008. It seems that much of the towpath will be accessible for cycling, but not all; where the towpath is deemed unsuitable, or there is an existing or suitable nearby route, the cycle route will be slightly separated from the towpath. However, we need to trawl through the whole plan (a copy of which is held at Stroud Town Council Office, and also I am sure at Ebley Mill), and see what representations we need to make.

The towpath will be the last piece of the jigsaw to be put into place, primarily so that it will not be damaged by other works such as dredging.

Another bid, to the Lottery's Living Landmarks Fund, is being made; if this is successful work between Stonehouse and Saul could also start next year for completion by 2010.

## **GET ON YOUR BIKE – GET INVOLVED**

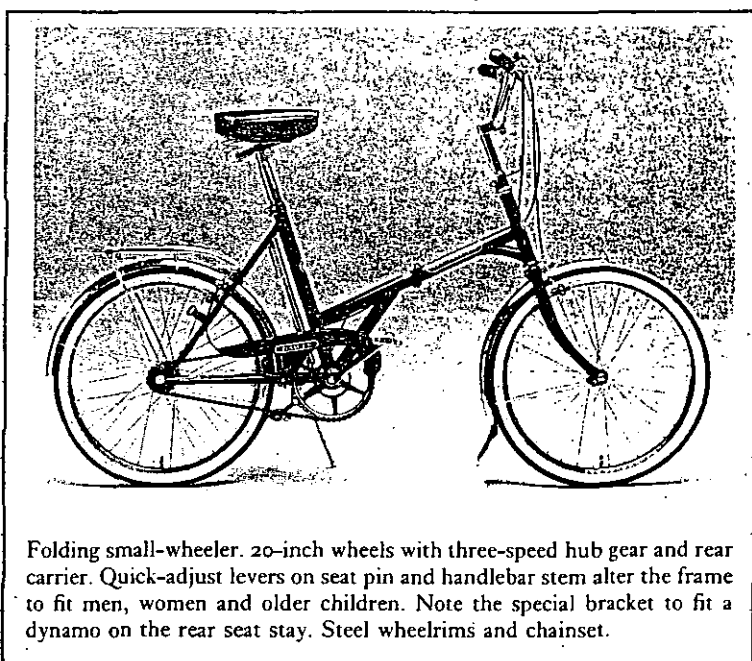
Do we have any SVCC members who have a bee in their bonnet about a cycling issue? Do you have any ideas for new campaigns? Please let us know – contact details on the back page.

Our monthly meetings are open to *all* members. At present the same 7 or 8 people attend every one and we would welcome new input.

## ALEX MOULTON'S REVOLUTION

Mike Hemming delves into the social history of the small-wheel 'shopper'.

In the 'never had it so good' swinging 60s the British bicycle industry was in serious trouble as Britons in droves deserted cycles for cars. The small-wheel Moulton bicycle reversed this at a stroke for one company. The other manufacturers rushed to produce their own versions. Unable to quickly circumvent the Moulton suspension patents they opted to use wide 20" tyres to absorb rough road bumps. With a low step-over frame and by fitting carriers and a basket they invented the shopper bicycle. A few were designed to fold so they would fit into a car boot to be carried into the countryside on fine summer weekends. All these bicycles, aimed mainly at housewives, became very popular and fashionable.



Folding small-wheeler. 20-inch wheels with three-speed hub gear and rear carrier. Quick-adjust levers on seat pin and handlebar stem alter the frame to fit men, women and older children. Note the special bracket to fit a dynamo on the rear seat stay. Steel wheelrims and chainset.

But that which is fashionable usually becomes unfashionable, and the 'sports' bicycle became the cool machine with which to be seen. The shopper was abandoned to the back of the garage and then, seen as not worth a repair, scrapped. But not quite all of them.

When a local lady told a friend she was planning to go back to cycling she was offered a folding shopper that came home to Gloucestershire in the boot of a car. The local lady was lucky: the Dawes bicycle company made the very best shoppers. Sceptics said, 'You can't buy 500A tyres now – scrap it.' The new owner persisted and found a pair of white wall tyres with inner tubes to match (though now they have Presta

valves) and new brake blocks for the dimpled steel rims. The bicycle went to an enthusiast who straightened out the rims, tightened up the spokes and persuaded the brakes and three-speed Sturmey Archer hub to work as they should. The shopper was ready to go.

So when you meet a Dawes Folding Kingpin twinkling along our cycle track somewhere between Dudbridge and Nailsworth doing, once again, the job for which she was built 30 years ago, please raise a hand in salute to the shopping bicycle that came back from the dead.

**Moral: bikes don't have to be expensive or constructed with spin-offs from space technology. Re-cycle!**

## CARS VS. THE ENVIRONMENT

The *Guardian* recently ran a feature on the effect of cars on the environment, entitled 'On the Roads', using statistics from the Department of Transport, Transport 2000, National Travel Survey, amongst others. Here are a few sobering facts:

- Road traffic grew by 79% between 1980 and 2003. The majority of the growth was in car traffic.
- The number of cars on the road in the UK rose from 17,000 in 1903, to 17.3m in 1976, to 29.7m in 2001.
- Food transport accounts for 25% of the HGV-miles on our roads.
- The Ford Model T got better miles to the gallon nearly a century ago than the average Ford on the road today.
- Road transport makes up around 21% of total man-made carbon dioxide emissions in the UK. Road freight now accounts for 8% of UK carbon dioxide emissions.
- Each of us has a 1 in 17 chance of being killed or seriously injured in a road crash during our lives. Road accidents are the leading cause of death and hospital admission for Europeans under 45 years of age.

- British car occupants are the least likely to die in Europe, but pedestrians and cyclists are more than twice as likely to be killed on UK roads than in Sweden or the Netherlands.

### How much pollution do you cause for every kilometre you travel?

(approximate figures in grammes of carbon dioxide, per kilometre)

Cycling	3
Minibus, 3 people	100
Urban bus, 12 people	100
Small car, 1 person	150
Large car, 1 person	350
Aeroplane, long-haul	400
Aeroplane, Bristol-Glasgow	800

## PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS AND PREY TO FORTUNE

### Nigel Stanton tells it like it is on the Nailsworth-Stroud-Stonehouse-Eastington Cycle Path.

There are two aspects of the Path which engage our attention, one continuously frustrating and the other new and exciting.

The frustrating and irritating aspect is Gloucestershire County Council's perennial inability and unwillingness to lay a good surface along the whole length of the Path. The branch into Stroud from Dudbridge is ideal and could not be bettered. The stretch from Dudbridge to Ryeford and onto the Horsetrough roundabout is reasonable but could do with some work on the Dudbridge to Ryeford stretch to widen and lay a finer, level surface. Beyond the Horsetrough roundabout to Bond's Mill needs a new surface. Thereafter it is good except at Oldends Lane roundabout but this is being developed now and a new link in the path is part of the development. Heading westwards to Eastington the path is good, but crossing the roundabout by the Little Chef to get into the lane to Whitminster needs care.

Heading eastwards from Dudbridge towards Nailsworth there are stretches that have been improved with new surfacing (particularly in wet conditions, some stretches are hazardous where, without warning, the 'metalled' surface changes to rutted mud under the road bridges and elsewhere. Eds) and this work is ongoing very slowly. We have John Roberts, the Divisional Operations Manager, GCC Highways at Stroudwater to thank for this work and he is doing what he can with very limited resources.

What is completely lacking is the will and enthusiasm on the part of the County Council to put money into this project. Indeed, the present Conservative 'administration', after it was newly elected last May, decided to lop £10 million off the Integrated Transport budget and put that money into highway maintenance. This budget covers cycling, public transport, and park-and-ride schemes as well as walking. To bring this path up to a good standard of surfacing is comparatively inexpensive, because the path already exists with a good substrate that was the old railway trackbed. Additionally, using the path when it is dry, especially in summer, is a very pleasant experience. You are away from the noise and pollution of the traffic on the A46, in the shade of the trees and able to pass the time of day with people you meet.

The exciting aspect is that Sustrans, with the Highways staff, are signing the path as part of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 45. At the time of writing it is possible to cycle on Route 45 all the way from Avebury in Wiltshire to Cirencester. Hopefully it will soon be possible to cycle on from Cirencester to Gloucester on Routes 45 and 41. The full Route 45 runs from Gloucester to Salisbury and this year it may be possible to do just that. The point about the NCN is that there are frequent links into other parts of the Network and local towns and villages. Nailsworth, Stroud, Stonehouse and Eastington are all on or close to Route 45 and with railway stations at Stroud and Stonehouse the possibilities of national and international travel by bike and train beckon. Sustrans can be contacted on 0845 113 0065 or go to [www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk).



## **HOT LINES REDUCE ROAD RAGE – WE HOPE**

**Potholes:** Ring Gloucestershire County Council on 01453 822193 and report the location; the pothole should be repaired within the next working day.

**Litter/glass on cycle path:** Ring Stroud District Council on 01453 754403 (Lisa Samak).

**Glass on roads:** Ring Stroud District Council, Environmental Contacts, on 01453 754424.

*cont'd from front page*

You may be aware that there is already a similar problem with the Highway Code rule which says 'you should wear a cycle helmet'. Regardless of your views on the pros and cons of helmet-wearing per se, one only has to remember how this rule affected 9-year-old cyclist Darren Coombs and his family. Not only did a driver leave Darren with permanent brain damage; but his parents then had to face the claim that they themselves were guilty of 'contributory negligence' for allowing him to ride unaccompanied and without a helmet. Nobody should have to suffer the anguish which they, several other cyclists and their families, and (in one recent tragic case) a bereaved widow had to go through, simply because of that one word 'should' in the Highway Code. 'Consider wearing a cycle helmet' would be a far more reasonable and less prejudicial alternative.

In one important respect though, the rule about using cycle facilities is even more insidious. With helmet-wearing, it seems that those cyclists who have dared to resist the claim of 'contributory negligence' (including the Coombs family) have always managed to win the argument in court eventually. It takes guts to do this, not to mention a strong-willed cycle-friendly solicitor! However, to the best of CTC's knowledge, the courts have rejected every helmet-related claim of 'contributory negligence' brought before them, ruling in every case that a helmet would probably not have prevented the injuries which occurred.

By contrast, it will be almost impossible to argue against 'contributory negligence' claims based on non-use of a cycle facility. Challenging such a claim would take not just guts, but downright foolhardiness. However strongly the cyclist might argue that their decision not to use the facility was a rational one, the court would be almost bound to conclude that the collision would have been avoided if the cyclist had been in a different place at the time.

CTC is calling for the following changes to the Code:

- \* Remove all words which could give rise to unwarranted 'contributory negligence' claims against cyclists (including those relating to use of cycle facilities and helmets);
- \* Include clearer advice to drivers on safe interactions with cyclists (e.g. on how much space to leave when overtaking a cyclist);
- \* Ensure that its advice to cyclists (particularly that on negotiating roundabouts) is in line with the Government-backed National Standard for cycle training, and;
- \* A recommendation that anyone wishing to improve their confidence and safety should undertake cycle training to the National Standard.

Please lobby your MP to make sure that, instead of a further erosion of cyclists rights, the new Highway Code helps achieve a real advantage for cycle safety. On the CTC website, [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk), there is a facility following the above article, which is entitled 'Driving Cyclists Off the Road!', enabling you to send a preworded email (which you can edit) direct to your local MP. Please do it!

### **NEXT SVCC MEETING**

Wednesday 5th April at 8pm.

3 Rodborough Avenue, Rodborough, Stroud  
(758188). Bikes safe in the back garden.

ALL WELCOME

*This newsletter is published by Stroud Valleys Cycle Campaign, c/o 45 Bisley Old Road, Stroud GL5 1LU, tel 01453 762233, email [ckambites@fsmail.net](mailto:ckambites@fsmail.net). The Cycle Campaign works for better cycling facilities; membership is only £5 pa, £7.50 for couples, £2.50 for unwaged.*