

# UPHILL

Stroud Valleys Cycle Campaign Newsletter July 2009 No.34



SVCC

GEARED-UP FOR CHANGE

## SWITCH ON TO GREEN TRAVEL

**TRIP SWITCH GREEN TRAVEL EVENT, SAT 13th JUNE, SUB ROOMS, STROUD**

by Sheila Booth



It was a warm and sunny day for this event, the forecourt was busy and people seemed to enjoy themselves.

The biggest draw was the bike events, and there was an impressive collection of bikes and parts for sale. Cytec of Cainscross generously provided two staff to run the free bike checks section; many people came particularly for this and had their bikes checked over, and simple adjustments made to tyres, brakes and gears, and if new tyres or parts were needed were advised to go to the shop. Colin Drewett of Gloucestershire Police postcoded 72 bikes; and Bicycology supplied pedal-powered music.

At I I am the Ape Project arrived for kids to try

spin painting, powered by pedalling on the tandem bike. There were some interesting bike trailers, one borrowed from Waitrose in Cirencester, and one made locally of TV aerials. Urbanmovers came with four electric bikes which many people tried out (I was impressed with the way that I was able to pedal easily up past the police station to Bisley Old Road!).

The Transition Town Stroud Travel group had a 'Travel Planning' stall to help people find out how they might use their cars less; two options, the Car Club and Gloucestershire Lift Share were there, and there was lots of public transport information. Information was also collected about people's public transport needs.

Sustrans had a stall with information about Route 45 in particular. And we sold our District cycle maps, and the Pedestrian Cycle trail leaflet; provided information about if and how our campaigns are progressing; and asked people to write a post-it note saying what they wanted doing for cyclists (see p.xxx).

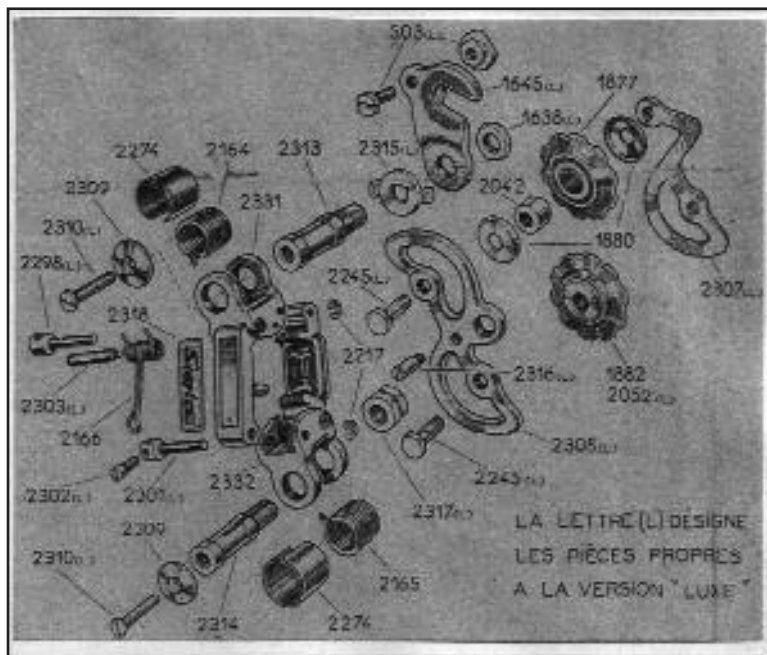


# BY THE WAY

## ROAD SPEED LIMITS

The Department for Transport (DfT) has laid out plans to overhaul Britain's road speed limits and to improve the driving test. Its publication, *A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World*, has been released and its recommendations aim to reduce one third of road deaths by 2020. Included in its recommendations are the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas and a review of speed limits on single carriageway rural roads.

Minister Jim Fitzpatrick said: 'We've already made real improvements to the safety of our roads – there are now almost 17,000 fewer deaths or serious injuries in a year than there were in the mid-1990s. But it is intolerable that eight people are still dying on our roads each day.'



CTC's Roger Geffen welcomed the report but emphasised that lower speed limits have the desired effect when implemented on a large scale: 'It's very good news that the Government is recognising the benefits of lowering speed limits. But if they want people to cycle more we need to go beyond having little oases of traffic calming and have a default urban speed limit of 20 mph with higher speeds only on the more major through roads.'

To view the consultation document, visit: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/roadsafetyconsultation/>  
CTC's response is available via [www.tinyurl.com/CTC-21April](http://www.tinyurl.com/CTC-21April)

## 20 MILES PER HOUR

20's Plenty For Us has published a leaflet presenting the case for 20mph speed limits for residential and urban roads. This was distributed at the recent national Speed Management Conference held in London. The leaflet is available from [www.20splentyforus.org.uk](http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk)

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

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

**Cotswold Collectables and Cycles**, 7 Long Street, Wotton-under-Edge, 01453 842259; bike sales, servicing, repairs, parts and accessories.

**Cytek**, 59 Westward Road, Cainscross, Stroud, 01453 753330; bike sales, servicing, repairs, parts and accessories.

**Halfords**, Merrywalks, Stroud, 01453 764571; bike sales, parts and accessories.

**Noahs Ark Cycles & Snowboards**, Bourne Mills, Brimscombe, 01453 884738; bike sales, servicing, repairs, parts and accessories, bike hire.

**Severn Cycles**. We are sorry to report that this business has closed. A sad loss.

**Slimbridge Boat Station**, Patch Bridge, Slimbridge, 01453 899190; bike hire, café.

**Square Deals on Wheels**, Farm Bungalow, Cowcombe Lane, Chalford, Stroud, 01285 760475, [www.sdeals.com](http://www.sdeals.com); internet shop and lightweight bike specialists.

**Stonehouse Accessories Ltd**, 18 High Street, Stonehouse, 01453 822881, [accessories@stonehouse](mailto:accessories@stonehouse), [powernet-int.co.uk](http://powernet-int.co.uk); bike sales, servicing, repairs, parts and accessories, bike hire.

## **SUSTRANS CELEBRATION**

Cycling to school doubled in 2008 The number of pupils cycling to school every day rose from 4 per cent to 8 per cent (out of 19,000 pupils surveyed) in 'Bike It' schools during 2008. In its annual Bike It Project Review, Sustrans also claims that pupils cycling at least once a week rose from 14 per cent to 26 per cent as a direct result of Bike It's work to create a cycling culture in UK schools.

## **LONDON BIKES**

London has shortlisted six bidders to operate its bike hire scheme. Local Transport Today lists the six shortlisted bidders as: Clear Channel; John Laing/Deutsche Bahn; Serco; Cubic; Arup; and the Public Bike System Company. Only two of these companies – Clear Channel and Deutsche Bahn – have operational experience of running a cycle hire scheme. Clear Channel operates 13 schemes, including the one in Barcelona. Deutsche Bahn runs Call-a-bike in Berlin, Munich and four other German cities.

The scheme is due to start in May 2010.

## **TRAVEL BY TRAIN AND BROMPTON**

South West Trains has launched the UK rail network's first cycle hire initiative. The train operating company has teamed up with Brompton in a bid to encourage passengers to cycle as part of an integrated journey. South West Trains season ticket holders have been invited to take part in a 3-month trial of the scheme.

The idea followed research involving 13,000 people across the UK, focusing on public attitudes to green issues. Health emerged as a significant factor in convincing people to ditch the car and switch modes. Passengers will be able to hire the South West Trains' branded Brompton bicycles from the Lost Property Office at Waterloo station.

## **BIKE SHORTAGE IN EUROPE**

Europe is running out of bikes thanks to a British cycling boom that has caught the world's biggest bike manufacturers on the hop.

Bike shops are struggling to meet demand, which has tripled in the past 12 months despite massive price hikes. And that was before yesterday's start of the Tour de France, usually an annual sales trigger for arm-chair cycling enthusiasts.

The bicycle bonanza, which saw annual sales surge more than 20 per cent in June, comes as the rest of the UK high street struggles, with retail sales tumbling. Two-wheeled commuters are fuelling the surge, as more people embrace pedal power instead of battling with the Tube or driving. (*The Independent*)

## **ITALIAN GOVERNMENT OFFERS MONEY OFF NEW BIKES**

For the first time in Europe a government has started handing out direct incentives for the purchase of a bicycle. On 22nd April, the Italian government's Ministry for the Environment announced that it would pay 30 per cent of the retail price of a bicycle or electric bike. The maximum available is 700 euros for a bike that retails for 2,330 euros, the price of a high-end e-bike.

## **PADDINGTON BIKE PARK**

A revolutionary 'cycle warehouse' for up to 1,000 bikes could be installed at Paddington station. If the £750,000 scheme goes ahead it will become Britain's biggest station cycle park. The concept has been developed by Dutch operator NedRailways, which is building a similar park for up to 500 bikes at Leeds and has 40 in Holland.

It would be manned until late into the evening and would include a cycle hire, sale and repair shop. A spokesman for NedRailways said it would be secure, accessible only with a swipe card, and would cost about 75p a day with discounts for season ticket holders.

If it goes ahead it will mark a huge breakthrough for cyclists. At present there is an average of only one cycle parking space per 700 commuters. (*London Evening Standard*)

# STROUD NEWS

## CHANGING GEAR REPORT, BIKE WEEK '09

by John Meadley



Changing Gear – which promotes cycling to secondary schools in the Five Valleys – took off during Bike Week in June after three months of preparation. In some ways it was the same as last year. Those who took part registered and identified where cycling was difficult, those who cycled to school were eligible to win a £25 cycle voucher and everyone received a puncture repair outfit. There was an hour of fun cycle ‘training’ for 119 at the five schools and there was a bikers’ breakfast at four of the schools. The police attended all sessions and ultra-violet post-coded all bikes. Overall

numbers formally cycling to school were down from last year – 170 versus 235 last year. Part of this was because quite a few of those who cycled last year normally walked anyway and the novelty had worn off.

However, there were new features this year. Rob Reed led on-road level 3 training at Marling for over 20 year 7 students, for which the pupils paid £7.50 (an equal amount being paid by Changing Gear). Two police CPSOs participated in the final training session on 13th July, reflecting the growing relationship with the local police and their recognition of the importance of cycling. Two new mountain bike clubs have been set up – at Thomas Keble and Maidenhill schools – both of which are being led by Robert Reed, with the start-up funding coming from Changing Gear.

The website has been significantly updated and expanded – see [www.changinggear.org.uk](http://www.changinggear.org.uk).

We built the Bamboo trailer (see right), which was featured in *Stroud Life* on 7th July, and details are on the website. It was built from two TV aerial rods rather than from bamboo, the rods donated by A-Z Aerials, and the trailer was built by Brian Harrison of Stanley Engineers. We are now discussing with *Stroud Life* a trailer-building schools challenge for the autumn.



A wholly new element was Access Bike, which was funded by the PCT through Stroud District Council.

The aim was to assist students who did not own a bike, as a result of their family circumstances, to own one – working through Archway and Maidenhill Schools. The result is that 17 young people, both boys and girls, now own a reconditioned bike at a cost not exceeding £40 (the price including a helmet and a lock) and were able to participate in Bike Week. They could ride away with a bike after paying £10 down, the balance payable over the coming months. There were many smiling faces as a result.

Following on from the information that we learnt last year about areas difficult for cycling, we have been having discussions with the local authorities – district and county councils, highways, police etc. – about cycling in the area from the Sainsbury’s to the Cainscross roundabouts. GCC and Highways reviewed the options on site recently and Sustrans has offered funding of 33–50%. Who knows? We might get a safer route for both students and the cycling public before long.

Where we go next is not clear. However, there is a significant momentum building up and there seems to be a wish to consolidate what has been achieved so far and to identify other ways in which schools and cycling can become synonymous.

The funds for Changing Gear were raised from Stroud District Council, Stroud Town Council, Stonehouse Town Council, Stroud District Youth Club, Ecotricity, Green Fuels and The Green Shop/Rainwater Harvesting.

## **SOCIAL RIDE**

There will be an easy-paced social ride on Saturday 25th July, starting at 11am from Stonehouse Post Office and going via Whitminster to the Anchor pub at Epney. The leader is Carol Kambites. Phone her on 827929 if you need more information.

## **STROUD TO CHALFORD ROUTE**

**by Sheila Booth**

I am sorry to report that the postponed meeting with the County Council (deferred from end February because of snow) is still not arranged. The current delay follows the elections on 4 June, and the fact that Councillor Waddington, who very positively chaired the group last November, has changed his role at the Council, and it is still not clear whether he, or another, will chair the group from now on. I very much hope that Councillor Waddington will continue to do so but it is still unclear.

The Feasibility Study for the route was completed by the highway engineers some time ago, but it seems that until the new chair is confirmed the report cannot be 'signed off', and it can't be released until that happens. I believe that there is support for this project, and that the need for a safe route is recognised by the County Council, but it is very frustrating that things are not moving forward.

## **PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON TRIP SWITCH EVENT (see p.1)**

**by Rosie Franklin**

People love to say what they think is the best way ahead for the needs of us cyclists, but getting them to write it down is a different matter. Some very lively discussions took place by the 'suggestions' stand, especially about the proposed Chalford to Stroud route. But some did write down what they thought would improve cycling for them and for the wider community: Build a cycle track along the canal before doing anything else. Remove measures planned to slow down cyclists (I'm not sure if this means pushing the fishermen at Thrupp into the canal, removing the steps, the bridges, the mud or even the dog walkers!). Someone from Minchinhampton would love a safe route into Stroud, and a family from Nailsworth who enjoy the track to Eastington wishes it went on to Chalford. A bike maintenance workshop was a plea from, dare I say, quite a few ladies, and there was a request for family- or OAP-friendly bike rides with a leader and lots of helpers. It was good to see so many people coming up with ideas or showing an interest in what SVCC is all about; let's hope some of these suggestions can become reality. Lastly was the great idea that we build our very own Rinky Dink type of attraction for future cycle events – perhaps it could be used to lead the family cycling group!

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

**Potholes:** Ring Gloucestershire County Council on 08000 514514 and report the location, or log-on to their website: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/pothole](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/pothole).

**Glass or litter on cycle path, roads, pavements:** Ring Stroud District Council on 01453 754424.

## **WHEELS OF FRANCE**

**by Jeff Cloves**

I grew up in a cycling family. We only had bikes. We used them for everything. We had *Cycling* magazine delivered.

I've never been or wanted to be a racer but *Cycling* reported the Tour de France when the national's sports pages – unlike now – hardly gave it a mention. As a boy, I followed Le Tour avidly. In the mid-50s it was dominated by Coppi from Italy, Kubler and Koblet, from Switzerland, and Louis (Louison) Bobet, the French star who became the first rider to win it three years in succession.

Now I'm reading *Tomorrow we ride* by Jean Bobet (paperback published by Mousehold Press 2008) and, if you're interested in cycling, you should read this book. Even if you have no interest whatever in cycle racing, I bet you'll be gripped. As for me, any book which starts with a quotation from the poet/songwriter, Jacques Prévert, can hardly miss. Jean Bobet is Louis' young brother and a retired (he's now 89) racing cyclist himself. He raced wearing glasses and, because he held a degree in English literature, was regarded as an 'intellectual' by his *copains de la bicyclette*.

His book is about his love of literature, his love for his brother, and their shared love of cycling. After they stopped racing, the brothers continued to cycle together for pleasure – almost to the week of Louis' death. Jean's writing is quirky and even odd (could be the translation) but it has rich personality. It's a philosophical, social, cultural, commentary on their life and times and often very moving. Years ago I wrote here of how H G Wells' *Wheels of Chance* captured the sheer joy of cycling and, in that regard, *Tomorrow, we ride* is its equal.

Here's a taster. In 1953 Jean was riding in the Tour of Italy:

As the kilometres went by the restiveness, then the excitement and finally the hysteria of the Tifosi thronging both side of the road, led me to guess, and very soon to feel that Coppi was on my tail. With a deafening roar press cars and photographers' motorcycles shot past me, sirens wailing. He had arrived. He passed me on the left. He did not notice me. He was riding on a cushion of air. His long legs were whirling round and his hands on top of the handlebars. He was sublime. I strove desperately to keep him for a moment in my sights. I saw his sky-blue Bianchi jersey, the sky-blue support car in which his mechanic, the faithful Pinella, balanced a spare bike over his shoulder. This image will never be erased. One day, in a cloud of golden dust, I saw the sun riding a bicycle between Grosseto and Follonica.

Dennis Gould will have *Tomorrow, we ride* on his stall in the Shambles market. Look out for its stunning cover photograph of the Bobet Brothers.

### **NEXT SVCC MEETING**

Monday 21st September at 7.30pm.  
45 Bisley Old Road  
01453 762233  
ALL WELCOME

Caption for masthead in place of Wells quote follows:

Cycling is delicate, intimate and ephemeral. It arrives, it takes hold of you, sweeps you up and then leaves you again. It is for you alone. It is a combination of speed and ease, force and grace. It is pure happiness. Jean Bobet

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