



**Birmingham leaps into action:
cyclists' meeting on 22 October! see p.3**

If you would like to help make the newsletter happen, please contact any of the Newsletter team.

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Newsletter Team: Graham Hankins, Michael Groll

Birmingham Cyclist has a readership of nearly 1000 cyclists. We offer competitive advertising rates. For more information on advertising please contact: secretary @pushbikes.org.uk

View from the Chair

Undoubtedly most significant this summer has been the increase in Push Bikes' membership. Thanks to prodigious efforts by members of the committee who manned stands at Bike Week events in parks and on High Street, 38 new members were recruited. Why is this so significant? Because numbers count! Push Bikes is a well respected and recognised campaigning body, but it can't be said to represent the cross section of cyclists in Birmingham until we have a big enough and broad enough base of membership across the city. We are currently less than 300 but need more to exert a greater influence on the council and other transport providers. For a city of 1m people, our target should be at least 500 members.

It always surprises me to come across regular, committed cyclists who either are unaware of Push Bikes, or in some respects worse, know that we exist but haven't become members. Our message still isn't getting across: if cycling in Birmingham is to become better and safer Push Bikes NEEDS YOU!!

How do we persuade reluctant cyclists? I think that it depends firstly on getting them to admit that facilities could and should be improved. Then that Push Bikes is likely to win improvements as being the best way of getting the 'authorities' to act.

This shouldn't prove too difficult: we have a history of achievement and a strong presence to put pressure where required. Our subscriptions are modest, we provide useful services to members, and we don't ask members to be 'active' unless they want to. But, however well convinced of Push Bikes worthiness, most potential members won't decide to join unless they are presented with a membership application form and asked to sign. 'Closing the sale' is the essential bit.

So, may I ask you to carry with you the **enclosed membership flyer** and when you meet a non-member, just ask them to join by filling in the form and sending their subscription. I think you may be pleased to find that many will say 'yes'. Thank you.
John Bennett



Push Bikes needs your help!

Reuse Cycle Bits

Number 1 in a new series
Ipods, itunes - what about itubes? Old inner tubes have multifarious uses either whole or cut up. Left whole [with one cut] they make straps to tie apple trees to posts or bikes to bike racks. They are secure when knotted yet easy to undo. Cut transversely they make dozens of small elastic bands [ebands]. Cutting the tubes into elastic strips lengthwise is easy. The manufacturers thoughtfully put longitudinal ridges in the rubber - about 12mm apart. These help us cut neat strips. Use the strips for hookless bungees e.g. on a rear rack. Make big ebands and you don't need to collect those red ones left by postmen. When packing roll your clothes and compact them with a big band etc. .



Any more ideas for ex-bike parts? Send 'em in.

Kate Fox



ACTION POINTS

This symbol indicates items where readers can take action such as writing or emailing

The front cover picture shows a BMX rider at the Family Cycle Day at Kingfisher Country Park on 20 June.

How would YOU improve cycling in Birmingham?

Cyclists' Meeting 2009

Banqueting Suite, Council House, Thursday
October 22nd 2009, 7pm.

I am sure all of us have answers to this question, so to follow on from last year's very successful event and to celebrate Push Bikes' 30th anniversary, we have arranged a meeting at the Council House this time! Principal council officers, guest speakers and refreshments, come along and tell them what matters to you about cycling in Birmingham. We still have the list of issues highlighted on the map from last year: have any of them been addressed?

- Do you have a problem with a path or roundabout?
- A hazardous crossing?
- Could you suggest a better route?

Ask the council tonight! We never forget – make sure the council doesn't either!

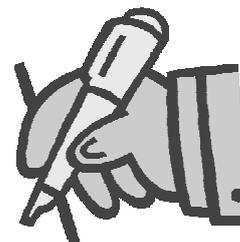
This is your opportunity to get your voice heard!

Cycling Strategy: Birmingham City Council (BCC) is writing an updated Cycling Strategy. Yes, this is the strategy that was mentioned back in January and was to be launched in March, but certain key officers had been unavailable. The task had now been passed back to Graham Lennard, Travelwise Team Leader, who had identified several amendments he wished to incorporate, one of these was to put sports cycling into a distinct section. The strategy is now expected to be launched around December.

Cycling Coordination Group: BCC is developing an internal Cycling Coordination Group. This will pool funding, resources, web development, databases, ideas and oversee the implementation of the Cycling Strategy.

Connect2 – North Birmingham Route: in June Sustrans and Birmingham City Council signed the memorandum of understanding which enables work to start in earnest. A consultation document for first section between New Hall Valley Country Park and Pype Hayes Park, can be viewed at:

www.connect2birmingham.org/publicconsultations



Cole Valley: Three-year delivery programme. New bridge to be designed.

Harborne Walkway: Many improvements completed but one section is still muddy. Further S106 monies will be available.

River Tame Way: Environment Agency keen to re-establish route.

Cannon Hill Park resurfacing: Improvements are needed as this will be part of the World half-marathon route. Discussions taking place with Parks and Highways Maintenance. Push Bikes asked about the 'segregated' cycle lane running through the park – would it be re-marked or removed and the entire path designated as shared use? BCC responded that it was likely to become Shared Use, as the segregation was largely ignored anyway.

Hagley Road/Lordswood Road traffic light timings: The inter-green time was too short for cyclists to cross safely. A study has been made and Traffic Management will be asked to consider re-timings at this junction.

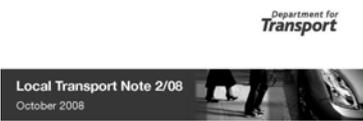
Belgrave Middleway crossing: Recent traffic count has indicated c. 300 vehicles a day using the bus lane to cross over this junction. Ongoing. BCC was waiting for the police camera monitoring report.

Hagley Road parallel route: A feasibility study has been made, many issues to be addressed, consultation with 'stakeholders' (yes, this includes Push Bikes) to take place during September.

Rea Valley Route: solar-powered road studs to indicate the direction of the path coloured are being installed.

Graham Hankins

The Cyclists Dismount Sign



Cycle Infrastructure Design



The Department for Transport published *Cycle Infrastructure Design* in October 2008, a guidance document for highway engineers and planners. We intend publishing extracts that may interest Push Bikes members and help in understanding the departmental policy. The complete document is available at: www.dft.gov.uk/cyclinginfrastructuredesign

[cyclinginfrastructuredesign](http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclinginfrastructuredesign)

“The CYCLISTS DISMOUNT sign is another over-used sign. On a well designed cycle facility, it is very rarely appropriate. The sign is possibly the least favoured among cyclists – each time it is used, it represents a discontinuity in the journey, which is highly disruptive. In general, the sign should only be used in relatively rare situations where it would be unsafe or impracticable for a cyclist to continue riding.

If it looks as if the sign might be needed, practitioners should first check to see whether the scheme design could not first be modified to make its use unnecessary. In general, the sign should not be used where a cycle track joins a carriageway directly”.



Cyclists dismount sign on the Selly Oak Bypass: is this really necessary?

Edgbaston tunnel resurfaced

British Waterways has made some improvements to the severely rough surface in this 95 metre tunnel on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal (see photographs below). Unfortunately the relaid gravel is still uneven and is made worse because several lights are not illuminated. We understand that lighting is the responsibility of the City Council who needs to hire a barge to get access to the light fittings. Does life have to be so complicated? Couldn't the lights be made accessible from the towpath?



Canal towpath before resurfacing



Canal towpath after resurfacing

John Bennett



The Push Bikes' team getting the message out

During Bike Week in June, Birmingham City Council's Leisure Services Department organised Family Cycle Days in Cannon Hill and Sutton parks. These attracted several hundred people and demonstrated, if it was necessary to do so, that cycling is booming.

Cycle rides round the parks were signed, route sheets available, and mechanics to test bike safety. You could use your own cycle or borrow one provided by the council. Push Bikes was there flying the flag, meeting and discussing problems and opportunities with existing members, and recruiting new ones.

One of the big attractions was a stunt display team cleverly showing what is possible by expert cycle handlers: leaping over obstacles, doing wheelies, and static balancing. There was a variety of weird and wonderful bikes to try out in the practice ring which proved very popular. Similar events were held in two other city parks: Kingfisher Country Park (Shard End) and Witton Lakes (Short Heath) on a smaller scale and, as luck would have it, with mixed weather.



"And the pothole was this big..": Neeraj captivates her audience

A41 Warwick Road could become a Smart Route

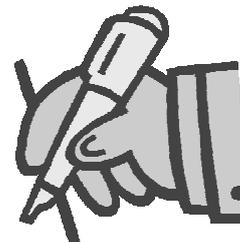
The Warwick Road from Sparkhill through to Solihull, could be designated as a 'Smart Route' combining Red Route, Bus Showcase and congestion improving measures. Birmingham and Solihull councils together with Centro are undertaking consultation to decide on what improvements should be made along this important corridor. Under consideration are:

- Traffic congestion
- Improving journey times and reliability
- Enhanced road safety
- Improved pedestrian facilities
- Improved urban environment
- Improved accessibility by sustainable modes and public transport

The project includes the neighbourhoods on either side of the road, shopping and other local activities, as well as the use of the Grand Union canal.

Graham Hankins of Push Bikes attended a stakeholders' meeting on 6 August and proposed shared-use for the wide footway into the city alongside the dual-carriageway in Greet and signing at the Battery Way/Weston Lane 'Give Way' junction to warn drivers of cyclists crossing (raised at last year's Cyclists' Meeting).

You can give feedback on the proposals by completing a questionnaire on the website www.warwickroad.org.uk or by phoning 0121 483 6485.



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Bike and Rail

Cycle parking at stations

Both Centro and train operator London Midland continue to work together to develop cycle parking programmes at stations in our area. The objectives for Centro's programme is to:

- maximise the current provision of cycle storage across the West Midlands' public transport network
- replace existing facilities where the condition of the facility has deteriorated
- provide additional storage at interchanges where demand for cycle storage exceeds supply

Facilities will continue to be monitored by Centro, in order to evaluate usage, and thus influence the future installation programme.

Online cycle journey planner

All 7 West Midlands' metropolitan authorities are supplying mapping of cycle routes to provide a web-based journey planner. This is under development at present.

Kings Norton Station Travel Plan

Kings Norton rail station was selected by ATOC (Association of Train Operating Companies) as one of 24 rail stations across the country to take part in a national station travel plan pilot scheme. The aim of the pilot is to assess the benefits of implementing travel plans for rail station passengers, to promote travel by sustainable modes (walking, cycling, car sharing, bus use), thereby reducing local traffic congestion and car park overcrowding. Particular issues identified for cycling include:

Cycling facilities being limited in comparison to similar stations. There are six bicycle lockers and two uncovered Sheffield stands which are in poor condition. Neither of these are covered by CCTV. There is no signage for cyclists from or to the nearby off-road Sustrans Millennium Rea Valley Cycle Route, while main road access is via a busy roundabout. Information about links to nearby "Advisory Cycle Routes" is not provided at the station.

The travel plan has now been drawn up and is being implemented over a two year period. One of the main objectives agreed is to increase the cycling share of journeys to the station from 0% to 3% (on the 3 days last October when passenger surveys were undertaken, not one person was re-

corded as having cycled to the station!).

Centro is working together with South Birmingham Primary Care Trust and Push Bikes to help achieve cycling-related targets in the plan. This is however at a relatively early stage, with details still to be arranged.

For more information on the station travel plan, see:

<http://www.networkwestmidlands.com/stationtravelplan/index.aspx>

Stephen Bermingham, Centro



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www.networkwestmidlands.com/travelwise

Cycling is part of the multi-modal mix in Centro's marketing materials

Pootlers' Ride

Eight riders met at the MAC for the loopy ride on 15 August. We went by the canal to Gas Street Basin from the University station then out along the BCN Main Line canal round the Soho Loop (loop 1). Gas St Basin was busy as expected, but rideable while the Soho loop was very quiet, not one angler! An angler on the BCN pointed out the exit onto Rotton Park Street, so we reached the Edgbaston Reservoir easily.

Loop 2: the path around the reservoir was excellent: a good surface and traffic free. After going three quarters round, we exited into Summerhill Park and joined the Harborne Walkway. What a fantastic ride: a tree lined path which felt like being in the countryside instead of a city. The recent upgrades are excellent but there remains a lot to do to eliminate the muddy sections. Getting people out walking, riding and running in a pleasant and safe environment should be a top priority in an age of obesity and global warming. But it was too pleasant on the day even to think about political priorities.

Through Harborne to rejoin the canal and back to the Mailbox to complete the ultimate loop: 13.2 leisurely miles, average speed 8.4mph, too nice to race! We finished with a quiet chat, sandwiches etc. at the Mailbox. What an excellent day.

The route is on www.Bikely.com/maps/bike-path/Loopy1 - it's 13.2 miles but could easily be broken down into shorter rides.

Should we be planning some more Pootlers' rides? We could probably do another in September if there's enough interest: please email us: pbrides@pushbikes.org.uk - if you're interested.

David Little

Push Bikes on High Street, City Centre

We'll have a stall on the High Street outside Marks & Spencer from 10.00 to 16.00 on the following Saturdays:

19 September, 17 October, 14 November and 5 December.

If you're in town come and see us!



Relaxed pootlers at the start of their ride in Cannon Hill Park

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ANITA transport scheme for Birmingham Airport

Work continues on the ANITA (Airport NEC Integrated Transport Access) project. While the main objective is to improve public transport, elements for cycling and walking include:

- This will include new and upgraded cycle routes within the area of the NEC and BIA linking into existing routes within residential areas.
- A possible route adjacent to the railway line linking the Multi Modal Interchange with Marston Green.
- Possible footway and cycleway facilities on Bickenhill Lane, including a shared facility, advanced stop lines for cyclists at traffic signals and crossings at key junctions.
- Improvements to the existing Blackfirs Lane cycle/footway, (commenced in July and due to be completed in September).
- Improvement to the existing facility to a foot/cycleway on Bickenhill Lane south of the railway (Due to commence on 24 August and complete by end of October).

Arden Safer Routes to School

Proposals to increase cycling in the area around Arden School by providing cycle routes through Knowle Park and the local area has met with opposition from some local residents, in particular plans to introduce shared-use paths for cycling and walking through Knowle Park. As we go to press a decision has yet to be reached as to how the scheme will be taken forward. Do you live in this area or have children who attend Arden School? Please let us know what you think about the proposed scheme.



Cyclesolihull Rides

Cyclesolihull rides continue to be well supported. There has been a continuing growth of participants for Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday evening rides each of the last three years as they have become more widely known and publicised. So far during 2009 over 400 people have attended rides.

For further information, including the current rides programme visit:

www.cyclesolihull.org.uk

Solihull Cycling Club

Solihull Cycling Club now has a record number of members. Recent growth has been based on the success of the Tudor Grange circuit which has attracted interest from young aspiring cyclists as well as established racers.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE FUTURE NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL INSTEAD OF BY POST?

Sending your newsletter as a Portable Data Format (PDF) attachment would save us considerable postage and printing costs. You could still 'take it with you' on the train or the beach by printing it out. Reducing our postage and printing costs would really help our finances - so if you would be happy with an e-newsletter instead of a printed copy please tell us by emailing:

secretary@pushbikes.org.uk

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We offer a wide variety of trips to entice adventure seekers. Many cyclists start in Laos, the south-east Asian gem which is Red Spokes most popular destination. Highlights of the tour include:

- Witnessing an enchanting country taking its first steps in the modern world
- Breathtaking scenery and a rich, diverse culture
- A spectacular boat ride down the mighty Mekong River
- Discovering Luang Prabang, a World Heritage Site crammed with exquisite temples



The most extreme challenge offered by Red Spokes is an epic 1,000-kilometre journey across the roof of the world. Cyclists traverse the backbone of the Himalayas, from Lhasa in Tibet to Kathmandu in Nepal. This is one of the world's great rides and a must for adventure cyclists. The main attractions of the tour include:

- Exploring Lhasa, the mystical capital of Tibet, home to world-famous Potala Palace
- Cycling to Base Camp Everest via 50 (yes 50!) hairpin bends
- Completing the world's longest downhill ride
- Conquering five high-altitude mountain passes over 5,000 metres



Red Spokes has a reputation for developing trailblazing rides in parts of the world untouched by tourism. Our tours of remote Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan provide a fascinating insight into ex-Soviet Central Asia.

As well as giving cyclists a life-changing experience, we are committed to "putting something back" into the communities we visit. In Laos Red Spokes has funded two new schools and provided safe drinking water in the village that is home to our guide Khen. The same ethical cycling concept has been extended to projects in Tibet and Peru.



www.redspokes.co.uk

Visit our website www.redspokes.co.uk to see more of the countries we visit including Peru, Chile/Argentina, Kerala, Vietnam and India

Push Bikes' Rides

Push Bikes' Rides

Keeping up to date

It's best to check the Rides forum:
<http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/bb/> - on the website for the latest details of rides. The Rides forum is information only ie if you have a question or want to let us know your coming – always wise, if you're delayed we can wait – email pbrides@pushbikes.org.uk. You can also use this address to subscribe to the Rides mailing list which sends an email a week before Sunday rides & on the Monday before the Wednesday ride.

Sunday Rides

Usually meet at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, 10.30am for 10.45am start although this varies.

4 October - Harvington

There's a choice of a 15 or 3 mile ride to Harvington Hall (details on the forum).

Half price admission to the Hall for cyclists on the 4th - see www.harvingtonhall.com

1 November - Kinver

Meet at the Black Horse Pub car park, Northfield 10.00am for 10.15am start.

Lunch venue to be decided, about 40 mile round trip.

29 November - Bromsgrove

Meet at Kings Norton Railway Station car park at 10.15am for 10.30am start.

Lunch venue to be decided, about 35 mile round trip.

20 December - Tinsel Ride

Meet at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, 10.30am for 10.45am start.

Destination will be a local pub, possibly Holly Bush on Stourbridge Road to meet with other cycle groups. 20 mile round trip.

Wednesday Evening Rides

Meet at the MAC at 7:45pm for a 8:00pm start, though can be earlier if people have to be up early the next day. The rides list is on the forum.

All Push Bikes' rides are free, open to members and non-members and are undertaken at the rider's own risk. Please ensure that your bike is roadworthy, has good brakes and working lights. Wearing high-visibility clothing will improve your safety by making you more conspicuous to other road users. If you have doubts about wearing a helmet, wear one. Ensure it is in good condition and is a proper fit. It may help protect your head should you have an unscheduled dismount. All participants are expected to take great care and observe the Highway Code. The organisers do not accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal property, for personal accident or injury, or for any public liability.

Further advice on ride participation and changes to the rides programme can be found on our web site at:
<http://www.pushbikes.org.uk> Details can be obtained from Nick Wattison on 07837 414236 on the day of the ride.

Committee

Chair:	John Bennett
Secretary:	Graham Hankins
Campaigns Coordinator:	Howard Boyd
Treasurer:	James Le Gry
Rides Co-ordinator:	Nick Wattison
Membership Convenor:	Neeraj Malhotra
Webmaster:	David Little
Newsletter Editor:	Michael Groll
Membership Secretary:	Ann Griffiths

Standing Order Mandate

To (your bank) _____
Address (inc. Post Code) _____

Please pay The Co-operative Bank, Birmingham Branch Sorting Code 08-90-01 for the credit of Push Bikes account number 50011748 the sum of (amount in figures) £_____. (amount in words) _____
Commencing (date*) _____ / now* and thereafter every year on (date dd/mm) __/__/__ until you receive further notice from me/us* in writing quoting reference _____ and debit my/our* account accordingly:
Name of account to be debited _____
Account number _____
Name _____
Signature _____
Date _____
Please cancel any previous Standing Order in favour of Push Bikes under the reference given above.
Please write clearly and send the forms to Push Bikes, 54-57 Allison Street, BIRMINGHAM, B5 5TH
<small>*Delete as applicable. www.pushbikes.org.uk Telephone: 0121 632 6753 Thank you.</small>

We are based In the Friends of the Earth building:

'The Warehouse'
54-57 Allison Street
Digbeth
BIRMINGHAM
B5 5TH

Telephone: 0121 632 6909

E-mail: secretary@pushbikes.org.uk

As we are a voluntary organisation, the office is not manned on a regular basis. The most effective means of contacting us is by e-mail.

We hold meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 19:30 including: 15 September, 20 October and 17 November.

Useful Numbers

Birmingham Cycling Officer	0121 303 7485
Solihull Cycling Officer	0121 704 8291
Sandwell Cycling Officer	0121 569 4021
Sandwell Potholes	0121 569 4129
Birmingham Potholes	0121 303 6644
Smoky Diesels	0121 789 7999
Emergency Line	0121 303 4149

Beacon Road Club	John Hitchcock	0121 427 5590
CTC N. Birmingham	Harry Child	0121 353 5814
CTC S. Birmingham	John Bennett	0121 459 9319
Royal Sutton Cycling Club	Bill Jinks	0121 681 7401
Concorde Cyclists' Club	Denis Feasey	0121 747 6420

Membership Application Form

I/we* wish to join Push Bikes Summer 09

Name(s) _____

Address (inc. Post Code) _____

Home Telephone _____

Mobile Telephone _____

Work Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

I/we* enclose one year's subscription:

Individual, waged (£11)

Individual, unwaged (£5-50)

Joint/Family (£14-00)

Voluntary donation (optional)

TOTAL £.....

Signature _____ Date _____

I heard about Push Bikes from _____

I/we* would like to help by: (✓)

() Letter writing () Helping on Push Bikes' stall () Organising activities for Bike Week

() Reviewing plans () Writing articles for Newsletter () Setting up a Bicycle User Group

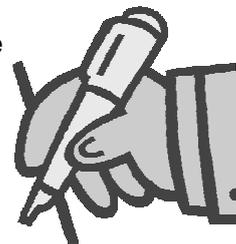
() Leading rides () Assisting with Newsletter () Newsletter/leaflets distribution

() Newsletter stuffing () Other _____

*Delete as applicable. P.T.O.

Write To Them!

One of the most effective ways of influencing policy is to email or write directly to your MP and / or councillor. Even a small number of voters contacting their elected representatives powerfully amplifies Push Bikes' direct campaign actions.



Locally this might be a problem with a poor cycle path, blocked cycle lane, speeding traffic, lack of cycle parking, potholes.

Obviously, no-one expects a flurry of action in response, but it will be noticed and if enough voters express similar concerns there will be some result. Don't be put off by a form letter response.

If you would like to raise an issue with the Council, British Waterways etc, either:

contact Push Bikes by email/phoning us: if the issue is already active, we can update you, help with the details or raise the issue directly with the Council.

or, copy your email/letter to Push Bikes.

Who is my MP/councillor?

The website www.WriteToThem.com will find them if you type in your post code.

Alternatively a template letter specific to Birmingham, which you could adapt as you wish, is available on our web site (www.pushbikes.org.uk).

Members' Discounts From:

Bike Shop	Location	Exceptions
Scott's Cycles (see advert p.9)	Hall Green	bikes
Action Bikes	Rubery	bikes
CBC	Northfield	bikes
Bike Pro	Bearwood	none
Fletchers Auto Store	King's Heath	none
Harborne Cycle Surgery	City Centre	none
Red Kite Cycles	Harborne	none
Sprocket Cycles	Shirley	bikes
(see advert p.5)	City Centre	none

