



## Belgrave Middleway / Longmore St. cycle crossing



**Birmingham City Council, call for action: make this junction safe for cyclists in 2009!** see p.3  
**Why aren't there more cyclists in Brum?** see p.7

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

Copyright 2009 Push Bikes, The Birmingham Area Cycling Campaign.

No part of this newsletter may be reproduced without express acknowledgement of the copyright.

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect official Push Bikes' policy.

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 Treasurer David Wilkinson on 0121 440 3072 or e-mail: DW@atft.co.uk or post.

## View from the Chair

The final version of Birmingham City Council's Cycling Strategy, which has been undergoing revision since the consultation period ended in the middle of 2008, is still awaited. It now seems that a major rethink is taking place – not so much in the strategy as in the way it should be presented. Apparently the thinking within the Council is that it should be made 'action oriented' and addressed at issues that appeal to those people who should (or could) consider cycling rather than those who are already active cyclists. (See the article on p.7 "Why aren't there more cyclists in Birmingham?")

In my opinion, another feature of the change is the recognition that infrastructure improvements cost money and human resources that are so scarce that there is no point in making grand plans that have little chance of being implemented. Plans should stick to the 'soft measures' i.e. altering attitudes, making it safer to cycle (training), organising leisure rides, and improving facilities (bike storage etc.) Whilst accepting that many of these measures are important, it is disappointing that, once again, Birmingham is failing to recognise the benefits that would accrue from greater investment in cycling infrastructure coupled with better public transport and limitations on the use of cars.

Push Bikes will, of course, work with the Council officers and with partners from all interested organisations in developing these 'soft measures'. We will, however, continue strenuously to campaign for better infrastructure – along the lines that our members keep asking for.

Please keep your ideas for improvements coming.

John Bennett

*Front cover picture shows the Belgrave Middleway crossing on National Cycle Network Route 5, looking south towards Longmore Street*

## Committee Strategy

### Push Bikes Committee Strategy Day

To kick off the New Year with a productive bang, the committee decided to evaluate its work and to plan for the future. The aim was to create four goals to focus on for the forthcoming year. Given the huge scope for Push Bikes' work, it was quite challenging to be so ruthless. In Push Bikes' history, there have been many points when its work has been evaluated. This day served not to reinvent the wheel (eek..) but to breathe fresh energy into the committee for 2009.

If you are keen to make a difference to cycling in Birmingham, please come to the AGM and join the Push Bikes committee. There is a huge amount to be done and a role that will suit your interests and commitment. Please email [secretary@pushbikes.org](mailto:secretary@pushbikes.org) for more information.



Our aim: To unlock the potential for cycling as a means of transport such that it is normal to make journeys by bicycle in Birmingham.

### The four goals were to:

1. Provide training to potential cyclists in Birmingham
2. Strengthen the work of the Push Bikes committee
3. Raise the public profile of Push Bikes
4. Develop Push Bikes' involvement in transport planning

The "How" component is a work in progress, but here are some tasters on ideas that we are developing:

### Training for potential cyclists:

- Multimedia training: create a DVD, distribute existing videos or add online videos to our website
- Cycle rides and a Cycle Buddy scheme
- Create a Guide to Cycling in Birmingham
- Deliver training sessions to new cyclists
- Work with the Council and local NHS to develop useful training materials

### Strengthening the Push Bikes committee:

- Recruit a larger committee at the AGM
- Organise a public meeting to be held at the same time as the AGM to encourage people to join the committee.
- Organise the committee roles into specific areas including campaigns (reactive), planning (proactive), networking (externally), communications (internally and externally), training, membership, fundraising and rides.

### Raise the public profile of Push Bikes:

- Seek funding to employ a press officer.
- Continue to promote our work through public meetings and current communications channels.

### Develop Push Bikes' involvement in transport planning:

- Create a team on the committee to review planning applications and traffic regulation orders, and respond to issues raised by members.
- Engage with developers of major transport proposals e.g. Birmingham New Street Gateway Scheme.
- Encourage Push Bikes members to lobby for better cycling facilities in new developments.
- Develop a mechanism of finding out when members have taken action on cycling issues.

Katie Garman

**Belgrave Middleway Crossing** – yes again, and again, and again.....

*Are you sitting comfortably?.....it all began twenty five (yes, 25) years ago!*

Extract from *Push Bikes' newsletter, Autumn 1983*: "For half an hour we are going to make the Gooch Street/ Longmore Street crossing legal for cyclists to cross. We'll be putting up 'Cycle Route' signs and amending the 'No vehicles except buses' sign to say 'and bicycles'."

*Five years later...Push Bikes' newsletter, 1988:*

"By the time you read this the Gooch Street crossing should be a step closer to happening.....features of the scheme are – signed cycle crossing (yes, 2008) Cycle traffic detectors (? 2008) gap for cyclists to the left of the bus lane" (yes, 2008, but is this part of the problem?)

*Then in Autumn 1989:*

"The Gooch Street crossing of the Middle Ring Road at Belgrave Middleway was finally opened on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1989. Now cyclists as well as buses may use this crossing legally". (Legally maybe – but safely...? GH 2009)

*Jump to Push Bikes' newsletter Winter 2005:* "Cyclists noted that when they crossed, cars were using the bus green to cross the Middleway. This increased the danger to cyclists and we've been asked Birmingham City Council to stop this happening for a few years".

*A year later...in Push Bikes, Winter 2006 the then chairman Mike Paley writes:* "...we decided that the problems were not with the actual crossing but the access to the cycle path alongside Longmore Street immediately after the Middleway. One of the solutions would be to move the access further along Longmore Street" (ie. further away from the junction – GH 2008). Mike Paley concluded: "We have therefore decided to drop this 'case' and advise cyclists to join the path further along the road, where traffic conditions make the first access point difficult or dangerous to use". (Hear hear - to the advice, but not to 'dropping the case' – GH 2008). Of course Push Bikes did not 'drop this case'.....

*In the Autumn 2007 NL, prompted by complaining emails on the CycleiseWM forum,* I wrote the results of my 'unofficial' traffic survey'; amongst my conclusions were: "the cycle lane (alongside the bus lane) places cyclists in the wrong position for a right turn (onto the Longmore cycle lane) immediately after the junction".

**Coming right up to date,** *in the Autumn 2008 newsletter* Push Bikes reports: "This is a long-running problem junction for cyclists (yes, 25 years long apparently – GH) and there have been calls for a camera to be installed to deter drivers from jumping the red lights or using the bus lane. So some good news from *Graham Lennard at Birmingham City Council:*

*"Long time waiting but they are installing the equipment at the Ring Road crossing to enable the survey of vehicles crossing the junction during November and Decem-*

*ber. A step in the right direction at least!"*

But a 'step' not taken yet? Towards the end of December a cyclist sent this email to Push Bikes:

"Hello Push Bikes,

I know it's an ongoing (i.e. eternal) issue but I witnessed the worst case of cars going straight over the crossing (heading south) for a long time last night at 5pm. At least 5 cars crossed in front of me and then as I was entering Longmore Street, three more overtook me using the right hand side of the road as I had indicated and moved into the middle of the road to turn onto the cycle lane. It was wet and dark and felt extremely dangerous. I wrote to Highgate Police Station about it again as I had indicated and moved into the middle of the road to turn onto the cycle lane."

Julia Rayment.

(In my opinion, that's the main problem: cyclists try to or are encouraged to (because it's there) turn right onto that Longmore Street cycle track! GH 2009.)

So the council's 'to do' list is still to install traffic monitoring or enforcement cameras, maybe even restyle the Gooch Street junction and move the Longmore Street cycle track further from the junction?

Julia then adds: "It was wet, dark and felt dangerous"

In that case I, Graham Hankins, SAY IF IT (or ANY manoeuvre on a bicycle) FEELS DANGEROUS, DON'T ATTEMPT IT THEN! If ANY right turn feels dangerous, stop at the kerb and walk across when safe. That is *standard, well-published advice for any cyclist*, not just this correspondent at this situation. Now I dare say that this advice may be strange to appear in a campaigning newsletter and is probably anathema to many ardent cyclists, who feel they are 'entitled' to stay on their bikes and make their turns etc. Indeed they are entitled, but sometimes reality bites and for safety has to be acknowledged. In this case, OK, the cars should not have been there, *but they were there*, plus conditions (December) were dark and wet. Sometimes factors combine to produce a situation where a manoeuvre just becomes to unsafe to attempt?

We hope, one day (this year?) to be able to report effective changes have been made to the Belgrave Middleway cycle crossing.....

Graham Hankins



## ACTION POINTS

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

Are you in a club or community group?  
Is your committee always looking for  
speakers?

FREE Presentations about cycling now  
available!

Any time; day or evening.

Presented by:

**push  bikes**

The Birmingham Area Cycling  
Campaign.

The talks include:

- Types of bike – Racing, Touring, Mountain....
- Find out about frame sizes, tyres, gears, accessories, basic repairs and adjustments.
- Advice for safer road cycling – try taking the bike for those short trips?
- Cycle training for children – what's in the 'Bikeability' course?
- Road features for cyclists – cycle lanes, Advanced Stop Lines, contra-flows.

Please contact Graham Hankins on  
0121 707 0420 (AnsaFone)  
or email [g8emx@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:g8emx@tiscali.co.uk)  
or go to my web site:  
<http://www.brumbycycle.info>

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Push Bikes Annual General Meeting  
2009

will be held at  
the Friends of the Earth Warehouse, Al-  
lison Street, Digbeth  
on Tuesday 19 May 2009 at 19.30

From the Cycling Advisory Group meeting, news on Bir-  
mingham City Council's Capital Programme for cycling:

- Cole Valley - completion in 2009/10 financial year.
- Harborne Walkway (a long-standing Push Bikes and Tim Weller) moan. Completion end of this month - hooray! So there's a photo for our next newsletter perhaps? A launch event is planned, date TBC.
- N. Birmingham Connect 2 cycle route. The draft Memorandum of Understanding has been completed, and awaits City Council committee approval by 23rd April. The Connect 2 Plants Brook route will be opened 'in elements' and in its entirety by 2013.
- Hagley Road Parallel Route. Another long-standing Push Bikes' campaign, this one. A study of what can be done has been undertaken, report due in May.
- On-line cycle journey planner. Being 'looked at' but the City Council's web site is 'frozen' for updating at the moment. This would be a useful facility but is quite complex and expensive to provide.
- London Midland Cycle Logos on trains. Graham Lenard of the City Council is going to London to talk to the Department for Transport on this one! It was suggested, but probably not minuted, that we just send some scouts with paint pots!
- On-street bike hire. Again, legalities and other issues hold up implementation Birmingham-wide. Small-scale scheme planned for a university campus.
- Belgrave Middleway Crossing on National Cycle Network Route 5. Traffic count and camera survey has been completed, report at next CAG.
- No funding available for British Waterways canal cycle guide but a number of 'finger posts' will be provided, showing distances and directions to various places, including railway stations.
- Birmingham Cycling and Walking Map - another 10,000 copies will be available by April.

Graham Hankins

### Erdington Cycling Summit

This City Council organised public meeting took place in Kingstanding.

'Bikeability' training for children. 1,000+ children trained in 2008/09, but so far, no substantial increase cycling to schools. One quote was: "We are doing all this training - kids are still not cycling". The main barriers were parental concerns and road safety fears. In answer to the question "What would persuade you to cycle to school?", 29% of children replied: "Nothing, my parents won't let me". Other barriers were the general perception of cycling, lack of safe storage at schools, general climate and geography. It was still considered that many of the schools really don't encourage it, taking the view that a child in a car is the parents' responsibility, a child on a bicycle is to some extent the school's.

A cycling day / event in Erdington is planned for the summer and all agreed to meet again beforehand. I confirmed to the meeting that Push Bikes was available to assist.

Graham Hankins

### Edgbaston cycle path

A member writes to Councillor Len Gregory, Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services:

Dear Cllr Gregory,  
New cycle path from Icknield Port Road to Barford Road and on to the canal.

Please let me know what the state of play is with this project, the first part is completed and very successful, but it would be great to see it completed so we can get to the canal on a continuous cycle path. There is a footpath already in place, but the tarmac is very bumpy and the footpath is not really wide enough for shared use with pedestrians. I quite frequently cycle from my house to the city centre and usually take this route to get to the canal and then it's a simple and flat path into the centre. I understand the project is waiting for you to sign it off? Can this be speeded up?  
Regards, David Gausson

And receives a reply from Cllr. Gregory:

"A scheme to improve the path between Barford Road and Northbrook Street for pedestrians and cyclists which addresses issues you raise has been developed and is currently being reviewed. A report will be prepared for my approval as Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services in early 2009 with possible implementation thereafter. These works will complement wider improvements to the Harborne Walkway Corridor between Summerfield Road and Harborne which are being implemented in 2009. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me."

### Gay Village Environmental Improvements – Consultation.

This is the area and roads around the Arcadian Centre and of course includes Hurst Street, which is an important cycling route into and out of city. Consultation documents were written on 16<sup>th</sup> December so received by Push Bikes just before Christmas, with a response deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> January! So I went along to the public meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

The map indicated several changes to on-road parking, with pavement widening to allow tree planting and for bars and restaurants to provide al-fresco dining (in warmer weather presumably!) It was confirmed that the contra-flow cycle lane along Hurst Street would remain, but I asked about the "amendment" to the lane running south east passing Skinner Lane and The Village Inn PH. Here again we would have pavement widening but I was assured that the cycle lane would stay, would be continuous with no 'Dismount' signs and would not be narrowed. So what would be amended? It would be 'bowed out' slightly, so given a very gently curve as it passed the Village Inn frontage, to go around the wider footway. This seemed OK. Push Bikes attendance and comments were noted and the postal response sent off.

### Access barriers on the canal

*Extract from British Waterways Canal User group meeting, Lapworth, November 2008:*

Question: Can motorcycle barriers be removed from the Stourbridge area, as this is a key cycling route for legitimate cycle club members; or at least a reduction in the number of barriers?

Response: BW are prepared to consider options, but requires these to be a consensus of local opinion; there have been some raising concerns if the barriers were removed and BW has reservations given the high level of vandalism and incident experienced during the Stourbridge breach. BW welcomed the suggestion that the local cycle club might 'adopt' a section of canal and could contribute to activity like litter picking – cycle club to bring forward any proposals that BW will review with interest. Post-meeting note: further discussions have taken place after the User group Meeting and BW has offered to remove some barriers for a trial period subject to agreeing which ones are involved.

*OK – if some barriers may be removed in Stourbridge, how about removing a few in Birmingham? GH*

### One-way scheme in Sparkhill

Push Bikes has objected to a Traffic Regulation Order for one-way traffic on a section of Oakwood Road between Park Road and Stratford Road. One-way systems cause detour and delay to cyclists and no provision for contra-flow cycling was made.

Graham Hankins

## Sprocket Cycles

**Child and adult bike sales,  
accessories, repairs and spares.**

**10% discount for Push Bikes'  
members**

**Buy now for Christmas**

**Now open 10-4 Wed - Sat.**

**54 Allison St. Birmingham B5 5TH**

**Tel. 0121 633 0730**

**or 07904 732697**

### Walking and Cycling Leaflets

Centro is also working with British Waterways to produce a set of Walking and Cycling leaflets for the West Midlands, which include maps showing connections between public transport interchanges and canal towpaths.

### Cycle parking at stations

Cycle lockers or shelters are now in place at 65% of rail stations, 86% of Metro stops and 67% of bus stations. As part of the 2008/09 installation programme, Centro is now working in partnership with train operator, London Midland to combine resources and collaborate work projects. Further installations are currently being identified for the 2009/10 cycling and walking facilities programme in conjunction with London Midland, incorporating recommendations from cycling groups and from our own monitoring programme.

The cycling and walking page on Network West Midlands' web site:

[http://www.networkwestmidlands.com/travelwise/cycle\\_storage.aspx](http://www.networkwestmidlands.com/travelwise/cycle_storage.aspx)

provides a full list of cycle parking at train stations, bus stations and Metro stops across the West Midlands' metropolitan area, including availability of Sheffield stands and / or lockers. At stations managed by Centro (excepting some mainline stations such as Birmingham New Street) regular users can reserve cycle lockers for a 12-month period. A £10 security deposit must be paid but there are no other charges for use. Application forms are provided on the cycling and walking page of Network West Midlands' web site (see above).

### Public cycle hire scheme in the West Midlands?

Centro's Sustainable Travel Team has met with JC Decaux, who manage Velo'v (known as the Paris Cycle Hire Company) and with Clear Channel (who manage Barcelona's cycle hire scheme) to see how a similar scheme could be implemented within the West Midlands.

Centro is offering a free information pack on the Network West Midlands web site to help encourage people to get out and about by bicycle. The pack includes a beginners guide to cycling, information on cycle storage facilities at interchanges, and a bicycle seat cover. [www.networkwestmidlands.com/travelwise](http://www.networkwestmidlands.com/travelwise)

### Promotion

Promotion of cycling and walking to rail stations, Metro stops and bus stations by the Sustainable Travel Team continues through the distribution of posters and leaflets at interchanges. Promotion of walking and cycling to public transport interchanges on the Network West Midlands website has been extensively developed, including links to local authority walking and cycling pages. Promoting cycling to the station is strengthened by a new cycle and ride leaflet. Existing cycling and walking facilities are also promoted via the Team's engagement with employers, schools and other large trip generators implementing Travel Plans. There have been three articles to date in the Go Green supplement of the Birmingham Mail, relating to Centro's walking and cycling initiatives.



Emma Crowton, Centro

## Why aren't there more cyclists in Birmingham?

Birmingham City Council has commissioned a consultants study of people who are potential (but not currently active) cyclists within the city: they are considered to be 'the near market' for cycling. The study took the form of a series of focus groups at which participants were asked to explore the reasons why they didn't cycle and what should be done to encourage them. The main conclusions of the study were:

- People want a convenient, safe, and reliable mode of transport.
- For most people cycling is not perceived to tick these boxes. Dissatisfaction with public transport and the rising cost of running a car, however, may make people more willing to consider cycling.
- Participants are put off cycling because of concerns about road safety, personal security, bike storage, changing/showering facilities, and poor weather.
- Cycling is seen as unfashionable, and as part of a wider lifestyle choice for fitness fanatics and 'greens'. As a result, there were mixed views as to how relevant or attractive cycling was to them.
- There was a great deal of concern about the appropriateness of the city's infrastructure for cyclists and the level of investment that would be needed to support increased cycling.
- It was also felt that increasing levels of cycling would require a cultural shift. Many felt that cycling should only be encouraged as part of an overall approach to transport in the city which should include improvements to public transport and measures to reduce car use overall. Reducing the number of cars on the roads and ultimately improving safety as a result is seen as a key benefit.
- The greatest levels of interest were expressed in relation to cycling for leisure. It was clear that many of the barriers highlighted throughout the discussions were not felt so keenly in relation to leisure trips, in the main because they were thinking about off road routes rather than on road cycling and because they wouldn't need changing facilities or secure bike storage.
- Key motivators included financial incentives and schemes (for example, mileage payments or purchase schemes) and critical

mass (the idea that more people would cycle if more people were already cycling). Fitness would be a key driver for many. It also became clear that cyclist training schemes to increase confidence and the provision or more information on cycle routes around the city, particularly for off-road routes for leisure purposes, would encourage more to cycle.

Overall, many participants fondly remember cycling as children and can highlight key benefits for the City if cycling were to be encouraged. However, there are a number of key barriers which put people off from cycling on the roads and in using the bike as a form of utility transport. Most participants would be interested in cycling more for leisure purposes. It therefore seems that leisure cycling is a good place to start giving people a chance to get on their bikes away from the dangers of traffic on busy roads.

John Bennett

## Cycle Confidently and more Safely



**Cycle training is a proven way of improving your cycling confidence on the road. It's also an effective way for non-cycling adults and children to get cycling easily and quickly. We offer:**

- friendly one-to-one tuition for all ages
- training for adult and child complete beginners
- help with starting to cycle on the road
- advanced training for busy roads

Purr-fect Pedalling provides CTC-accredited training to the new National Standard for Cycle Training. Our training is tailored to your needs and takes place in **Solihull, South Birmingham and Leamington Spa/Warwick**. Please email us at [info@purrfectpedalling.co.uk](mailto:info@purrfectpedalling.co.uk) or call **07896 885726** or **01564 779235** for further information or to book a lesson.

[www.purrfectpedalling.co.uk](http://www.purrfectpedalling.co.uk)

  
**Purr-fectPedalling**  
*friendly and helpful cycle training for everyone*

# www.cycleinjury.co.uk

Specialist lawyers to advise and represent cyclists with all types of accident claims

## Have you been injured?

Speak to Tim Beasley, Pushbikes member and head of our Birmingham Cycle Injuries Department

- Specialists in Cycle Injury Claims
- Home and hospital visits arranged
- Receive your compensation in full
- No deductions for lawyers or insurance



call us free on

# 0800 118899

Offices in Birmingham, London and Cardiff  
Email: [cycle@levenes.co.uk](mailto:cycle@levenes.co.uk)

## LEVENES SOLICITORS

## New £11.1m transport scheme for Birmingham Airport

In January Transport Minister Paul Clark announced £11.1m of funding for the Birmingham International Airport /National Exhibition Centre Integrated transport access public transport scheme.

While the main objective is to improve public transport between Solihull, the airport and the NEC, the scheme will also include

Shared use footways and cycleways to join up routes across the town and allow for safer travel

Push Bikes will be providing input to ensure that cycling really is integrated into this scheme!

## Arden Safer Routes to School

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has put forward a scheme to introduce a 20mph zone on Station Road and St Lawrence Close near Arden School and provide cycle routes linking the school with the local area, via Knowle Park.

The final scheme will depend on the results of this consultation. It is hoped to implement the scheme in two phases. Works on Station Road to be carried out early next year as part of phase one. Funding is being sought for phase two (cycle routes).

## Cyclesolihull Winter Rides

Cyclesolihull is a volunteer-led community initiative to encourage more people to cycle in Solihull. At present they produce a growing range of route leaflets to encourage people to explore their local area by bike and provide opportunities for people to ride together along these routes. It is easy to get involved - just ride the route yourself or turn up and join one of the community cycle rides!

Cyclesolihull is continuing the popular programme of Community Cycle Rides throughout the colder months.

For further information visit:

[www.cyclesolihull.org.uk](http://www.cyclesolihull.org.uk)



### 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](mailto:secretary@pushbikes.org.uk)

# SCOTT'S CYCLES

*Official Supplies Of*

**DAWES, GARY FISHER  
UNIVERSAL MONGOOSE BMX'S  
ELECTRIC POWABIKE  
CUSTOM BUILDS AVAILABLE**

**ACT**  
Super Galaxy

A MEMBER OF  
ASSOCIATION OF  
CYCLE TRADER



**MAVIC**  
SAPIM spokes

Wheel Building  
Service Available

**ROCKSHOX**  
SERVICE CENTRE

**PICK A NUMBER**  
**1 2 3 4**  
ANSWER IN SHOP

**YOUR LOCAL CYCLE SPECIALISTS FOR SALES,  
REPAIRS & SERVICE TO ALL MAKES OF CYCLES**  
**1345 STRATFORD ROAD, HALL GREEN**  
(OPPOSITE WAITROSE SUPERMARKET)  
**0121 777 2532**  
**COMPARE OUR PRICES!!**

**ALSO AT: 132 NEW ROAD, RUBERY, 0121 453 3148**  
10% Discount (except bikes) on production of CTC Membership Card

redspokes

## AFFORDABLE CYCLING HOLIDAYS

If you dream of riding through the snow-capped Himalayas or the tropical jungles of Asia but thought it was out of your price range then think again. Red Spokes offers affordable cycle tours to the more remote areas of the World. With prices that are considerably cheaper than our well-known competitors, there has never been a better time to ride off and broaden your horizons.



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](http://www.redspokes.co.uk)

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

## Letters

Dear Mr. Bennett,

I attended at Allison Street yesterday and saw your newsletter (Autumn 2008). Being a supporter of cycling as an activity, I was interested and picked up a copy. Having read through it I was disappointed to note the extracted letters as were published in the Birmingham Mail (newsletter page 7). Specifically, your own response to the letter of a Mr. John James.

Sir, you really have missed the point of Mr. James' constructive comments. And, in missing the point, you have exposed your own blinkered and prejudiced view. Starting from basic facts (not opinions): it is an offence to cycle on footpaths. That is a basic fact.

It is tempered by those local authorities which have legislated (by by-laws) to permit off-road cycling along designated routes. Regrettably, in the Birmingham city centre, although there are such designated routes, they are neither marked nor signed. But that it a separate issue. Next, you state in your "reply" that the Jason Howard incident was unique. With the result that someone was killed, yes it was. But you also state that cyclists "very rarely cause injury." You could not be more wrong. Your complacency on such an issue is breathtaking.

You state, in reinforcing your comments, that motorists cause some 3000 deaths. However, and which you fail to state, is the fact that a great many (but, of course, by no means all) such deaths arise because pedestrians (and some cyclists) are on the road when they should not be or are doing something on the road they should not be doing (such as cycling the wrong way along a one-way street - Colmore Row being a good example). Which is to say that a good many of these deaths arise because of the behaviour of the pedestrian (and cyclist), not the motorist.

Contrariwise, there are daily incidents of injury to pedestrians caused by cyclists cycling illegally on pavements. The fact of the matter ("fact", not opinion) is that very, very few of these incidents are reported because (a) the injury is minor (thank God!), and (b) the cyclist has vacated the scene as quickly as (and probably quicker than) he or she arrived at it. Sir, Mr. John James' closed his letter by making the valid point which you, revealingly and shamefully, failed to endorse) that cyclists should behave more responsibly.

On the contrary you spoke of cyclists, pedestrians and motorists co-existing. I remind you that it is an offence is an offence to cycle on the pavement and, until such time as that changes then I concede nothing to any nothing to any form of co-existence with cyclists on pavements. I repeat that I am in favour of cycling. It is not relevant, but I mention, that I do not own a Bike although I do have a licence and have driven a variety of vehicles : the point being that I have no personal interest in favouring cars over cycles. I like walking. I use public transport. A knee injury prevents me cycling (I wish that it were otherwise). But, as a pedestrian, I refuse to make way for any cyclist who is cycling on the pavement: such cyclists go round me, I do not go round them.

Yours sincerely, Terence Paget, B26

## Push Bikes' Rides

### Sunday 8 April - Easter Egg Run

A run into the country for a picnic. We're looking for a destination (tbc) with 'entertainment' for the driver of the food car etc.

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:	Howard Boyd / John Bennett
Secretary:	Graham Hankins
Campaigns Coordinator:	Howard Boyd / John Bennett
Treasurer:	David Wilkinson
Rides Co-ordinator:	Nick Wattison
Membership Convenor:	Neeraj Malhotra
Webmaster:	David Little
Newsletter Editor:	Michael Groll

## 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.      <a href="http://www.pushbikes.org.uk">www.pushbikes.org.uk</a>      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](mailto: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: 17 March, 21 April and 19 May.

### 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

### Write To Your Councillor!

One of the most effective ways that you as an individual member of Push Bikes can influence provision for cyclists in our area is to raise your concerns with your local councillors.



The web site: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) will identify who they are, what they are responsible for, give guidance about content and ensure it is delivered.

If you have a local problem with (say) a poor cycle path, blocked cycle lane, speeding traffic, lack of cycle parking, potholes, or any general cycling issue let the councillors know about it. It's your councillor's job to respond to you as a resident. If you don't tell them, they won't know, and as sure as hell, they won't do anything!

Please send a copy of any email to Push Bikes via: [secretary@pushbikes.org.uk](mailto:secretary@pushbikes.org.uk)

### Membership Application Form

I/we\* wish to join Push Bikes Winter 08/09

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.

### Members' Discounts From:

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

