

Birmingham

Cyclist

The newsletter for Push Bikes



Sky Ride Birmingham

This free event over a 10km circuit closed to traffic takes place 10.00 - 16.00 on Sunday 12 September. The start point is in Cannon Hill Park where bike hire will be available. Plus a wide variety of entertainment along the way: something for everyone. For more information and to register,

see page 2



How to handle roundabouts

From mini to maxi, some tips on negotiating roundabouts plus how their design affects cyclists' safety.

see page 4



Commuter Challenge

Cyclists beat a car driver, bus user and train passenger on a 6 mile rush-hour commute from Kings Norton to New Street in the city centre.

see page 3

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

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Sky Ride

For the very first time Sky Ride is coming to Birmingham. A 10km circuit running south from the city centre will be closed to traffic for the 10.00 to 16.00 duration of the event.

Rediscover the freedom of your bike with your friends and family, seeing and experiencing your city from a different view. There will be a wide variety of entertainment to enjoy, from music and fancy dress to sporting challenges and cycling tips and advice, and if you simply just need a break, enjoy the food markets and picnic areas. There's going to be lots of activities along the way so even if you are a beginner or non-cyclist, whatever your age, whatever your interests, there is guaranteed to be something for everyone!

Evans bike mechanics will also be on hand to help out with any punctures, repairs and expert advice and look out for the chance to get hold of the Team Sky Adidas kit.

Participants will be able to ride alongside Walsall-born model Erin O'Connor. Based on attendances at Sky Rides in other cities thousands are expected to take part.

Car parking for participants will be available at Newman University College and Washwood Heath Technical College.

For more information and to register visit:

www.goskyride.com

sky ride

Reservoir Cogs

Forty plus cyclists, 8 mile route, yet no punctures! Is this a record? 'Sky Ride' Local is a series of rides leading up to and beyond the main Birmingham Sky Ride in September. There are four 'grades' of Local Sky Ride; Easy, Steady, Well and Strong to give entrants (which is free but you have to register) an idea of how long the ride is and how 'fit' you need to be as a rider - which, for the Easy and Steady is 'not particularly'. 'Reservoir Cogs' on Sunday August 15th was my first Sky Ride Local as a Assistant Ride Leader (after the Leaders' Training Course, British Cycling asks (expects) you to help on at least four of the Local rides) 'Reservoir Cogs' was a 'Steady' ride and mostly adults but some families arrived at the start at Edgbaston Reservoir. There were three children, two aged 7 and one aged 8, on the participants list.

The lead 'Leader' explained that the ride was not a race and that the pace would be set by the slowest rider so off we went. The Assistant Leaders ride alongside the line of riders, are there to help out and advise if needed but are principally there to 'stop' traffic at junctions to allow what was a long string of riders to pass through without being 'broken up' and separated. This worked absolutely fine except at one Pelican crossing where a 'white van' passenger shouted abuse at us!

After leaving the reservoir car park, 'Cogs' took riders south, down the newly-surfaced Harborne Walkway then along some quiet roads towards the University. Plan was to 'cut through' the campus but much of this is presently a 'building site' so we crossed the Bristol Road on foot (also a 'building site' near the Uni!!) then followed quiet roads again into Cannon Hill Park. After a short break for ice creams the ride followed the signed cycle route back to the reservoir via Lea Bank and Ladywood. This ride largely followed one of Push Bikes' recently launched Urban Explorer Routes and what a splendid, varied and pleasant cycling experience it proved to be! The nine 'Explorer' routes are downloadable from our web site.

A little while ago our chair John Bennett rode one of the 'Strong' Local rides; these are about 30 to 40 miles of busier roads and some hills, so well done to John for that. The main Birmingham Sky Ride is on Sunday 12th September, so let's hope for fair weather!

Graham Hankins



ACTION POINTS

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

Cyclists' Forum for Birmingham

The Cycling Advisory Group is (or at the moment was) a quarterly meeting between Birmingham City Council (BCC) officers with cycling amongst their responsibilities and representatives from organisations representing cycling in the city. So Push Bikes were represented, plus Sustrans, British Cycling and sometimes several others. The council would cover cycling issues being addressed within the city, we would 'probe' the progress or detail of some of these, ask the council to address others and raise issues of our own.

The last CAG was held back in January and Push Bikes remains uncertain whether any further meetings will be held by BCC. Council officers felt that too much time and cost was involved in calling these meetings, to address a very 'narrow' audience i.e. only representatives of local 'stakeholders'. But BCC emphasised that no final decision had been made and that some form of CAG might be held maybe after a promised public cyclists' meeting in the spring. That was, of course, the public Cycling Forum during National Bike Week, with another forum promised in October. If this was to be the case, we would have expected some form of notification by now?

While Push Bikes welcomed the fact that BCC itself had organised the forum, the council had also been to a large extent in control of the agenda and since then no further mention of either a CAG or any hint of another Forum in October has, at the time of writing this (mid – August) been received.

Push Bikes has kept a record of all the issues raised at its previous Cyclists Meetings in 2008 and 2009, and what is obvious is the huge number of unresolved issues from year to year, ranging from the big, 'wide' concerns over major routes eg. Hagley Road, to 'site specific' problems that, although small in themselves, if resolved would make a big improvement to cyclists' day-to-day journeys. By 'resolved' I mean that BCC has examined the issue and replied either that it can be done and when, or that it cannot be done, and why. We have had BCC comment "would need a site visit" going back two years! We look for a 'yes' each time of course, but even a 'no' – if given with a reason - is an answer! At least we can then say we tried!

Push Bikes recognises that council budgets and 'manpower' for cycling issues are small, but that the council also talks frequently of liking 'quick wins'. Many of our smaller issues maybe could be 'quick wins' which could encourage more cycling at relatively modest budgets?

Push Bikes is therefore considering organising its own Cyclists Meeting again, probably for early October, at which it will attempt to have BCC respond directly on the night (given Notice of the issues) to our many 'small' issues previously raised. For progress on this, please watch the Push Bikes web site at www.pushbikes.org.uk and my own site at <http://www.brumbycycle.info>

Graham Hankins

Cycle Journey Planner

The West Midlands' local authorities have collaborated with the Department for Transport to launch a new online journey planner. The website: www.transportdirect.info makes it possible to find the quickest, quietest or recreational route for your chosen journey by cycle (as well as by public transport and car). Give it a try on one of your regular cycling journeys: it may surprise you by choosing different roads and paths. Then try it for less familiar journeys. It can give you clues to hills and journey times.

Commuter Challenge

On Tuesday 22 June, Push Bikes organised a commuter challenge race pitting car driver, bus user and train passenger against three cyclists (each taking different routes). Starting from Kings Norton Green at 08.30 the commuters were interviewed by Radio WM (*front cover picture*) and the event was supported and promoted by Centro. Using the Worcester and Birmingham canal towpath, the winner was cyclist Amanda Pickard, who works for South Birmingham Primary Care Trust. Cyclist David Cox, who had used the Pershore Road finished second followed by Hannah Rumsby who had combined bike and train.

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Cycling at Roundabouts

Ask many cyclists where they most feel in danger and the usual answer is “roundabouts!” Not surprisingly – it is where a cyclist is inevitably crossing paths of other traffic, where choice of the safest route is a problem, and where sight lines for other vehicles may be interrupted; all in all a hazardous place! How does the Department for Transport (DfT)’s Cycle Infrastructure Design tackle the problem? The following is an extract from this document:

“Roundabouts offer capacity advantages over other forms of junction, but they can be hazardous for cyclists. Finding a safe position to occupy in the circulatory carriageway may be difficult, and cyclists are at risk of not being noticed by drivers entering or leaving the junction at relatively high speeds.

- There is a higher risk of cyclist injury accidents at roundabouts compared with other junctions.
- Injury accident rates for cyclists at roundabouts are up to fifteen times greater than for car occupants.
- Large, unsignalled multi-lane roundabouts are generally the most hazardous and intimidating for cyclists. Some cyclists will seek to avoid them altogether, or may choose to dismount and walk across each arm.

Keeping well to the nearside on the circulatory carriageway is the typical approach adopted by less confident cyclists, but this puts them in the most hazardous position for being hit by vehicles entering or leaving the roundabout. They are less visible to motorists entering the junction, and this is where most conflicts occur.

Where feasible, roundabouts on cycle friendly routes should be designed for lower vehicle speeds to allow cyclists to take up a position in the centre of the circulatory carriageway, where motorists are most likely to see them. Lower speeds also help pedestrians crossing the arms. In areas of frequent traffic congestion, cycle lanes on the approach and departure arms (but not the actual circulatory carriageway) can be useful.

The idea of marking cycle lanes on roundabouts may appear, at first glance, to be a relatively simple one, but it is not. Cycle lanes on roundabouts must be very carefully considered. There is little evidence to suggest that they offer any safety benefit to cyclists, and they may introduce additional hazards. Some cycle lanes on roundabouts have been removed because they led to a deterioration in the accident rate.

Designers should first decide how the lanes are intended to benefit cyclists and then balance this with the problems they can give rise to. It is possible that annular nearside cycle lanes can highlight the presence of cyclists on the roundabout, but against this is the risk that cyclists using the lanes may be taking up an inappropriate position, particularly near exit arms. To a driver, it may appear that a cyclist approaching an exit arm in such a lane intends taking that exit because of his position in the circulatory carriageway. If the driver intends to leave at the same exit, he may attempt to overtake and be confronted with the cyclists turning across his path. On busy roundabouts, it is important that the cyclist takes up a prominent position nearer the centre of the carriageway to ensure that drivers understand the intended manoeuvre, and, for this reason, annular lanes are not generally recommended.

Mini-roundabouts do not generally carry much higher risk to cyclists than signalised junctions. They can be used as a

speed reducing feature, but they require adequate deflection on all arms to achieve this. A mini-roundabout allows cyclists to make right turns with relative ease, compared with a priority junction”



An intimidating prospect for cyclists?

GH's opinion: If I needed any help I would not find the quoted advice from the DfT of much value at all and not particularly understandable in places! As for its advice about mini-roundabouts - au contraire! Mini-roundabouts can be extremely hazardous for cyclists as most cars now make no attempt to go around the roundel when turning right and simply drive over it or turn right more sharply to avoid it altogether. It is difficult to advise a novice cyclist about handling roundabouts, other than in no circumstances cycle close to the outer kerb, to keep watching over right and left shoulders, to be in a responsive gear when about to join so that you are ready to go if you have to give way but can ‘keep up’ your speed and join straight away if there is a safe gap in the circulating traffic. Treat every roundabout on its own merits and adapt to circumstances and traffic flow each time you meet that roundabout. Or seek national level 3 cycle training from an experienced tutor!

The ‘Sky Ride’ web site offers the following advice: “Whilst they can often seem daunting, there's nothing to be scared of when using junctions and roundabouts. Follow these simple points:

1. Check your surroundings, and where other cars are and where they are going.
2. Indicate clearly - show other road users where you are going, just as you would in a car.
3. Give yourself space on the road, use whatever space you need to ensure you aren't bullied out of the way by cars or trucks. Try to get in front of or behind vehicles rather than alongside them. Their blind spots mean they might not be able to see you riding alongside them which is particularly dangerous when they're turn left.
4. Try to look other road users in the eye, if they are looking back then you know that they are aware of you.
5. Make your manoeuvre with confidence. Ride on...

John Bennett
Graham Hankins

Consider Cycling Shows

Titled 'Why Not Consider Cycling' these 'PowerPoint' shows were used during National Bike Week and attracted an interested audience of either 'would be' or inexperienced cyclists. We have therefore decided that this is a more time-effective and certainly more convenient method of encouraging people to cycle and of putting over our campaigning message than the display table that we set up during several months this year and last. Thanks to all members who helped out with the erecting of that display (which was always the tricky bit) and attending the display during the days, but this initiative is now cancelled.

The 'Consider Cycling shows will be held in the Meeting Room at friends of the Earth on the afternoon and evening of one Thursday each month from September to December, then resume maybe in March 2011. The dates for the remainder of 2010 are:

Thursday September 23rd, 1pm until 4pm, then 7 until 9pm.
Thursday October 14th, 1pm until 4pm, 7pm until 9pm
Thursday November 18th, 1pm until 4pm, 7pm until 9pm
Thursday December 9th, 1pm until 4pm, 7pm until 9pm.

Obviously we need to get these dates and times known as widely as possible, so the media will be sent press releases and BCC may also be willing to notify those names on its 'near-market' database. Fuller details of what these presentations cover will be on the Push Bikes web site <http://www.pushbikes.org.uk> and my own at <http://www.brumbycycle.info>

Cabinet Member for Transportation & Regeneration

The Autumn edition of Birmingham City Council's magazine 'Forward' has a 'Who's Who' of the new council cabinet.

Cabinet member for Transportation and Regeneration is Cllr. Tim Huxtable, who is: "looking forward to an environment which includes a high-speed rail link from Birmingham to London, an extension of Birmingham International Airport and the city metro and re-opening suburban railway lines within Birmingham"



Good, but what about cycling? The magazine states that: "Cllr. Huxtable also pledges to implement safer routes around our schools and improve Birmingham's walking and cycling routes".

Push Bikes looks forward to ongoing dialogue with Councillor Huxtable (pictured).

Hinckley Street / Hill Street junction

"Gimme A Little Sign....." (song lyrics by Brendon Wood)

Back in 2009 a member wrote to Push Bikes:

"I have seen a few cyclists come close to getting knocked off by drivers not looking as they pull out of Hinckley Street. Perhaps signage could be improved at the end of the road where it joins the cycle path to warn cars emerging from Hinckley Street onto Hill Street in the city centre".

From Smallbrook Queensway, Hill Street is one-way into the

city centre so Hinckley Street drivers only look to their left for cars coming up the hill and do not realise they also need to look for cyclists who may be coming from their right, down the contra-flow cycle lane (part of National Cycle Network route number 5).



So, 'All We Are Asking' (John Lennon) is for a 'Cycle Lane Look Right' sign at the end of Hinckley Street. How much does a sign cost? What 'procedure' has to be followed to erect a new sign? Does it need lots of surveys, manpower, Traffic Regulation Orders? Back in

February Push Bikes emailed Birmingham City Council's Cycling Officer Graham Lennard with photos of the junction to illustrate the problem and ask if a sign could be put up at this location; unfortunately we have no record of a reply.

There is another spot location in the city where a similar 'Caution – cyclists crossing' traffic sign is needed, the Battery Way junction with Weston Lane in Greet. Cars coming out of Battery Way come straight out as they expect all Weston Lane traffic to turn up Battery Way as Weston Lane is no through road to cars, but cyclists can go straight ahead, across junction, to access the Toucan crossing on Warwick Road. A request was made in 2008, the reply from the Council was: "Unfamiliar with situation. Site will be visited". Again, no further news, so this is a 'prompt'!

Cycle Parking at Birmingham New Street Station

As part of the station redevelopment, we have proposed that 500 cycle parking spaces be provided for station users: this is based upon Department for Transport guidelines and the number of passenger arrivals at the station. It also allows for a modest increase in cycling to the station. Cycle parking should / could be in the form of covered Sheffield stands (2 tier in places if necessary), cycle lockers and a secure compound. Parking should be installed in a number of locations to serve different entrances especially bearing in mind proximity to National Cycle Network route 5 (Hill Street etc). Separate cycle parking should also be provided for staff.

To increase the number of cycle parking spaces in the meantime, Network Rail have agreed to install 34 new cycle stands. These will be placed at the station front by the main glass entrance doors. The racks will be placed in a currently under utilised area between pillars by the area where taxis queue.

If you ever cycle to New Street Station and park, what kind of cycle parking would you like to see? Are there any other improvements that need to be made at the station for cyclists? Email Push Bikes and let us know.



Cycling Superhighways

About 15 years ago, the City Council approached Push Bikes with an interesting problem. Birmingham University students living in the Griffin Close estate of flats between Selly Oak and Northfield had expressed an interest in cycling to the Edgbaston campus. It would be just the right distance for the happy residents to leap on their bicycles every morning and be sitting, wide-awake, in their lecture rooms a quarter of an hour later. It might stop the students bringing their cars and it was a good direct road.

But what about unpleasant, not to say potentially dangerous, heavy motor traffic on the Bristol Road, especially speeding along on the sections of 40 mph dual-carriageway? There was no obvious back street alternative: how could we make the main road safer and more attractive for cycling? And why stop at the University? Surely there was a need to go all the way into town? What did we recommend all those years ago?

The City decided to try several different solutions for cyclists who use the Bristol Road. The most striking suggestion was to move the lane lines on the dual carriageways so that the inside lane is wide enough for a heavy vehicle to keep within the lines but could still overtake a cyclist with room to spare. This was implemented on the stretch of dual carriageway on the Bristol Road between Priory Road and the Fire Station opposite the University. I think this is the best solution but I have not met many who agree with me. Obviously it only works on 4-lane dual carriageways.



Wider nearside lane on the Bristol Road

A more visible approach was used for the dual carriageway between Selly Oak and Griffin Close. Here there are more conventional cycle lanes, now in need of a repaint. Evidence from Britain and the continent indicates that this kind of treatment has a poor safety record. Drivers emerging from side roads are less likely to notice cyclists on the main road, and cyclists cannot safely leave the lane to make a right turn or other manoeuvre.



Cycle lanes on Bristol Road

The third approach was even more conventional. It was to divert cyclists on to the footways between Priory Road and the Ring Road. At every side access (such as Vice-roy Close) cyclists have to give way, and I seem to remember there are lots of objects on the pavements, such as street signs, bus shelters litterbins. The surface was very poor, too.



Poor quality shared-use footway with plenty of obstacles!

Fast forward 15 years on and we now have Transport for London (TfL) tackling the same challenge. TfL are adding cycle lanes and other features to make the major roads which form the arteries of the city's transport system and carry most of the traffic. These are Boris's new 12 London Cycle Superhighways:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezwWf9Hk7hY>

Can we have some too?

Howard Boyd

Access to towpaths, cycle ramps



A Push Bikes member emailed: "I find it very difficult carrying my bike up or down steep steps onto canal tow paths (e.g. by university station) and would like to put in a plea for cycle ramps at all access points on to the canals. The stairs at the university are quite narrow, but it should be possible to put a flat grooved track on one side of the stairs so you can wheel a bike up and down. Would still be quite a push!"

Push Bikes has asked British Waterways if a ramp on one side of the stairs could be provided, as many cyclists use this staircase to and from the University. Maintenance manager Ian Darby replied: "We have quite a backlog of repairs to existing assets and we are not in a position at this moment in time to allocate resources to this project. Also, just putting planks of wood down the ramp is fraught with many problems not least by the fact we could be possibly introducing a trip hazard and an ongoing liability. Any solution we can come up with would need to satisfy us that both the above concerns have been adequately addressed, all of which increases the cost to BW. If in the future funding can be gained for the project we will re-visit it, but sadly for the time being we are unable to take this project forward."

End of story? At a recent site visit by Push Bikes we were able to take photos of struggling cyclists but there was evidence that someone was preparing to carry out some building works on the other side of the bridge. So Push Bikes has contacted British Waterways again: what was being built here? Unfortunately, not a cycle ramp, as Des Harris, Principal Works Engineer from West Midlands Waterways explains: "Hi Graham, the markings you have picked up on have been undertaken by a contractor working on behalf of Birmingham University to install a new steam pipe bridge across the canal. The central support abutment for this bridge will be immediately behind the towpath and works are scheduled to commence on site in September". So, not a cycle ramp I'm afraid, but thank you to British Waterways for responding to our enquiry. But Push Bikes will keep raising this issue with British Waterways, plus the need for a pedestrian access at the Pritchetts Road bridge!

Graham Hankins

West Midlands' Local Transport Plan

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are public documents that set out a highway authority's policies, strategies, objectives and targets for improving transport in their communities. The current LTP2 for the 7 West Midlands' metropolitan authorities runs until March 2011, after which LTP3 has to be in place. In the next LTP there is a clear requirement for stronger links to carbon impact and climate change. LTP3 will cover the period up to 2026, so it's vitally important that it has the right policies and strategies for cycling and other sustainable transport.

Following public consultation for LTP3 published earlier this year, the five most important issues respondents felt should be addressed were:

1. Environmental issues including emissions and the need for carbon reduction
2. The need to improve safety and security on public transport
3. The need to improve the 'hard measures' of bus services including the frequency, routes, reliability and fares
4. Road based public transport issues including looking at road capacity, the need to reduce congestion and potential bus priority measures
5. The need to improve accessibility of public transport for less able users, including issues around social inclusion

Although cycling only appeared as the 16th most important ranked issue, it does of course directly help tackle numbers 1, 4 & 5 in the list above. Push Bikes will be responding to further consultation on LTP3 later this year.

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Bike It in Birmingham

The Sustrans Bike It project in Birmingham has seen cycling levels more than triple between 2009-2010, making this yet another very successful year. A Bike It officer works with selected schools running a programme of different projects to help remove barriers to cycling. There are currently 17 Sustrans Bike It schools across Birmingham and between September 2009 and July 2010 cycling levels have gone from as little as 4% to 27% on average in each school. Children at Hollywood Primary who cycle to school more than once a week has increased from 4% pre-Bike It to 15% post-Bike It. The hands-up survey which is conducted at the beginning and end of each year has revealed these staggering figures.

In addition to this the number of children who have never cycled to school has fallen from an average of 70% to only 48%, demonstrating that this project truly does bring about change in travel behaviour. At Hollywood Primary 87.5% of children had never cycled to school pre-Bike It. This figure had dropped by over 20% to 65% after just one year of Bike It activities.

Perry Common started as a Bike It school in September 2009 with less than 5 regular (more than once or twice a week) cyclists. Since the start of the project, the school has benefited from a new cycle shelter, Bikeability Training for the children and parents, an incentive scheme linked to attendance, as well as bike maintenance sessions and a bike ride which attracted more than 40 children and parents to Witton Lakes.

But, what really upped the number of regular cyclists was when they took part in the National Virtual Bike Race back in March 2010. This awarded miles, based on pupil roll, to everyone who cycled to school, but racing against other schools across Birmingham as well as other schools nationally. Moseley C of E Primary put up an extremely good fight to beat Perry Common, but were 'pipped at the post'. The school created an amazing 734 journeys in just 4 weeks, covering a total distance of 5,522 miles. As a reward to winning the competition in Birmingham, the school got to spend a day with Inertia BMX shows, not only being inspired by a professional BMX rider but also benefited from coaching sessions linked to the local BMX club.

Now Perry Common very rarely see less than 50-60 regular cyclists and children have to make sure they arrive at school early to ensure a guaranteed space in the new cycle shelter.



Cycle parking is at a premium at Bike It schools

Alan Beale, Deputy Head-Teacher and Bike It school champion said "without the support of the Bike It Officer our school would never have been able to bring about such differences in cycling levels. Not only have we been lucky enough to benefit from new cycle storage, but the school has been able to take part in such engaging and inspiring activities. Parents, staff and children have been able to gain new skills and improved confidence in cycling, which has brought about such changes within our school."



Parents and pupils enjoy a leisure ride

Rachel will be starting with another 6 new schools from September 2010, namely:

- o Allens Croft Primary
- o Colmore Junior School
- o Gilbertstone Primary
- o Kings Norton Boys School
- o Sundridge Primary
- o +1 more! Watch this space!

Schools from the previous 2 years will start to take more of a lead on delivering their own Bike It activities. Each school will also be able to work towards their Bronze School Mark Award which not only gives schools a framework in which to develop Bike It activities, but also enables each school to gain recognition for all their hard work and commitment. So far, Raddlebarn Primary, Cottesbrooke Junior, Moseley C of E Primary, Somerville Primary, Perry Beeches Junior & Perry Common Junior have all achieved their Bronze School Mark.

Robin Hood Primary has been one of Rachel's more recent schools and too has demonstrated huge changes in the number of children who cycle to school. For more inspiration on what this school has been up to including their very own bike recycle workshop visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqYsVt4959M>.

Rachel Vann

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.



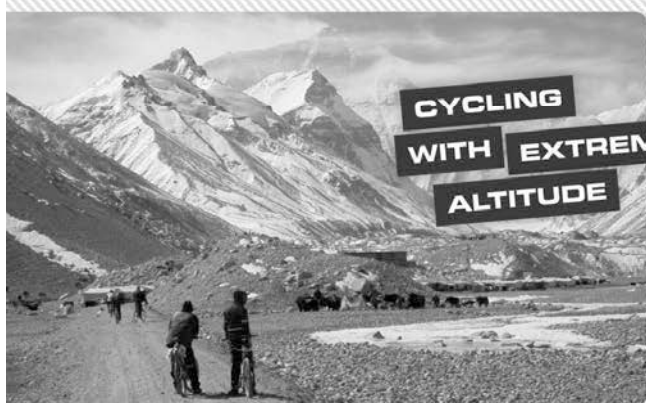
We offer a wide variety of trips to entice adventure seekers. Many cyclists start in Laos, the south-east Asian gem which is Red Spokes most popular destination. Highlights of the tour include:

- 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

LAOS ADVENTURE TOUR



CYCLING WITH EXTREME ALTITUDE



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.



CHARITY

WORK

WEEKEND & DAY RIDES



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Hereford to Colwall Stone

Distance: about 29 miles

Time: allow at least 4 -4.5 hours, depending on stops

OS Maps: 1:50000 149 (Hereford and Leominster) & 150 (Worcester)

There is a great deal of attractive countryside, such as Herefordshire, close to Birmingham and easily accessible by rail. Hourly trains run to Hereford from New Street and call at the University.

1. Leave Hereford station on its access road, then turn right on the A465, towards the town centre. After about a third of a mile, turn left onto the A438 and after about half a mile, take a right fork onto the B4224 towards Mordiford. At Mordiford cross the River Lugg on a very picturesque bridge, parts of which are almost 700 years old. Turn sharp right, still on the B4224, after crossing the bridge.

2. A further eight miles of cycling brings you to the A449; take the left turn towards Ledbury. Now for a very welcome downhill run to the attractive village of Much Marcle. Much Marcle is home to Weston's cider (they do guided tours), Hellen's Manor House (historically interesting and open to the public) and the Slip Inn (food and drink recommended), named after a large landslide in the area

3. In order to cycle on more attractive 'B' roads, turn right at Much Marcle on the B4024 and right again after a further three miles towards Dymock, another small and pleasant village. This was home to a group of poets just before the first world war, known somewhat unimaginatively as the 'Dymock poets'.

4. Turn left at Dymock on the B4216 to reach Ledbury in a further five miles. It's definitely worth avoiding the bypass and cycling through the town in order to see the lovely old black and white buildings and the interesting market hall. If you've time, leave the bike and enjoy stroll to study the architecture.

5. Go straight ahead at the cross roads in the middle of the town, on the A449 towards Great Malvern. After you leave the town, there's a steady pull up, not particularly steep, but it seems to go on interminably.

6. Approximately 3.5 miles further on turn left off the A449 and onto the B4218 towards Colwall. You will reach Colwall railway station in about two miles, where there are hourly trains to Birmingham. If you've time to spare, either the Colwall Park Hotel, very close to the station, or the Crown Inn, just down the road, are pleasant spots for a drink.

Ann Griffiths



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 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

Dear Push Bikes,

Has anyone bought up the issue of taxis which park all along both sides of Hill Street and often all the way down Station Street at busy times?

They all U-turn at the Navigation Street crossroads to get into New St Station. Had a near miss there this morning as a taxi went to U turn across me as I was about to pass straight on over the Hill Street / Navigation Street crossroads on a green light. I'm interested in whether this is a temporary problem associated with the works at the station, and hence whether there are plans to prevent this ridiculous queue?

Also on the issue of the new New Street Station, I have read something about 26 bicycle stands only being provided. If this is indeed the case then I think this is inadequate and I would like it bought up at the cyclists' meeting, which I am intending to attend.

Andy Wood

Both of these issues are being addressed by Push Bikes as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

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 _____ Sort code _____ Account number _____ Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____ Please cancel any previous standing order in favour of Push Bikes under the reference given above. Send to: Push Bikes, 54-57 Allison Street, BIRMINGHAM, B5 5TH *Delete as applicable. www.pushbikes.org.uk

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 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: 21 September, 19 October and 16 November.

Sprocket Cycles

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

10% discount for Push Bikes' members

Now open 10-4 Wed - Sat.

**54 Allison St. Birmingham B5 5TH
Tel. 0121 633 0730**

Membership Application Form

I/we * wish to join Push Bikes September 2010

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.

Push Bikes' Rides

Sunday Rides

Sunday 12th September - Sky Ride Birmingham:
see page 2 for further details

Sunday 26th September - TBA
see Push Bikes' web site for news

Sunday 24th October - TBA
see Push Bikes' web site for news

Sunday 21st November - Chaddersley Corbett:
Meet Nick at Kings Norton Railway Station car park at 10 for a 10.15am start. A 25 mile round trip through the lanes of rural Worcestershire. Lunch to be taken at the Swan Inn at Chaddersley Corbett.

Sunday 19th December - Tinsel Ride:
If the weather is favourable this is a popular event. Meet Nick at Kings Norton Railway Station car park at 10.45 for a 11am start. Our destination will be the Coach & Horses public house at Weatheroak. Don't forget to decorate yourself, or bike, or both, to celebrate Christmas.

Wednesday Evening Rides

Weekly rides, meet at the MAC usually at 7:30 for a 7:45pm start.
Please see the website for the full list and updates: and <http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/bb/> click on [rides forum].
Proper lighting is essential for the evening rides many of which are via unit country lanes.

Rides are open to all cyclists. Riders are responsible for their own safety, should ensure that their bike is road-worthy and are responsible for the security of their bike & personal belongings.
Rides average 10-12mph but we won't leave anyone behind.

Members' Discounts From:

Bike Shop	Location	Exceptions
Scott's Cycles (see advert p.3)	Hall Green	bikes
Action Bikes	Rubery	bikes
CBC	Northfield	bikes
Bike Pro	Bearwood	none
Fletchers Auto Store	King's Heath	none
iCycle	City Centre	none
Red Kite Cycles	Harborne	none
Sprocket Cycles	Shirley	bikes
	City Centre	none

