



# Work to finally start on BCR's on-road cycle routes.

At the end of October, Birmingham City Council (BCC) finally announced the start to the on-road cycle routes that should form the backbone of the Birmingham Cycle Revolution. Half of the initial routes will be started on shortly, due to be finished by spring 2016, and the other half should start in spring 2016 and finish by September 2016.

The announcement, however, has been greeted with disappointment by many as the first set of routes appear to be mainly focused on shared use pavements and bus lanes, along with back street routes that are mainly just signed. Sustrans' Bike Life report in October 2015 found that

bus lanes and shared use pavements were significantly less popular than segregated cycle tracks and on-road cycle lanes. Two of the main routes with significant lengths of wide cycle lanes - Alcester Road, Soho Road - will be delivered in the second half, although these routes have issues with bus stops and junctions interrupting the wide cycle lanes. But there are some good things in the routes to be delivered first.

## The good stuff:

Bristol Street is going to have a segregated, 3 metre bi-directional cycle track which will continue up part of the Middle-

Issue 129 Dec 2015  
[www.pushbikes.org.uk](http://www.pushbikes.org.uk)

Getting Birmingham  
in the saddle

# Contents

Front page	Work to finally start on BCR's on-road cycle routes
Page 3	'Changing Gear' update
Page 5	'Roads Were Not Built For Cars' book review
Page 7	Bus stop by-passes
Page 9	CycleBirmingham - The rides & social part of Push Bikes
Page 10	Push Bikes leading the way?
Page 11	'Three Men on a Bummel' book review
Page 12	Protecting cycle lanes with bollards

The Push Bikes website has regular updates about cycling issues in Birmingham, including updates about the Birmingham Cycle Revolution.

➤ Copyright 2015 Push Bikes, the Birmingham Area Cycling Campaign.

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

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

➤ Address: 'The Warehouse',  
54-57 Allison Street, Digbeth,  
BIRMINGHAM  
B5 5TH

➤ Telephone: 0121 632 6909

➤ E-mail: [chair@pushbikes.org.uk](mailto:chair@pushbikes.org.uk)

➤ Social media:  
[www.facebook.com/PushBikesBrum](http://www.facebook.com/PushBikesBrum)  
(This Facebook page is visible even if you don't have a Facebook account.)  
[@pushbikesbcc](https://twitter.com/pushbikesbcc)

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

➤ We hold meetings on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 19:00.

## BCR on-road works started (cont.)

way towards Five Ways. This will provide a good level of comfort along a major road, and provide connections to the shared use paths on Bristol Road.

Wheeler Street, Parallel Route A, will have wide mandatory cycle lanes, with good protection at the speed bumps, which will greatly improve the cycling experience on this busy road.

Along Olton Boulevard, Parallel Route J, part of the dual carriageway will be closed to create a quiet service road with filtered permeability for cycles and pedestrians.

Along Soho Road and Alcester Road, significant lengths of mandatory cycle lanes, with a minimum width of 1.5 meters, will be installed, which will improve conditions for people who cycle along those roads. Across Hockley Circus flyover, a lane on both sides will be taken out, to provide wide mandatory cycle lanes with substantial separation from the moving motor traffic.

### **The problems:**

The mandatory cycle lanes will be stopping at every bus stop, with no bus stop by-passes (see page 7) planned through BCR 1. Cycle users will either have to wait behind buses or move out into the lane of motor traffic to get past. This is in contrast

to other cities, such as Manchester. There are also issues with the cycle lanes going around the outside of car parking in some locations, presenting similar challenges as cycling around stopped buses.

There are long lengths of shared use pavement cycle routes, which do provide routes away from heavy motor traffic, but can be unpleasant for people walking. In addition, shared use pavements are not immediately obvious as cycle infrastructure, and so do not advertise cycling to passing car users.

Where cycle tracks are being created along pavements, it is not clear what quality surface can be afforded. Some sections will be freshly laid, but some sections, especially along the A47 Parkway route, the surface will remain untouched. While it is good to have new lengths of cycle track, they need to look like cycle track in order to advertise cycling to passing car users, and if the cycle track surface is too poor, many existing cycle users will continue to cycle on the carriageway.

Finally, in local centres such as Moseley, King's Heath and Soho, the cycle lanes will stop. These local centres do have many competing demands for space which are difficult to balance, but the lack of cycle lanes may put off many cycle users who might otherwise cycle through these locations.

## ‘Changing Gear’ update

During 2013 Birmingham City Council (BCC) established a Scrutiny Committee to examine Transport, Connectivity & Sustainability. One focus became the provision of cycling and walking resulting in their report: ‘Changing Gear - Transforming Urban Movement through Cycling and Walking’. The ‘Changing Gear’ report was part of the evidence that BCC submitted to central government in the Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR) bid, to show that Birmingham was serious about making positive changes for cycling. In October 2015 the committee held a ‘catch-up’ meeting to determine progress (or lack of it) on the ‘Changing Gear’ report and the Birmingham Cycle Revolution.

All councillors present in October expressed their commitment to the City’s BCR programme but acknowledged that that progress in implementing ‘on-highway’ schemes has been slow. Officers present said that the design teams and engineering contractors are now in place to complete the design and installation required for all Phase 1 road schemes along most of the main radial roads (except Harborne Road), including parallel routes, to be completed by the end of September 2016. Although other parts of BCR such as the canal towpaths, have progressed, without safe cycle provision on roads BCR will not achieve its aims.

Both Councillor Quinn (Chairman) and Councillor Trickett (Cabinet member for Green, Smart & Sustainable City) left the hearing in no doubt that council policy is focussed on securing a modal shift towards walking and cycling. It will be active in encouraging local ‘Green District’ initiatives, community involvement in the re-allocation of road space.

Dr Ewan Hamnett, City Champion for Tackling Physical Inactivity, argued strongly for greater progress. He said that the Selly Oak Green Travel District, with its high employment centres of the university and hospital desperately needs cycle investment.

Push Bikes representatives at the meeting spoke of successful initiatives in other UK cities and urged Birmingham to catch up. There has been little positive publicity and communication with Birmingham residents explaining the detailed plans and aspirations of the cycling revolution. BCC Highways department needs to become more ‘pro cycling’ and not focus mainly on vehicular ‘traffic’. We made specific complaints about lack of co-ordination when planning consents failed to require national guidelines on cycle parking.

John Bennett



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

**NO WIN. NO FEE**  
WHEN WE SAY IT, WE MEAN IT.

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



# Have you been injured?

**Speak to Tim Beasley, Push  
Bikes member and specialist  
in Cycle Accident Claims**

- Specialists in Cycle Injury Claims
- Home and hospital visits arranged

Plan your route and  
avoid the blackspots  
with our UK Cycle  
Accident Map



Offices in London and Birmingham  
Email: [tbeasley@levenes.co.uk](mailto:tbeasley@levenes.co.uk)  
Web: [www.cycleinjury.co.uk](http://www.cycleinjury.co.uk)

Call us on:

**0121 212 0000**

# Roads were not built for cars

*Looking for a good book to keep you busy during the long winter nights? John Bennett reviews a book that argues we wouldn't have modern roads if it wasn't for cycles.*

When you think about it - it's obvious! Roads have been around a long time and cars are newcomers. Before cars came the cyclists; by 1900 cycling was the most common way of travelling short distances.

Whatever his personal motivation Carlton Reid's book *"Roads were not built for Cars"* sets out a strong and well researched case for the involvement of early cyclists in road construction and repair.

The bicycle became seen as the most powerful factor in reawakening the idea that roads were a national rather than a local concern. Between 1890 and 1902, a period in which bicycles rose in the social scale, the expenditure on the main roads in England and Wales rose by 85%. As late as 1913 experts wrote that "It was the cyclist who brought the road once more into popular

use for pleasure travel and raised awareness of the extraordinary differences in the standards of road maintenance across the country".

Cyclists put pressure on councils to improve surfaces. In 1888 CTC persuaded the corporation of Birmingham to adopt CTC expert advice on road making methods. Sir Alfred Bird (of custard fame) led a delegation that protested to the BCC at the state of the city's roads on behalf of cyclists.

Cyclists also raised money to help pay for improved 'metalling'. The Midland Road Fund was a private pot of cash raised by cyclists to help pay for road repairs and for court action against highway surveyors for 'neglecting to keep the main roads in a proper state of repair'.

Maybe Push Bikes should follow these pioneering local cyclists and take to the courts!

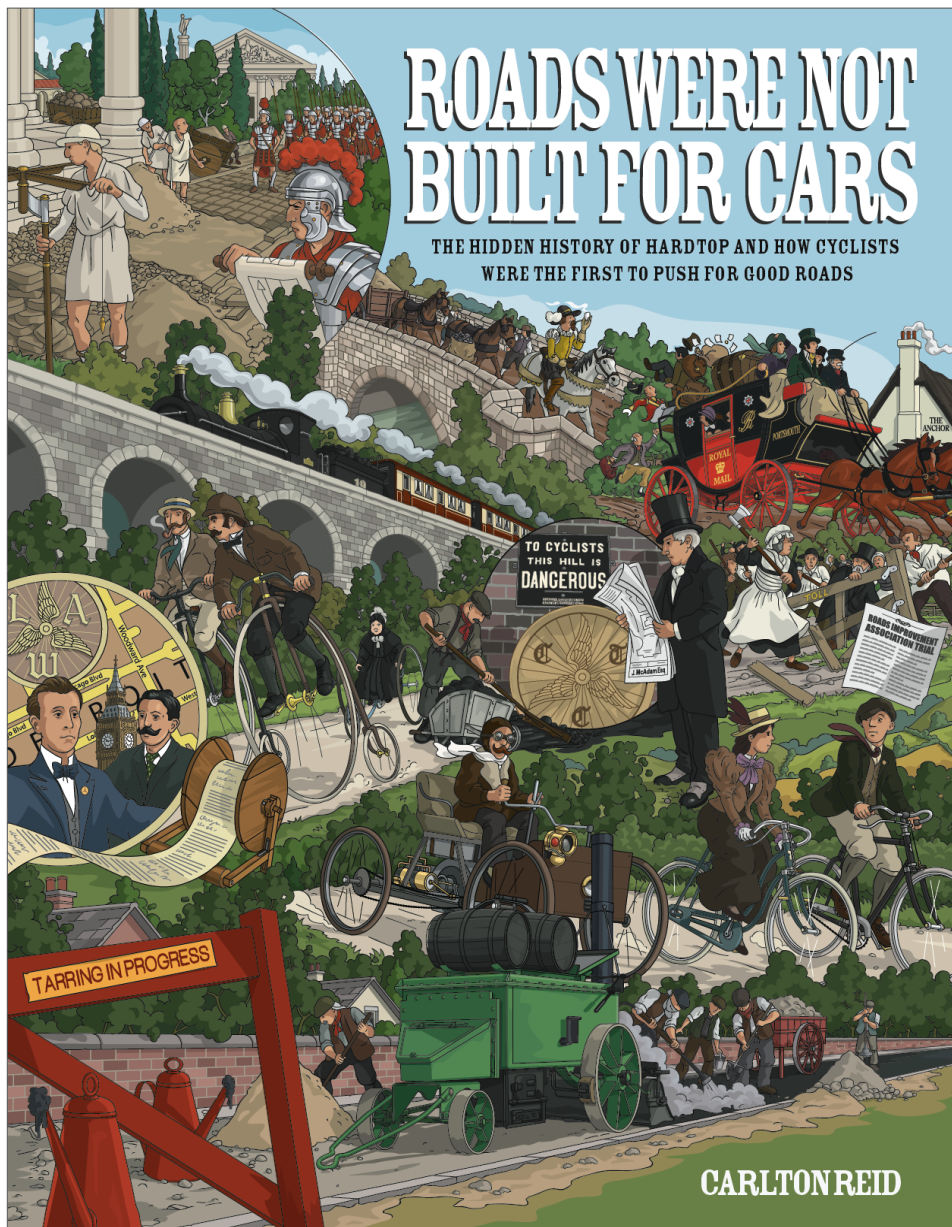
John Bennett

Carlton Reid's book can be bought from the website:

<http://www.roadswerenotbuiltforcars.com>

The cheapest option is the ePub format, which you can read on your computer, or you can buy a softback copy for less than £20. A good stocking filler for anyone interested in the history of cycling.





The cover of Carlton Reid's book, Roads Were Not Built for Cars.

## Bus stop by-passes

On a recent trip to Manchester, I visited Oxford Road, where this bus stop by-pass, in the photo opposite, has been installed as part of Manchester's Cycle City Ambition Grant. This is a uni-directional cycle track which has been taken around the back of the bus stop, with 3 crossings for bus users to reach the pavement. Bus stop by-passes like these are becoming standard practice in places such as London and Cambridge, and Birmingham may be trialling bus stop by-passes on Stockfield Road.

At the Cyclenation and CTC joint conference in Liverpool in October (incidentally the day before I visited Manchester) we heard from Brian Deegan, principal technical specialist at Transport for London. He argued that at bus stops, we have a choice between asking cycle users to re-join motor traffic, risking a collision with a high chance of injury, or asking bus users to cross the path of cycle users, with a risk of a collision with a low chance of injury. In safety terms, the choice seems clear.

He reported that in London 70% of bus users were in favour of the bus stop by-passes, suggesting that in practice there are few worries for bus users in crossing the cycle track. There was even a bus stop in Camden where for 10 years the bus

users had been stepping out of the bus directly into the cycle track with no complaints! In practice, cycle users do not want to hit pedestrians, and so will watch out for passengers when they see buses pulling up at bus stops.

Bus stop by-passes should also be popular with bus companies, as they remove potential conflicts between buses and cycle users, as the buses will not be crossing or blocking the cycle track. In addition, if the bus stop is kept in the running lane, then the bus will be able to pull directly away from the bus stop with minimal waiting. Where bus stops interrupt cycle lanes, the bus needs to pull into the edge of the pavement, and then wait for a break in the motor traffic that is squeezing around it.

As we see an increase in mandatory cycle lanes and protected cycle tracks in the UK, bus stop by-passes should become more common. Of the cycle users surveyed in London, 50% of them said that the presence of bus stop by-passes would make them cycle more often. This type of infrastructure will be necessary if we are to enable all people to take up cycling, so I hope that we will see more of these in Birmingham in the future.

Chris Lowe



# SCOTT'S CYCLES

*Official Suppliers of*

**Dawes, DiamondBack BMX  
Electric PowaBike, Probike  
Custom builds available**

*Member of Association of Cycle Traders*



wheel building service available



**PICK A NUMBER**

**1 2 3 4**  
ANSWER IN SHOP

**YOUR LOCAL CYCLE SPECIALISTS FOR SALES,  
REPAIRS & SERVICE OF ALL MAKES OF CYCLES**

**1345 STRATFORD RD HALL GREEN**

(OPPOSITE WAITROSE SUPERMARKET)

**0121 777 2532**

**COMPARE OUR PRICES!!**

ALSO AT: 132 NEW RD, RUBERY, 0121 453 3148

Discount 10% on cash, 5% on credit card, (except bikes) on production of  
Push Bikes membership card



# CycleBirmingham

The rides & social part of Push Bikes

## Weekly Evening Ride & Social:

The rides vary from 2 to 12 miles, depending on season and weather, with the pace set by the group. We try to use quiet routes for most of the rides, and advise on route type for each ride. Most destinations have food if you don't have time to eat after work. We try and pair you up with other members of the group for your return journey home, for example a number of the women riders cycle home together.

## Weekly Saturday Morning Rides in Bournville:

A gentle ride starting from Rowheath Pavillion, Heath Road (B30 1HH) 10am each Saturday Morning.

## Monthly Sunday Rides:

The rides vary in length and tend to be a bit quicker and longer than the Wednesday or Saturday rides. They

usually return to the area they start from after a leisurely lunch at the destination.

**Evening & Sunday ride details can be found on the following sites:**

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/CycleBirmingham](http://www.facebook.com/CycleBirmingham)

Visible without a Facebook account - Click 'Like Page' and Tick 'Get Notifications' and 'Following' to ensure you receive regular updates or bookmark it in your browser if you don't have a Facebook account. There is also an older Facebook Group in existence (This older group is only visible with a Facebook account).

**Twitter:** @cyclebirmingham

Saturday Bournville ride details can be found at: <http://bournvillegentlecyling.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Futurerides>



# Push Bikes leading the way?

For many years Push Bikes has led rides for members and others to explore the surrounding countryside and in recent years we have organised more weekly rides within the city. Additionally our Urban Explorer Routes enable anyone to take leisure rides suitable for families on quiet paths and minor roads.

Our weekly ride from Bournville (<http://bournvillegentlecycling.blogspot.co.uk/>) has been attracting up to 25 regular participants. Most are recent starters or 'returnees' who have been reluctant to face main road traffic and seek to use 'safe'

roads and paths. The Wednesday evening rides also avoid main roads in exploring suburban routes to pubs for a drink, a meal and a chat; these too are proving very popular.

One of the Birmingham Cycling Revolution's aims is to get more people on bikes. It is hoped that new owners join in led rides and so broaden their experience and confidence. Perhaps some of the experience of Push Bikes could be used in making these BCR rides successful.

John Bennett

Urban Explorer leaflets available to download at:

<http://www.pushbikes.org.uk/rides/urban-explorer>

Bournville Gentle Cycling route maps available at:

<http://bournvillegentlecycling.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Routes>



# Three Men on a Bummel.

Written at the end of the 1890s cycle craze driven by the invention of the safety bicycle, *Three Men on a Bummel* is a sequel to Jerome K Jerome's better known classic *Three Men in a Boat* and follows the further adventures of the author and his two friends, George and Harris. It is, as the title suggests, a wander, this time through Germany, particularly the Black Forest region. However, the routes taken and the journeys themselves are extremely vague and the 'story' mainly consists of a series of anecdotes, some humorous, others less so.

Despite the fact that the men set off on two bicycles (one a tandem) this is not particularly a cycling book; for instance, there is little description of the cycles themselves and certainly no technical information. Nor is there any description of the means the friends used to carry their luggage, and very little information of what they took with them. One assumes the baggage was sent on by train but this is barely mentioned.

However, the book does give some interesting insights into twentieth century life, describing the domestic set-up and the means by which the two married men (Harris and the author) persuaded their wives to let them go on their wanderings.

While this is hardly a 'laugh out loud' story there is a gently humour about many of the incidents, such as George's attempts to buy boots, the difficulties of speaking German, short strolls in Hanover and in Berlin, the delights and drawbacks of the Kneipe (German stag party) and the way the men wandered in ever-increasing circles due to their imperfect map reading.

Ann Griffiths

Note: A bummel is a German word, described by one of the characters as 'a journey, long or short, without an end' with the only rule being that you must return to the start at some point. The word has some similarities with wander in English.

Jerome K. Jerome's '*Three Men on a Bummel*' can be read for free through Project Gutenberg's website.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2183>

Project Gutenberg offers over 50,000 free ebooks, which are all out-of-copyright and can be read either on your computer or an ebook reader.



# Protecting cycle lanes with bollards

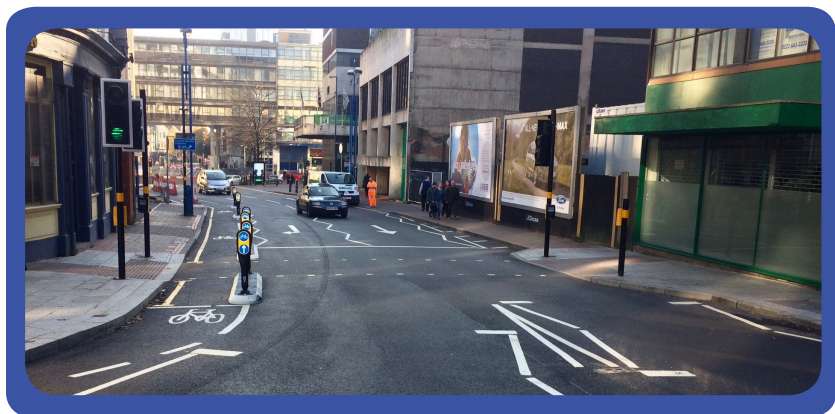
In September, Grand Central and the new concourse of New Street station were opened. The Hill Street contra-flow was re-instated, but there was an immediate problem: motor vehicles, especially buses, turning off Hill Street onto Station Street were sweeping over the cycle lane, putting cycle users at risk. Birmingham City Council reacted quickly to this issue, installing these bollards to protect the cycle lane and at the entrance to the car park on the corner of Hinckley Street and Hill Street.

This protection is very welcome, but it seems odd that it has been installed as an after-thought, narrowing an already narrow cycle lane. Why there is a need for two lanes of motor traffic here is unclear, as Ladywell Walk and Hurst Street next to the Hippodrome will become an expanded pedestrian-

ised area, cutting the heavy motor traffic flows that used to travel up Hill Street from Hurst Street. It seems that they have simply re-instated the previous traffic lanes, rather than planning around future reduced traffic flows. Having one lane of motor traffic up to this point would have provided space for a wide contra-flow cycle lane, as well as widening the pavement to the same width as the build-out for the pedestrian crossing lights.

These bollards are cheap and quick forms of protection that can be used for cycle lanes, so it is encouraging that BCC are using them. Push Bikes will be arguing for them to be used in other locations too, to provide protection for cycle users where needed.

Chris Lowe  
(Further details and better photos on our website.)




## Join Pushbikes

Birmingham is starting to plan better for cycling, but there is still a lot to do.

We currently have several campaigns in progress and are in frequent contact with local councils over cycling issues whether raised by cyclists or matters the councils contact us about, as they believe they might affect cyclists and therefore ask for our views. With the Birmingham Cycle Revolution

approaching its second stage, it is even more important that we influence local planners, Centro and local councils to build good quality infrastructure that increases the safety of cyclists.

Your support for Push Bikes will help benefit cyclists in and around Birmingham and Solihull.

Please fill in the form to the right to join us. 

## Push Bikes Members' Discounts:

Push Bikes members receive a 10% discount in a number of shops.

Please note that you will need your Push Bikes' membership card to claim the discount.

Shop	Location	Exceptions
Scott's Cycles	Hall Green (B28 9HW)	Bikes
Scott's Cycles	Rubery (B45 9HY)	Bikes
Bike Pro Racing	King's Heath (B14 7JZ)	None
iCycle	Harborne (B17 9QH)	None
Red Kite Cycles	Shirley (B90 3DX)	Bikes
Sprocket Cycles	Digbeth (B5 5TH)	None
On Your Bike	Digbeth (B5 6HY)	Bikes
Fletchers Autostores	Duddeston (B7 4LS)	None
Mechanix Bicycle	Moseley (B13 8EH)	None

# Join Pushbikes

Contact Details			
Name(s)			
Address			
Post Code		Work Tel.No	
Mobile Tel.No		Home Tel.No	
E-mail Address			

Subscription Type (please tick the relevant box)			
Individual, Waged Paper Newsletter £15	Individual, Waged E-Newsletter £12	Individual, Un-waged Paper Newsletter £7.50	Individual, unwaged E-newsletter £6
Family/Joint, Paper Newsletter £18	Family/Joint, E-Newsletter £15		

Optional Donation	£	Total	£
Payment By	Standing Order (see form on reverse)	Cheque	Cash
Signature			
Date			

I heard about Pushbikes From	
------------------------------	--

I/We Would Like To Help Pushbikes By (please tick the relevant box)		
Letter Writing	Helping On Stalls	Organising Bike Week Activities
Reviewing Plans	Writing For The Newsletter	Setting Up Bike User Groups
Leading Rides	Assisting With Newsletter	Newsletter / Leaflet Distribution

Please send completed forms and subscription payments to Pushbikes, 'The Warehouse'  
54-57 Allison Street, Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TH.



## Standing Order Form

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	£	
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		Sort Code	
Account Number		Name	
Signature		Date	

Please cancel any previous standing order in favour of Push Bikes under the reference given above. \*Delete as applicable. [www.pushbikes.org.uk](http://www.pushbikes.org.uk)

Send (with membership form if joining) to: Push Bikes, 54-57 Allison Street, BIRMINGHAM, B5 5TH