



Cyclic  
Coventry Cycling  
Campaign



# The Coventry Cyclist

Winter 2009/2010



## Cycle track on Allard Way

The 800m long track, running between Humber Road and The Moorfield was completed last Autumn. It's a four metre wide shared use path with a smoother surface than most roads in Coventry! Lamp posts were moved to prevent them obstructing the path. The tactile paving is better than that used on many older paths.

Coventry Council is to be congratulated on producing a link of such a good standard. We hope that the next section, linking The Moorfield to the subway by Yew Close, and running partly alongside the river, will be completed according to plan, before April 2011.

## Rides & events

- 25/35 mile leisure rides leaving City Arms Earlsdon 10:00am Saturdays and Sundays. See <http://www.zen180727.zen.co.uk/earlsdonwheelers/schedule.html> for dates
- 50/60 mile day rides, every Sunday, leave Starley House Eaton Road (opp. Coventry Railway Station) at 09:15 am. Returning at about 4pm. See <http://www.coventryctc.org.uk>

## Potholes and obstructions

- If you see a pothole, over-hanging vegetation or other obstruction, don't ignore it, report it!
- Ring Coventry Direct on 0500 834 333
- Enter the details on Coventry council's website: <http://survey.coventry.gov.uk/forms/pothole/index.html>
- or complete a report at <http://www.fillthathole.org.uk>

## Coventry & Warwickshire Cyclists

A social networking website for people who cycle or want to cycle in the area stretching from Nuneaton to Leamington. <http://covandwarkcyclists.ning.com/>

## Coventry Cycling Campaign - Cyclic

We lobby local councils, public bodies and private organisations to use their power to encourage more cycling. For the good of

- The global environment - If people used cycles rather than cars for the shorter journey, less "greenhouse" gas would be produced.
- The local environment - Just imagine what a busy road, currently packed with cars, would be like if the people were riding cycles instead. So quiet, no fumes.
- Other people - In our car dependent societies, people without access to cars are excluded from participation in many activities. If our towns and cities were designed so that more people didn't use cars, it would no longer be a big disadvantage to not own one.
- Ourselves - Cycling is cheaper than driving and more flexible than using buses. It's also a great way to enjoy yourself and one of the most simple and effective ways of keeping fit. Cycling, even at a gentle pace can help you to feel good and look great. Why waste time and money on boring gym exercise bikes?

Why not join us? Send your name, address and £5.00 annual membership (or what you can afford) to: The Secretary, 9 Bromleigh Drive, Coventry, CV2 5LY.

You can join our monthly mailing list for free! E-mail:

[George.Riches@CoventryCyclist.org.uk](mailto:George.Riches@CoventryCyclist.org.uk) Web: <http://www.coventrycyclist.org.uk>

Send articles for the next edition of the Coventry Cyclist or notices of forthcoming cycling events to the same email address.

## Heckling & the Cyclopedia of the Road

I guess cyclists, like all road users, are the subject of heckling from members of the public. "Oi, mate, yer wheel's going round" and "Get off and milk it" are two of the oldest and commonest. These phrases are usually yelled out by teenagers or gentlemen congregating outside pubs. However, I often ride a tandem, and this generates a whole new genre of heckles.



Occasionally, I ride it on my own. This invariably prompts variations on "You've left your wife at home...she's fallen off...have you forgotten something?" These comments are often delivered from the front passenger seat of a car with the rear seats vacant! But perhaps life is too short for irony. However, I'm indebted to the Tandem Club's Bulletin Board ([www.tandem-club.org.uk](http://www.tandem-club.org.uk)) for inspiration for the following. The instigator was Tandem Club member Eric Ludlow, and there are contributions from other TC members.

Eric pointed out that most wayside hecklers like to allege that "She's not pedalling at the back." Usually, there's no time to reply, but "She must be 'cos I'm not" usually serves to end the exchange. A variation that was suggested was, "This thing is a Porsche - engine at the back..."

A Merseyside heckle was, "Hey mate, she's catching you up!" However, Eric's favourite was when a young child with parents saw them coming by and yelled out "Look Mum, buy one, get one free!"

TC member 'Jonathan' reported that when he and his partner were struggling up a steep hill in their matching Tandem Club clothing, a solo rider passed them and quite apologetically asked, "Er, do you realize that your socks don't match?"

As usual, kids come up with some of the wittiest comments. "Hey mate, can you do a wheely on that thing?" But kids' comments are usually tempered by a paucity of either language or experience, resulting in often bizarre comments. "Hey, a two-wheeled tandem!" or "Look mum, that bike's got two wheels" are two variants. On another website ([www.unicyclist.com/forums](http://www.unicyclist.com/forums)) a unicyclist reports a child's comment "Look, he's riding a one wheeled tricycle!" And whilst in this surreal vein, the TC members Ray and Alison's bulletin contribution is worth quoting in full.

*"Last weekend we rode to Beeston castle in Cheshire and, whilst having a cuppa, two chaps walked up to the tandem and spent quite a while looking at it. After, they came across to us and in broken English asked us various questions. One of them then said, 'I have been looking for one of these, but for one person'. We never did work out if he was being serious or just not very good with the language yet."*

Some of the banter that is shouted at tandem riders can get tedious, if only because these comments are repeated interminably. However, as one of the TC members pointed out, cyclists seem to get less abuse and more banter when riding tandem. This tallies with my experience. I can't recall that I've ever been sworn at on a tandem (apart from by my partner) or even honked at in anger, whereas it happens on pretty much a daily basis on the solo.

Indeed, the most noticeable thing when riding, especially through middle class areas, is the smiles on people's faces as we approach. Older people are perhaps remembering earlier experiences of tandems, whilst children gape in amazement at something new.

Solo cyclists, when they elicit a response, tend to find it's more negative. On the other hand, the TC Bulletin Board drew forth an even less acceptable component of the cycling fraternity.

*"The worst heckling ever was experienced on my recumbent which varied from having objects thrown at me (soft drink can!) to 'get off the &\*&% road' and this was pretty frequent. Worse than that was the slow reaction of car drivers at junctions and roundabouts, particularly at roundabouts. I could be hoofing it at 25mph, coming into a roundabout, and the car driver to my right, who should have just carried on, slowed down to a crawl whilst looking at the bike, leaving me no room..."*

So where does this get us? Judging by wayside hecklers, it seems that there's a hierarchy of acceptance when it comes to cycling, with tandemists close to the top and recumbent riders at the other end. Perhaps more research is required.

But I'll leave the last word to TC member 'Geoff' who writes, "The best, funniest and most original shout I got was when riding my trike. A paper boy stared at me for a while and commented 'I always wondered what Reliant 3 wheelers looked like without the plastic!'"

John England  
August 2009

## Re-cycling - Coventry Cycling Centre



The Cycling Centre started in 2004 as a workshop for cyclists to use to repair their own bicycles, but has since turned to bicycle re-cycling. A team of eight part-time volunteers repair donated bicycles and sell them in the local community for about £30/£35 (Children's £10-£15). The aim is not only recycling, but also to promote more cycling by making roadworthy bikes available as cheaply as possible to the public. One of the team, Una, is taking the City & Guilds accredited bike maintenance course. They are always looking for more volunteers, good at cycle maintenance, to help.

They don't offer a repair service. In the past they have found that bicycles brought in for repair needed so much work and new parts, that it was not worth the effort to make them roadworthy. Last year they sold about eighty bicycles. The money left after spending on new parts is donated to community projects run by the Peace House.

The centre is at 311 Stoney Stanton Road and it's open on Tuesdays (10 am to 4.30 pm and 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm) and alternate Saturdays (30th Jan, 13th Feb, 27th Feb... 10-12). Telephone: Una on 07512 061231.

[http://covpeacehouse.org.uk/coventry\\_cycling\\_centre\\_1](http://covpeacehouse.org.uk/coventry_cycling_centre_1)

## Re-cycling - Coventry Jesus Centre

The Re-Cycle project is primarily a means of providing constructive activity to people trying to get back on their feet after addiction, prison or homelessness. To give them additional skills and new friends. As Piers Young, manager at the Jesus Centre put it "*We get people involved on a fairly adhoc basis; we had one young man who ran it for two or three months, very enthusiastically, fixed a lot of bikes, bought bikes, sold bikes, and he's gone on to set up his own project. Not in Coventry though.*"

Like the Cycling Centre the bikes are sold for about £30, although in special cases they will given to those in real need. Unlike the Cycling Centre, the Re-Cycle project offers a repair service and will buy in bikes; which raises the problem of stolen goods. After expenses any surplus is donated to the Coventry Jesus Centre.



The project is at 7 Lamb Street CV1 4AE. It's open on Wednesday afternoons and other times when volunteers are available. Telephone Keith Harvey on 07891 582252.

<http://covjcc.co.uk/recycle.aspx>

<http://piersjcc.blogspot.com/2010/01/ticking-boxes-with-re-cycle.html>

## A Family Cycle Ride

If you are looking for a family cycle ride of about 20 miles, there is a great area to the south of Stratford upon Avon. There is a mixture of Greenway - a flat, cycle friendly disused railway on the National Cycle Network (NCN) 5, quiet lanes and one or two gentle hills to make use of your lowest gears and brakes! Most of the way is on public roads so any children need to be competent cyclists.

You will need to transport your bikes to either the car park at the start of the Greenway on the outskirts of Stratford, where you start with a five mile stretch of Greenway, or the car park at Milcote crossing on the minor road between Clifford Chambers and Welford on Avon which gives you 2½ miles of Greenway. To enable you to find the car parks and the route of the ride itself you will need either the Landranger 151 Stratford or the more detailed Explorer 205 Stratford map. N.B. there are 2 metre (6' 6") height barriers at both car parks.

When you reach the far end of the Greenway you will be facing an industrial estate and will see the remains of railway lines embedded in the road. Turn left and cycle about one mile to the B4632 along which there is a short section of cycle track, behind the hedge, allowing cyclists to avoid the motor traffic. At the end of the cycle track turn left for Lower Quinton where there is a nice bench at the far end of the village on the green near the pub.

Continue past the church and then turn right and follow the road past Meon Hill (on the right -check) to a junction. Go forward to the next junction where you follow the road to the right. As you approach the Cotswold style village of Mickleton there is a great downhill section, but beware of dangerous potholes and parked cars. Join the B4632 into Mickleton passing the green on the right, then turn left up a little lane leading to the church and cemetery. At the end of the lane, on the right hand side there are some benches at the top of a grassy bank - ideal for your lunch break.

Return to the green and turn left to follow a level but narrow road for 2½ miles. You may need to wait on the grass verge to allow other vehicles to pass. Part way along, turn left then right to pass under a railway bridge to reach Broad Marston and Pebworth. In Pebworth, turn right and follow the delightful Friday Lane to a junction. Here, turn right and at the next junction (about 1½ miles) turn left then right into Dorsington with its beautiful thatched residences. Turn right and have a well earned rest on the bench near the church.

Follow the lane past Braggington House - you will soon need your low gears - to a junction. Turn right and follow the road down to Welford on Avon. At the end of the road turn left to the Maypole where you can have another rest!

Return to the junction where you entered the village, but now go ahead for a short distance and turn left towards Milcote (& Clifford Chambers). After one and a quarter miles you will see the line of conifers at Milcote Car Park.

As a rough guide to timing - allow at least five hours if you take children on this ride. Two and half hours of riding and two and half hours for stops. Enjoy it - but steer clear of the Bulldog Bash weekend at Long Marston airfield.

Bob Watson

*Editor's comment: It's a pity there's not more quiet roads and cycleways closer to Coventry. They would be available to those, such as teenagers, without cars!*

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## 20 mph traffic speed zones in London

Recent research published in the British Medical Journal compared the casualty rate on roads where the speed limit had been reduced to that on other roads:

Road user	Reduction in casualties
Pedestrians	32%
Cyclists	17%
Powered two wheeled vehicle riders	33%
Car occupants	52%

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## What most encourages you about cycling where you live?

"Seeing the ever growing numbers of people riding bikes in ordinary clothes and with no special gear." says Richard Ambler, Cycle Programme Manager at the London Borough of Lambeth.