

Campaign Spokes



The Summer Event: The Teddy Bike Picnic

I'm sure the Teddy Bike Picnic, which happened on a wet Sunday afternoon on July 18th was fun for many people. Personally I had a five-star hangover. I'd crawled along as a gesture of solidarity, with my second-best bear riding shotgun on my carrier, offering mute sympathy and wincing silently as his unpadded rear took the full force of the potholes.



We met at the Central Bank in a seasonable drizzle, decked out in painfully (to my eyes) bright rain gear and toting bagfuls of goodies. The original plan was to head out along the new cycle path/QBC in Amiens Street, into Fairview Park and out along the Clontarf cycle route to Howth. As the rain got worse, this plan was abbreviated to Dollymount. And as the rain got even worse, it was further abbreviated, and switched inland to St Anne's Park and the shelter of the trees.

So if you'd gone down to the woods that day, you'd have been sure of a big surprise. Bikes, bears, adults, kids, sandwiches and chocolate digestives, frisbees and a curious squirrel, all cavorting under the

umbrella of a grove of beech trees (yours truly sitting miserably on a log negotiating a flask of tea and trying to find her way into a Bister Kiplik Exceedingly Good Cake). They tell me it was a good afternoon: everyone except me certainly seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The aim, of course, besides having a bit of crack, was to get a large group of cyclists out on the public roads so that we were visible and so that motorists see us. And we'd also hope that some of the people walking from place to place, or taking the bus, or driving, would see bicycles and realise that they could be cycling too. The bears, of course, are optional.

Rachel Vaughan

Locked Out

Apologies to anyone who wanted to come to the August monthly meeting but couldn't find it. When members arrived at the City Arts Centre they were met with bolted and locked doors. We did have the room booked as usual, so we have no idea why the building was closed. In the end the meeting took place in Scanlon's, on the corner of Moss Street - the Campaign is trying to establish what the problem with the City Centre was.

Fame at last!

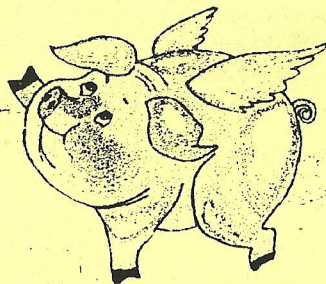
RTE hopes to do a piece on its *Open House* programme shortly, about bikes, bus lanes and QBCs. Anyone with ideas or who is interested in getting involved should contact the DCC secretary, Damien O Tuama, on 087 2840799 or contact him via the campaign (details on back page.)

Do it soon.

Flying Pigs and Bull Bars

The subject of safety on our roads is always topical. It's a complex issue and because road accidents cause death and serious injury they leave psychological and emotional scars.

Commercial interests who campaign on road safety issues are generally blind to the pain and suffering caused by the lack of care and consideration on the roads. Reality is seldom confronted, sectional interests are pursued and, fair enough, commercial interests are there for profit but when narrow goals are followed and broader aspects of a problem are consistently ignored then one may question the sincerity of the campaigns promoted by the bodies.



A current advertisement on RTE TV sponsored by a tyre manufacturer states that "436 people were killed or injured on Irish roads last year because they weren't wearing seat belts". Seat-belt users are car travellers, so who killed or injured all these people? It's a safe bet to assume that not one of the 436 was killed or injured by a cyclist, pedestrian or low-flying pigs. Seat belts on their own contribute nothing to road safety.

A news item in July stated that certain brands of 'people carriers' (a half-way model between a saloon car and mini-bus) were more likely in a crash to cause death and injury to occupants than other brands. Simulated tests showed this to be so and Conor Faughnan of the AA stated that these vehicles were now being made safer by reinforcements at the front and sides. Protecting the occupants of people-carriers contributes nothing to road safety.

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Over-protecting the occupants of cars by reinforcing the vehicle and by tucking them into seat belts gives an "I'm-okay, I'm-doing-my-bit, it's-up-to-you-to-look-after-yourself" feeling. This approach is short-sighted. The follow-through of this notion is to develop cars as secure for the occupants as the steel-plated troop-carriers used by the security forces in Northern Ireland. But neither would this contribute anything to road safety.

Making cars super-safe for occupants is tokenism to the emotions of an unsuspecting public. It is a commercial ploy. It is a fraud. Thankfully the use of bull-bars on the front of vehicles is soon to come to an end thanks to proposals being put by EU Transport Commissioner Neil Kinnock. These bull-bars were a considerable danger to pedestrians and cyclists even after a low-speed impact. Now, this proposal might contribute something to road safety.

It goes without saying that all road users - cyclists, pedestrians, drivers - need to be alert and be aware of all other road users. Certainly cyclists feel vulnerable because in a collision, even with a pedestrian, the cyclist will always come off second best. Vulnerability is probably a key word in the context of road safety. A driver in a small car feels vulnerable in the face of a four-wheel-drive (with bull-bars) or a people-carrier (reinforced) or a juggernaut. So what about making the bodies of cars, front and sides especially, of flimsy material - material that will withstand the elements but will yield on impact? Now that might contribute to road safety. It would certainly concentrate the mind.

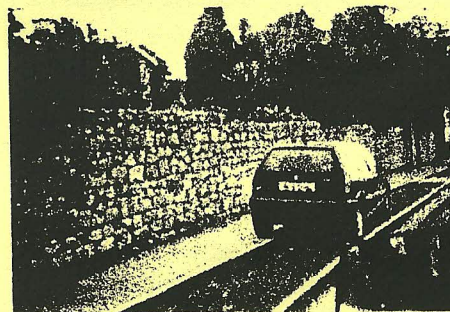
A parallel with the seat-belt syndrome is the campaign, which surfaces now and again, for the compulsory wearing of helmets by cyclists. Again the actual wearing of cycle-helmets contributes nothing to road safety. What the seat-belt and the helmet says is "Have your accident first, then the seat belt or helmet may save you." But remember you must have your accident first. The promotion of the helmet campaigns is led by do-gooders, politicians, journalists, medics who never cycle and know nothing about cycling. In March 1999 researchers from the Royal College of Nursing in the UK stated "There is no evidence that the use of cycle helmets prevents injury."

Could we now have a real road safety campaign?

Brendan Ryan

Parking in cycleways

The new cycleway in Ranelagh is to be welcomed. Finally, some decent space for cyclists, especially at rush hour. Sadly, though, motorists seem to view it as extra parking space. On several occasions I have pointed out to motorists that they are actually parked in a cycle lane and therefore obstructing the way of cyclists. One was a woman drinking a cup of coffee (yes, parked in a cycle lane drinking a cup of coffee). She was obviously surprised to see where she was parked and had the courtesy to apologise.



Handy parking for a motorist on Stilorgan Bike lane

The second was a woman who pointed out to me that she was actually parked outside her own home. I pointed out that she had a perfectly adequate driveway but she indicated that it was her right to park outside, cycleway or not.

But the winner of MOST OBNOXIOUS MOTORIST PARKED IN A CYCLEWAY was a male in his early 20s in a 99D car. I was cycling along, enjoying the space of the cycle way when I noticed up ahead a car blocking my way. The driver was leaning across the passenger seat talking someone on the pavement. As I approached I gestured to the person on the pavement, assuming that he would point out to the driver that he was causing an obstruction. He laughed at me. I pulled up at the window of the car (therefore causing an obstruction to traffic as I was no longer in the cycleway) and told the driver that he was in fact blocking my way. He told me that I was causing an obstruction to which I replied that he was the cause of my position. Again I asked him to move. This time his response was a string of verbal abuse. Defeated I gave up and went on my not-so-merry way.

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What can we do about these inconsiderate cycleway-blocking motorists?

Lucy Sutton

New Internet Mailing list for the Dublin Cycling Campaign

A chance for DCC members and friends to discuss things by e-mail is now available. Over the summer the list was set up and is now running.

DCC members and friends who are not already subscribed to the new e-mail list can subscribe themselves by sending a blank message to:

Dublin-Cycling-Subscribe@egroups.com

You will then be sent a reply to which you must reply to be put on the list. So if you can't get to the meetings and would welcome the chance to raise a point or two, then this is your chance!

Reading messages on the Internet

If you are already a member of this mailing list then you can also read the messages by pointing your browser at:

<http://www.egroups.com>

Register using your e-mail address as your login name, and choose a password. You may then read messages posted to

Dublin-Cycling@egroups.com

Sean MacSuibhne

Thoroughly Alarmed...Remote Control Bike Alarms

A Galway Cycling Campaign member has written to tell us about his Remote Control Bike Alarm. He says that the alarm fits into the hollow of the handlebars, and that it makes "an excruciating noise to the eardrums of a bike thief". They cost £29 (batteries not included). If anyone is interested in finding out more about these alarms, contact Jeron de Rallij, 81b Ros Ard, Cappagh Road, Galway.

The Helmet Question

Should the Cycling Campaign take a position on the compulsory wearing of helmets? And, if we do decide to take a position, what should that position be?

The question came up for debate at a recent meeting. We discussed the pros and cons of having a policy, and we discussed the pros and cons of what such a policy might look like. In the end, we decided that as no government or other body is currently suggesting that helmets should be compulsory, the Campaign need not, for the moment, take a position on this fairly divisive issue. So we kicked to touch.

I have no doubt that this issue will keep coming up for regular airings. What do other members of the campaign think? Policy, or no policy? And if policy, what should it be?

If this is an issue that you feel strongly about, or on which you have an opinion that you'd like to share, write to or e-mail the Newsletter, e-mail other members, or raise it at a monthly Campaign meeting.

Rachel Vaughan

A Scrappage Scheme for Bikes?

The recent car scrappage scheme, funded by you and me, has helped to contribute to the current gridlock in Dublin city and many other places around the country. Having donated money to that scheme we are currently donating our tax money to 'traffic calming' measures in many suburban estates around the city. So one arm of the Government is encouraging an increase of cars on the road, while another is trying to get the same motorists to slow down and drive responsibly (thereby trying to decrease the number of cars)!

What I think is needed now is a bold move to try and get more cyclists on to Dublin's streets. What about a bike scrappage scheme? It's possible that many cyclists are using old and dangerous bikes, without lights, brakes, or bells. Why not have a scheme to upgrade the current stock of bikes?

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Such a scheme could have several advantages, such as:

- it would encourage more people to become cyclists (both first time cyclists and born again ones) by offering financial support to buy a new bike
- it would help to increase the safety of cyclists in Dublin city and elsewhere.

So rather than paying your hard earned taxes to encouraging motoring why not use them to support a more safe, healthy and environmentally-friendly way of travelling?

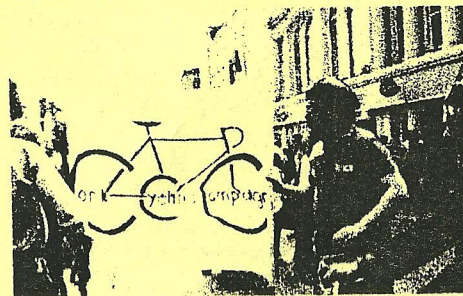
Tom Ryder

Cork Cycling Campaign

The Cork Cycling Campaign kicked off with its first rally on 20th July this year. It was a fine day and about one hundred people turned up. There were two police-escorted laps of the city centre, and then the rally went to the Mayor's Office in City Hall. The Mayor was presented with the Cork Cycling Campaign's manifesto by a founder member, Warren Pickles. It was a great success.

For further information contact Cork (021) 291478 or <http://aoife.indigo.ie/~woz/cc>

Kevin McCann



Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Dublin Cycling Campaign.

If you have an accident

According to the London Cycling Campaign, less than one in five accidents are the fault of the cyclist. So if you are involved in an accident do not admit blame - you may be concussed, embarrassed or hurt. Get the number of the car, ask if anyone witnessed the accident and get their names. Write down the details. Get all the details you can even if it's a hit and run.

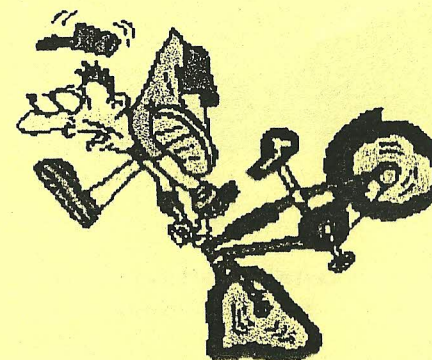
If you are hurt or your bike is damaged report the accident to the police. Get a doctor to check you over as soon as possible. Contact a solicitor regarding compensation (many a victim regrets not lodging a claim against the motorist when they later suffer as the result of an accident). Many solicitors agree to take a fee only if successful. If it was a hit and run, you can lodge a claim against the Motor Insurance Bureau of Ireland. Your solicitor will know the details.

Bring your bike to a good bicycle repair shop. You are entitled to have your bike as good as it was before the accident. Keep all bus and taxi receipts, as you may be able to claim for these.

There's a British website for legal advice on cycle accidents. It's www.cycleaid.co.uk and there's also an Irish book called Road Accidents by John Schütte (1995 Dublin: John Schütte Associates).

Best of all though, cycle carefully. It's a concrete jungle out there.

Brendan Sheehan



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Our Number's Up

You may have discovered that 7000312, up until recently the number of the Dublin Cycling Campaign, is not functioning. It seems that this number is no longer available to us so we are, for the moment, phoneless. If you want to contact the Campaign, the best idea is to write or e-mail (the addresses are on the back of the newsletter).

As we don't have an office and the Campaign is entirely voluntary, it's not that easy to figure out what to do about a phone. We have to decide where the telephone should be, whose name should be on the bills, and how to avoid heavy ongoing costs. A couple of members have researched the various options and they reported back to the August meeting but no conclusions were reached. However, as soon as we have a new number, it will be published and made available to everyone, and especially to all members.

Draft Submission

Three members of the Campaign are putting together a submission to the National Plan. This submission will be suggesting that the money spent on facilities for bikes should be increased to 5% of the roads budget over the period of the Plan (£35m at current prices). There should also be a national cycle route linking all towns with a population greater than 20,000 by 2005. The first priorities are Dublin to Galway and a link to the Kingfisher cycle route from the Midlands within three years. They are also suggesting that a Safe Routes to Schools programme should be put in place.

When a draft submission is ready, the proposers will circulate to all the other cycling campaigns in the country. Anyone who is interested in doing work on this submission can contact Chris O'Neill at chris.oneill@mail.esb.ie or via the Campaign (address on the back of the Newsletter).

Chris O'Neil

DCC members in (hyper) space

The astute among you will have noticed that the last *Campaign Spokes* did not have much in the way of Internet stuff. Well, let's try to make up some ground.

As you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, the DCC has a new method of emailing people using egroups.com, which allows one quickly to circulate members with up-to-date information. It allows members who don't have an on-line connection of their own to look up their email (using Internet cafes, coin op connections, other people's computers etc.) and it automatically reminds (on-line) members about meetings. It has a chat facility of which we have yet to make use.

Sean MacSuihbne, our Webmaster, is interested in your comments and suggestions regarding the new website, www.connect.ie/dcc

We have been getting enquiries from abroad generated by the website and a visitor to Dublin from Canada recently met members as a result of one of these enquiries. He introduced the DCC to the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition which can be visited at www.gvcc.bc.ca/ - it's well worth it. They have an illustrated history of the development of bicycles and lots more besides.

We welcome the formation of the Cork Cycling Campaign and immediately they have a presence on the web. Try <http://aoife.indigo.ie/~woz/cc> to reach them.

The DCC are members of the ECF (the European Cyclists Federation) and they have recently got their own domain address - www.ecf.com. Try www.ecf.com/cfc for Cities For Cyclists, www.ecf.com/velocity for Velocity, www.ecf.com/magazine for the ECF magazine and www.ecf.com/eurovelo for the Euro Velo routes around the continent.

In an e-mail the DCC recently received the following "The US Bicycle Polo Association (USBPA) promotes the sport of bike polo that is over 100 years old and whose origins are often traced to Irish bicycle racing champion Richard McRedy (McReady). Check us out at www.bikepolo.com"

Unlike Dublin, San Francisco has had a bike summer. There us a special site dedicated to it called, unsurprisingly, www.bikesummer.org. It lists the many, many events, which took place in the city for bike activists and aficionados.

There's a great article on do-it-yourself-bicycle-lanes, which can be found on a site which is made for activists. Visit www.adbusters.org/magazine/24/bike.html to read all about it.

Some cyclists are interested in the critical mass phenomenon where, as if by magic, hundreds/thousands of cyclists arrive at a single place at a particular time and take back the road space for a while. The 'hub' or central information site for critical mass worldwide can be found at www.michealbluejay.com.

TLC is not tender loving care but Transportation for Living Communities Network and they can be found at www.tlcnetwork.org.

The League of American Bicyclists started off over a hundred years ago as the League of American Wheelmen. They might be thought of as our American grand uncles. Their site is www.bike-league.org and give yourself a little time to browse.

The International Bicycle Fund can be found at www.ibike.org/ibfnews.htm

Finally three commercial sites for your interest - www.workbike.org - www.bicyclemall.com and www.bicyclelink.com

Browse on.

B. Sheehan

Why can't a bike stand up on it's own?
Because it's two tyred.

Brendan Behan - Cyclist

In his early life Brendan Behan worked as a painter and decorator. Like many of his generation he travelled to his various work-places around Dublin on his bicycle. But as his writing talents emerged, the paint-brush and bicycle receded into the background.

As a writer he was often invited to speak at literary functions for he had a novel approach to life and to literary matters, and his forthright and pithy comments were his trademark. Once he attended a symposium in Cambridge University where he had to listen to and suffer renowned academics and authors discussing the peculiarities and finer points of the English language. Brendan was then asked to speak on the differences between prose and poetry. He illustrated the difference as follows:

"A young cyclist from down near Ringsend
Who worked for a builder named Polacks
Rode on his bike along Sandymount Strand
And the water came up to his ankles"

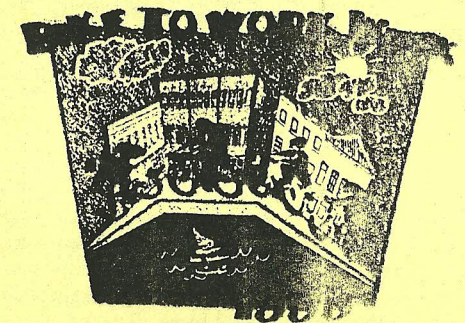


"That," said Brendan, "is prose. If the tide was in, it would be poetry."

Brendan Ryan

Greater Victoria Cycling Collation

A small group of DCC members met with some visitors from the GVCC in early August. They had made contact with us though the web. We met in Ned Scanlons and spent a very convivial evening discussing our similar yet differing adgendas. They would seem to be a very successful group having over 500 members from a population of only 400,000. Amongst their other activities they have just started a legal department to help any members involved in an accident.



They gave us one of their t-shirts which they suggested we would auction and the bid stands at £5. Bids will close at the end of the September meeting. Their web address is www.gvcc.bc.ca/

Stillorgan QBB - Quicker by Bike

When the Stillorgan QBC opened on Monday August 23 the Cassandras who promised motor-ing chaos were doubtless delighted with them-selves for being proved right - tail backs (for cars), traffic jams (for cars), long journey times (for cars). The following day, on the 24th August, the Irish Times did a bike-bus-car race from Foxrock, all leaving at 8.10 am.

The car arrived in South King Street fifty minutes later, to be greeted by the bus passenger who had arrived nearly twenty minutes earlier - it took him thirty-two minutes - and the cyclist, who had been kept waiting even longer. The journey had taken him a mere thirty-one minutes.

While nobody would deny that a car is some-times essential - when you have large heavy boxes to move from A to B, for example - it seems equally undeniable that many people who drive every day could travel by bus or bike at least some of the time. Nobody is suggesting that all the people should leave all cars at home all the time. Just some people, sometimes would do. However, if people really want to travel by car, nobody's stopping them: I just don't want to listen to them moaning simply because everyone else has also chosen to do this, and now they're all stuck in the resulting traffic jam.

Oh dear. I really should try and do something about the smug expression of superiority that's plastered across my face every time I cycle into town, passing out a thousand or more station-ary cars.

Rachel Vaughan

Dublin Cycling Campaign
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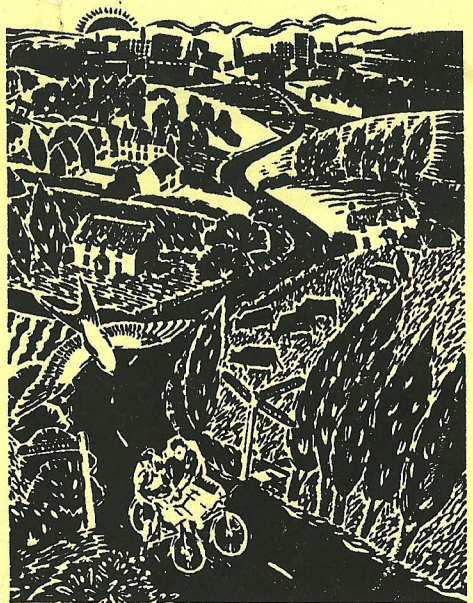
Dates For Your Diary

The Campaign meets on the second Monday of each month in the City Arts Centre, Moss Street, Dublin 2. Please come along at 7.45 for an 8.00 pm start. The forthcoming meetings are on...

Monday September 13

Monday October 11

Monday November 8



The autumn edition of Campaign Spokes was edited by Rachel Vaughan and produced by Niall O Cleirigh. The contributors were Lucy Sutton, Kevin McCann, Brendan Ryan, Brendan Sheehan, Chris O'Neill, Tom Ryder, and Webmaster Seán Mac Suibhne.