

**Moving Cycling into the Mainstream**  
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**Presented at "Streets Ahead" CTC/CCN Conference**  
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Good Afternoon

I've been campaigning for about 6 years now.

I Commute to work about 40% of the time.

I'm a bit of a cycle rambler and trips have included Western Isles of Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Germany. Hopefully I won't ramble too much today.

I believe cycling is safe, enjoyable, healthy, invigorating and fantastic fun.

I would like you to meet Jane, Fred, Peter, Mary and Nigel. None of them cycle. Jane has just started at University and is home for the weekend, Fred works in a call centre and very much a family man, Peter is in business professional running a local advertising agency, Mary is now retired but still very active with her grandchildren, especially Nigel who each day goes to day nursery.

They all started the day going about their activities Christmas shopping, going around to friends, taking the children to swimming; without even a thought of doing those by bicycle.

Is it our job to encourage them?

How can we do that?

What are the attractions of cycling that will enable them to take up this activity which so many of us enjoy and treasure?

How can we make it safe and enjoyable for them?

If they were to cycle, would this reduce congestion on our roads?

Would they have a healthier lifestyle, and be more independent?

Key questions for a conference such as this.

Well, I have to tell you that none of these will become cyclists or create any "modal shift". For this morning in statistical terms they WERE the 5 people of our communities who have died so far on our UK roads today.

They all met very violent deaths, and none of them were cyclists.

They all died because a motor vehicle did the unexpected. Even something that its driver did not intend. For some they were that driver, but for others they were passengers, crossing the roads, or for one just standing on the pavement, but in the wrong place at the wrong time.

And of course it is not just Jane, Fred, Peter, Mary and Nigel. By the time we are getting into bed tonight then Jill, Frank, Amanda, David and Collette will also have been killed on our roads. And all of their families will be devastated at the waste of lives cut down before their time. But that is not

all, over 100 more will be seriously injured today and have some sort of disablement for the rest of their lives.

And tomorrow, it will be the same again, except statistically one of them will be riding a bike this time.. And this will be continued Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday.... in fact between now and the end of the month 180 will have been killed and 1,800 seriously injured. The road deaths over the next 18 days will be more than all the deaths on UK trains in the last 10 years (1995 to 2004, Transport Statistics Great Britain 200%).

I have said that only some of these will be cyclists, about 4%, but together with pedestrians, they make up over 25% of deaths on our roads.

But, statistically, we know that cycling is not dangerous and it provides so many benefits to the community, reducing congestions, healthier lifestyles, better mobility for children, reduces air pollution.

So, we arm ourselves with a copy of Cyclecraft,  
Get out our Cycle Maps which show the safest routes to use when cycling,  
We impress upon riders how a helmet makes cycling safer,  
We take advantage of the cycle lanes, facilities and specially treated junctions  
We work out Safe Routes to Schools and Travel Plans  
We get employers to install showers.  
We work with LAs to produce cycle friendly LTPs  
We organise cycle rides for novices  
We implement training schemes  
We do all of this great and positive work, yet the modal shift is not happening.

Well, I know that some will say that there are encouraging signs. But in fact according to Road Traffic Great Britain, cycle use fell from 4.5 to 3.9 bkm in 2004 compared to 2003.

Whilst car use has been inexorably rising in the last 10 years, cycle use has been completely flat. (British Transport Statistics)

Why has there been no modal shift to cycling.

The answer is that the British public is too frightened to cycle on our roads. This fear effects our whole attitude to cycling and pervades it use with danger, liability and caution. No wonder that we are not achieving any real change.

Whilst it is entirely correct as campaigners to argue that such fear is perceived rather than real, we must not make the mistake of denying that it does not have a serious effect. Fear is a subjective emotion. Often we compound this mistake by both denying that cycling is dangerous but then

spending 90% of our campaigning effort trying to reduce a danger which is not supposed to exist.

We must accept that if we cannot successfully correct this perception, then we must address the factors which cause this fear to exist, for unless we do, we will never achieve our goals.

Over the last 10 years, tremendous work has been done to establish the existence of cyclists within LTP, in creating an informal campaigning structure and campaigning for better highway engineering for cyclists.

Our society aspires to number of objectives which cycling can play a big part in delivering :-

Increased child mobility and independence

Social inclusion regardless of income

Increased air quality

Reduced congestion

Healthier people

and remember that in many Northern European town cycling is nothing special, just a way to get from A to B

But there is an additional body of people involved in influencing the cycling environment who do not cycle. These concerned individuals work from their own particular area of responsibility as councillors, health officials, council officers, teachers, motorists, policemen, or parents and whilst very well intentioned, can through their own ignorance and uninformed decisions, actually discourage the very activity they are trying to promote.

As Cycle Campaigners we must understand that we are dealing with very complex relationships between the individual, society, government, press, politics, world affairs.

These relationships are not steady state in nature but continually change and develop. Unless we take account of these then we will lose the opportunity to optimise our efforts and take advantage of those changes. If we can understand how increased cycling can deliver these aspirations then we have far greater leverage and support in achieving our objectives.

But to do so we must understand how non-cyclists feel about the possibility of cycling rather than address the needs of current cyclists.

Almost everything that we do in life has some danger, but is balanced by the rewards that we achieve.

And with cycling the reward is the ability of independent travel and it comes at a very early age. As parents we celebrate the day when our child takes their first steps and we do it again when they ride a "two wheeler". However, as soon as that is mastered by the child, us adults start the really scary stuff about cycling.

In the name of safety and reducing danger we adults initiate a whole range of campaigns to scare children. Its all there, watch you don't get killed, wear a helmet, wear bright clothing, pull over stop, dismount and walk across when turning right, all of these inculcate a terror of roads in our children. It is almost as if adults, aware of their own failings as motorists, are asking children to make up for these by curtailing their children's rights, freedom and privileges. These are not just to ride, but to walk, play, run and jump in our streets which we call roads lest anyone think they are for people rather than cars.

This is done by moving the responsibility for danger away from the causal factor (motorist) and onto either the cyclists or pedestrian, design of the roads or some other convenient scapegoat.

Identifying safer routes to schools attempts to encourage walking and cycling by creating a preferred environment for these activities. Yet it primarily sites the route as the danger for children. In its very basic message it abandons the right of children to have respect from drivers wherever they are, and instead attempts to marshall them along routes which also happen to provide the minimal inconvenience to motorists. ALL routes are safe routes to school, it is only the motorists that take away the safety.

We should ask ourselves not what the child can do to avoid the motorist but what the motorist can do to avoid the child.

Today there is a huge emphasis on safety in motor vehicles. But 99% of this is directed at the occupants rather than the external "soft" road users. All of this reinforces the view that it is dangerous to be without the protected shell of metal.

So, every advert that extols the safety of a vehicle sub-consciously highlights the dangers for cyclists and pedestrians.

The principle of "risk compensation" also means that drivers who feel safer travel faster.

We have also seen many kms of cycle lanes and tracks put into place in the UK, and many millions spent on cycle facilities. Yet this very visible public expenditure has not resulted in people thinking that cycling is safe. Well the reality is that most of these facilities actually increase the dangers to cyclists. Countries with a long history of implementing segregated facilities now have sufficient statistical evidence compared to non-segregated routes to know that they are only useful if continuous and without intersection

conflict. An attribute which is clearly missing from most UK facilities. Segregated facilities may actually encourage new cyclists on to them, but will quite quickly result in conflict experiences which will convince the new cyclist of the dangers.

In addition, the very high urban speeds of vehicles in the UK make it particularly expensive to engineer in the same degrees of safety for pedestrians and cyclists compared to coping with lower vehicle speeds. In fact it has been estimated that it costs 25 times more to make a junction equally safe for cyclists at 30 mph compared with 20mph.

We must accept that our actions as campaigners, with particular focus on the engineering of roads, rather than the behaviour of motorists, aids and abets the marginalisation of cycling. It supports the idea that the problem is the cyclist on our roads rather than the inequitable sharing of our roads.

At junctions we have a possibility that vehicles can travel at such a speed as to endanger pedestrians and cyclists. Do we inconvenience the cyclist or pedestrian by giving them a circuitous route to avoid the vehicle or simply slow the car down.

Even worse, some junctions, particularly roundabouts, place the soft road user directly in the path of fast moving vehicles.

Why does the fast, hard car ALWAYS get priority over the slow and vulnerable.

Fear of our roads is therefore very real. It is supported by the actions of thousands of road safety campaigners, teachers, and millions of pounds of vehicle manufacturer advertising who keep that fear very much alive.

As cycle campaigners we also tend to continually re-inforce this. So much of our efforts are aimed at reducing the danger of cycling. Our language, reasoning and arguments all communicate "It is dangerous to cycle".

No "It is safe to Cycle or walk, WE are dangerous when WE drive our car"

Fear of our roads has created a society where young people are denied the right to independent mobility. We also deny them the ability to gradually expand their own boundaries of experience to prepare them for adult life. We also deny them the experience of being a cyclist on our roads and then are amazed that they have little empathy for cyclists when they aspire to and acquire their own motorised transport.

Why are levels of independent youth travel up to 80% lower in the UK than Europe

Why, with a regime that only allows speed cameras in locations where citizens have been killed, do people still complain about how unfair it is to be caught breaking the law.

Why does the law always favour the seat belt protected motorist against the comatose cyclist or pedestrian.

Why are allowable speeds in UK urban areas 62% higher than in Northern Europe. 30 km compared to 30 mph.

Why do we allow 53% of motorised vehicles exceed 30 mph speed limits. (British Transport Statistics 2005).

Why do more than 50% of UK road deaths occur in urban areas with 30mph speed limits.

Why do we allow alcohol levels in British drivers to be 50% higher than in Europe

Why are cyclists and pedestrians twice as likely to be killed on our urban streets in the UK than in Northern European countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden.

(SUN report comparing Sweden, UK and Netherlands)

Our traffic legislation is in fact one of the most hostile in Europe to pedestrians and cyclists.

We have a real problem in the UK regarding the way we use and share our roads to the absolute prejudice of the cyclist and pedestrian.

I think that you will agree that if we are to make real progress then a radical change is required in the equitable sharing of our roads.

This may seem daunting, but I do believe that the latent desire to cycle within our communities is so great that if we can grasp the opportunity that presents itself and realise how our campaigning could change then we can achieve success that is beyond our wildest dreams.

Well I believe that we must start off with the needs of all our people.

At every event Warrington Cycle Campaign attends we get almost everyone asking us for maps of where they can cycle, they are telling us that if we can take away the fear of the traffic then cycling is a natural and preferred method of travel for Britons to use. In addition the cost and viability of relying upon cars as the primary mode of transport for citizens will become increasingly compromised as trends for oil and availability of parking in towns take their effect.

I believe that there is a very strong future for cycling and a fantastic opportunity to get modal shift towards the levels obtained in such towns as Hilden.

We must universally accept that the primary responsibility for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on our roads and streets is the management of motorised vehicles. The viability, convenience, safety, directness and simple right to walk or cycle on our roads cannot be compromised in order to

maintain high traffic speeds and throughput in our towns, cities and villages. Other countries do this, why cant we.

We must protect the rights of our children, teenagers and adults to choose their mode of transport without fear. This must become an unalienable right for our citizens in a society which does not give disproportionate mobility rights to individuals based upon their capacity or choice to own a car.

This equitable sharing of road space to all road users is the fundamental platform on which other countries build their cycling infrastructure. To assume that we can turn this on its head and somehow build segregated facilities within an urban environment that encourages vehicle speeds 62% higher than other countries is fatally flawed, and I use the word fatally most carefully.

Maximum vehicle speeds must therefore be reduced in all urban and residential areas to 20 mph. This blanket setting of 20mph will have only a marginal effect on journey times yet will have a very significant effect of safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Most importantly, it will, at a stroke, take away the fear that so many citizens have. It will also give pedestrians and cyclists a similar "street" environment to most of our Northern European neighbours.

The TRL has shown that when traffic is slowed to 20mph there is a 70% reduction in in accidents to child pedestrians.

Kingston upon Hull has shown that 20mph zones have reduced the crashes with deaths or serious injuries by 90% and child pedestrian casualties by 74%. (Hull City Council)

In 2005 why are we still talking about this!!!!!!

It should have been done years ago and is accepted throughout most of Europe.

Incredibly some will campaign against this.

Some will say that business cannot afford the time lost through slower speeds.

Well this estimated to increase a 15 minute journey by just one minute and this "business" cost is more than offset by the savings in accident costs.

Some will say that invisible highway engineering will make roads seem more dangerous and cause drivers to slow down.

I say why bother with £50,000 of highway engineering on a stretch of road when you can spend £50 to put a few 20 mph repeater signs up.

Some say the British like speed too much.

I say, perhaps they dislike death and serious injury more.

Some will say the public won't be convinced.

I say if Hilden can engage with and get the publics backing then so can we.

And some will say, we must do a pilot study to demonstrate its effectiveness.

I say that whenever pilots are suggested then this is usually accompanied by deferment, compromise, inaction and lack of commitment.

If we want pilots then we can quite simply quote every town in Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, etc.

It will benefit all sides of society.

Roads and streets will become more peaceful

Road capacity will increase (20mph is the optimum for maximising this)

Air Pollution will reduce

Road maintenance costs will reduce.

Reduced pedestrian, cycle and motorist death and injury

In addition, the resulting modal shift will deliver

Increased independent child travel to school by cycling or walking.

Healthier lifestyles with lower obesity

Release parents from the slavery of the school run

End the discrimination against those without cars

Safer cycling

Most importantly it can be done at minimal cost and will therefore provide excellent value to local authorities.

This step will be far more benefit than all the cycle schemes, facilities and routes put in to date. It will deliver in spades far more than we have been able to achieve in thimbles for all our campaigning for the last 20 years. It will be the turning point that will move cycling into the mainstream.

The Twenty's Plenty campaign will become a defining turning point in the use of our roads in the UK.

Do we look across the Atlantic towards the inevitable rise of motor car dependency and all the problems it brings or across the North Sea where our European neighbours enjoy cities, towns and villages where people use the streets to play, gossip, shop, run, cycle, walk, talk gather and linger without fear of being killed.

This is the challenge we face not as cycle campaigners but as responsible and informed individuals.

Do we campaign for changing cultures and respect and equity.

or do we accept what some call the inevitable and make the best of a very bad business.

The campaign for lower blanket speeds must become not only the priority for pedestrians, cycle, road safety and civic campaigners, but also the primary campaign activity in which we participate.

So TWENTY'S PLENTY must become our rallying cry.

But we must understand how we are perceived as campaigners.

It is a fact that today it is only the "fit and the brave " who cycle. Therefore today's cyclists may well be a cross-section of society in terms of class, race,

religion, work or lifestyle, but most seem to be at the high end of any assertiveness spectrum. Such clearly independent creatures, seldom get the sympathy of other.

Whilst there is a place for someone to act as a pressure group for cyclists, we must really ask ourselves whether we would not be better acting as campaigners for a far wider group. After all, we are all pedestrians and in this respect are indistinguishable from others who become pedestrians when they stop driving.

As pedestrians we represent the majority rather than the minority when we campaign. Far better to be campaigning for every child in a school, or everyone who walks rather than the 5% who cycle. This may mean that we can most effectively campaign for cycling not as cyclists but as pedestrians who also cycle.

It is essential that we take our campaign, to the public. It is here that we must engage in a debate about the rights of individuals to enjoy the safe use of our roads and streets as pedestrians or cyclists.

If people say its down to culture then we must work on that culture. We must explain the current failing and NOT be frightened to bring into question the effects of excessive speed.

We must equally understand that we are not anti-motorist but for better and safer motoring.

It should also become a moral issue about the rights of individuals.

Throughout the UK 26% of households have no car. What sort of society creates a transport system that prejudices their rights to safe, convenient and economic travel?

What sort of society is happy that road crashes account for nearly half of all accidental injury fatalities in children?

What sort of society is content to have death rates for pedestrians and cyclists double the levels in other countries?

What sort of society is frightened for its children to walk to school through fear of driver intolerance?

We must also work with the press who can be champions for our cause and a medium for spreading our message. This takes time and effort but is an excellent way of developing the public debate.

And remember we are not campaigning for cyclists but mainly for pedestrians who outnumber cyclist deaths by 4:1.

Letters, articles, press releases can all be used with great effect.

In a recent Warrington Guardian article I was even referred to as Rod King, Speed Campaigner rather than Cycle Campaigner.

And if we are talking about culture, morality and rights of individuals we must not ignore politics. As well as campaigning for cyclists and pedestrians we should join political parties and influence from the inside as well.

Most importantly we must become better organised.

Local political lobbying should be coordinated with that at central government to obtain maximum effect.

Where officers say something is not possible because of legislation then we should work to change the legislation. This is especially relevant to the introduction of 20 mph with proper enforcement.

And we need better central reference and campaign material to assist efficient local campaigning.

We all need to provide better structures for disseminating information, co-ordinating local and regional activities and resources, and most of all communicating with the public.

We must back Twenty's Plenty wholeheartedly as citizens of the modern world.

We must engage with the public in debating the moral issues of excessive speed.

We must work in local politics to campaign primarily for speed reduction.

We must think carefully whether to assist the development of any segregated facilities.

We must remember Jane, Fred, Peter, Mary, Nigel, Jill, Frank, Amanda, David and Collette. For they have already lost what we possess.

Our society is beginning to have real doubts about many of the aspects of our roads that have previously been taken for granted. We are the INFORMED who see the flaws in our system and also the way forward to deliver change and real benefits for our communities.

Our responsibility is to lead and influence our society towards a better future

We have a simple message, everyone needs the

Right to ride

Right to walk

Right to life

Thank you for your attention