

PEDAL PRESS



MERSEYSIDE CYCLING CAMPAIGN

A new look for the campaign

Merseyside Cycling Campaign was approached by a local creative services agency, A Better Planet, with the offer of helping us to connect with a wider audience, to grow our support and to reflect just how important active travel – and cycling in particular – has become in today's world.

The logo above is part of a wider rebrand of our organisation, with a new website and spruced up social media channels to follow at the beginning of December.

We already knew Stu and Gary at A Better Planet through their work on the Save Rimrose Valley campaign. We support this campaign and the community's fight against a government road proposal which would not only destroy a safe, clean and green cycling oasis in the north of Liverpool, but a new road would also be completely at odds with the urgent steps needed to tackle road construction, HGV traffic and our own car use.

The campaign inspired Stu and Gary to start A Better Planet, the 'green wing' of existing creative services agency, Creation ADM.

Their work is specifically aimed at supporting charities, NGOs, businesses and individuals who are championing sustainability and doing anything and everything to make the world a better place. They offer branding, websites, digital, print, video, animation, and a complete range of creative services.

We're really pleased with the work they have done for us and are looking forward to sharing the new website with you very soon.

We feel that this puts us in a great position to grow our organisation and our work heading into 2022 and what is sure to be another pivotal year for cycling and the essential role it plays in combatting pollution, improving people's health and tackling the climate emergency.

www.abetterplanet.co.uk



MCC Committee

Co-chair: Don Thompson

Co-chair: Eddy Taylor

Secretary: Andrew Grimbley

Membership Secretary: Joanne Dobbie

Treasurer: Chris Beazer

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The views expressed in *Pedal Press* are not necessarily those of Merseyside Cycling Campaign

News

Merseyside Cycling Campaign meetings

The December meeting will now be on Monday 13th. The MCC AGM is on Saturday 22 January 2022.

If you would like to attend either of these online meetings email hello@merseycycle.org.uk

Liverpool pop-up cycle lanes

The additional lanes that were to have been delivered by July 2021 will now be in place by March 2022.

A contractor has been appointed to fix problems on the lanes that have already been installed.

The issue of maintaining the pop-up lanes is under review.

Bike Life renamed and new report planned

The Bike Life survey report is being renamed as the Walking & Cycling Index and has a planned publication date of May 2022

The public survey has been done and city data and survey results are being processed.

It includes questions and data about walking as well as cycling and has a focus on what would make neighbourhoods better.

LCR Local Transport Plan '2040 Vision'

Merseyside and Halton have got existing Local Transport Plans that were published in 2011. Now a Liverpool City Region plan is being created with consultation to start in 2022 and it will be finalised in Spring 2023.

The vision is to plan for, and deliver a clean, safe, resilient, accessible and inclusive London-standard transport system for the movement of people, goods and freight in a way that delivers our vision and to become a net zero carbon emitting city region by 2040."

Sustrans Liveable Neighbourhoods

Sustrans has been working to create liveable neighbourhoods in Southport. It has completed the design stages and delivered draft designs delivered to households.

After consultation it will analyse the feedback and revise designs. Then it will produce a feasibility study and business case before handover and potential trial of the schemes.

In the Lodge Lane area of Liverpool it is assessing the neighbourhood with a view to designing school gate solutions in six schools.

Sustrans is also looking at similar schemes in Cowley Hill, St Helens and Bebington, Wirral.

New cycle route in Sefton

Sefton Council has produced a map of a new route in Crosby and Hightown. The route starts at Crosby Lakeside, passing through Rimrose Valley before heading up to Hightown. This route is quite a long, but comes with two shorter options which can be done instead of the full route.

Moderate. Length: 11.5m / 18.5km

Mostly off road. Time 95-115mins

Download map at bit.ly/310Q0XC



Smart Green Journey app

The Smart Green Journey app aims to encourage more people across the Liverpool City Region to ditch the car for short journeys.

The free mobile app, which is available for Apple and Android devices, also allows users to plan the quickest or quietest routes, track journey progress, check local air quality and find secure bike parking facilities.

People Pedal Power gets Jessie to Cop26



On October 26th I had the pleasure of joining Jessie Stevens and the 'People Pedal Power' movement on their #Ride2COP26 journey. Jessie, a 16 year old climate activist who lives in Devon, wanted to participate in the COP26 climate conference but was unable to afford the cost of a train ticket to Glasgow from where she lives. Determined to get there, she connected with The Adventure Syndicate, a group of (mainly) female

athletes and cyclists, and together they hatched a plan to support Jessie to cycle the 580+ mile journey from Devon. Jessie wants to highlight how inaccessible and unaffordable our public transport systems are, and to ensure that younger voices like hers are being heard at the conference.

A call was put out for people to support Jessie en route by being part of a cargo bike relay crew that would transport all the equipment and provisions that the team needed for their journey (including camera equipment, as a film is also going to be made about Jessie's journey). About 20 of us from across the country answered the call and pedalled the cargo bike in a relay.

It was fantastic to meet Jessie and many other cyclists who joined us for part of the day. Being part of the cargo bike relay and riding just a small part of Jessie's journey highlighted how we can make things happen through the power of collective action.

Sal Woodward

Photos: Catherine Dunn



Society can change with the right leaders

Well where or how to start? What a crazy world. Lockdown one and the nation took to their bikes. Surely this is it? The turning point for our beloved form of transport. Everyone will remember the clean air and quiet streets, safe for people of all ages won't they?

Alas since then we have seen Liberal Councillor Steve Radford embarrassing the city of Liverpool by triumphantly holding aloft wands from the West Derby pop up route. The removal of the lane authorised by Dan Barrington, the Council Cabinet member for Climate Emergency, Transport and Environment!!! You couldn't make it up. Sefton Council are being cowed by the 'bike lash' lobby and all over the region council officers and elected members are feeling the pressure with regard to measures to help us all get about safely and reduce pollution. I rode to Mann Island this morning and it's more or less business as usual out there. Dirty, aggressive roads once more.

At times I have felt the whole situation to be so depressing that I wondered what's the point of bothering to try and help bring about change. But then I take a breath and carry on chipping away.

Why?

Well the scientific evidence is there for all to see. This is not just a notional argument. On every level my agenda is supported by facts and that's very helpful. Also I am lucky enough to travel with my filming work all over the country and I have seen with my own eyes that other places are really changing and not just the usual examples in Europe. In this country cities like Leicester and Bristol are doing good things and at a pace. Whilst in Birmingham recently I took a detour to Kings Heath to see the 'controversial' low traffic neighbourhood scheme.

It's brilliant. Quiet, traffic free streets with a really positive community vibe. I am currently working on a multi platform video tool for LCR in which I will visit real examples of how our streets, neighbourhoods and city centres can be improved for all. School streets in Halifax, pedestrianisation in Chester and even suburban cycle lanes in Manchester. I will talk to the people living there so that the good folk in our region can see for themselves and hear positive voices instead of the usual negative moaners. Nothing to be scared about, just a better way of life.



Central government has dangled over 700 million pounds in front of the Combined Authority to be used over the next five years. The Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram totally gets the agenda. What's needed now is full cross party support from every level of the political spectrum or that offer will dwindle away. We need to for vote for leaders, MPs and councillors who will celebrate putting in bike lanes.

The last two years have shown us that society can change in the blink of an eye with the right leadership and common goals. And you know what, at the back of my mind, the optimist still lurks because I believe that once the dust of this terrible pandemic has truly settled then people will still remember those few months when the birds could be heard, the streets were quiet and families could ride and walk around without worrying their kids would be killed any moment. We know how to create that world again and it's not even that hard. So lets keep on pedalling. I am off for a ride in the sunshine along the new segregated lane on the Strand now and I might just take the long way home along the riverfront.

Simon O'Brien

Carbon-neutral cities – in 3 or 30 years?

In favour of a 3-year timescale are

1. The IPCC 2018 report saying that we need “rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems”, with a timescale of just a few years.
2. The IPCC 2021 report saying that “immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions” are needed to keep global warming to 1.5°C
3. Independent scientists, e.g. the Tyndall Centre in Manchester in their 2019 reports for each local authority that said Merseyside councils need to make emission cuts of around 13% per year to comply with the Paris Agreement – with the dithering and delay in action since then, cuts now have to be even quicker
4. Scientist for Global Responsibility, also saying >10% emission cuts per year
5. *The British Medical Journal* editor, pointing out that the UK’s share of the global carbon budget will run out in less than four years
6. The Fridays for Futures youth climate activists (climateemergencyeu.org)
7. Extinction Rebellion (the second demand includes “net zero 2025”).

In favour of a 30-year timescale are

1. Boris Johnson
2. Other corrupt and/or incompetent politicians
3. Fossil fuel companies
4. Airlines
5. Car manufacturers
3. The billionaires who own national newspapers

Comparing the 3- and 30-year timescales with the text of the Paris Agreement:

A. Halving Merseyside emissions in three years is consistent with the 1.5 degree limit and the stipulation of equity between nations

B. The 30-year timescale of the UK Government’s Net Zero plan would take *three times* the UK’s share of the residual carbon budget – the report doesn’t say so and instead pretends that it is a plan that all countries should copy.

So I see the choice as between, on the one hand, Truth & Justice (a 3-year timescale) and, on the other hand, Greed & Deceit (a 30-year timescale) and for me it is an easy choice.



The LCR Third Transport Plan for Merseyside aspires to: “A city region ... where sustainable travel is the option of choice”. LCR Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham has claimed that progress so far in Merseyside has been good, but compared to the changes that could have made, this is not the case.

He has claimed that the hydrogen buses are zero-carbon, when the hydrogen is made from fossil fuels.

And he has suggested that his net zero 2040 plan is a satisfactory timescale.

Ian Campbell

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

Membership is open to anyone – cyclist or not – who supports our aims and objectives for safer cycling, traffic calming and a better, healthier environment.

Membership is free, however, the campaign relies on donations of time and money.

Sign up at www.merseycycle.org.uk



The challenges of getting kids on bikes

Cycle of Life want cycling to be more accessible and are keen to understand the obstacles that prevent local families in L8 choosing to make more short journeys by cycle in their day life.

Over 24 days in the summer we ran a cycle club which a number of local families and over 40 children age 7-13 participated.

Many did not have a bike and at least one third could not cycle at all. We are very fortunate to have an almost traffic free cycle path from our centre to Sefton Park. Within days the whole group were happily cycling and growing in confidence we discussed as a group about places we wanted to visit by bike in Liverpool. Many wanted to visit a pump track. After some collective research we discovered the nearest public one was in Everton Park. The families plotted

a few alternative routes with our support and we assessed which would be the most suitable.

When we took the journey we quickly discovered the inadequacies of the existing cycle infrastructure. As recent and not so confident cyclists on the road, there were a number of formations we had no choice but to get off our bikes and walk on the pavement as the road was too challenging and inaccessible for cyclists. We enjoyed our visit to the pump track as the group had never experienced anything like that and most had never considered visiting Everton Park although it is only three miles away from their homes in Toxteth, due to the fear of conflict and lack of awareness of the available facilities.

After the trip most of the group expressed mixed feelings because even though they enjoyed the trip they did not feel confident to cycle down there which is a real shame, as they really enjoyed the facilities down there and even made a couple of new friends with local kids who were using the track.

It’s frustrating for us as an organisation that although we are promoting cycling to communities in reality we aren’t convinced that the local council are doing enough to make the city accessible and safe for families who might consider making more journeys by bike.

Ibe Hayter





Photo: Slim Smith

A protest for cycling in Liverpool

I shall never forget: the moment when the car was only centimetres away from hitting me. The driver looked at me, I looked at him. I have no idea why he kept going, but going he kept. So I sped up, hoping to avoid him, and thank god I did.

I was cycling down Hardman Street, towards the Bombed Out Church. I was in the process of crossing Hope Street when it happened. I understand he might at first not have seen me: I was stuck behind a bus. But: he looked at me. He looked me in the eye and still kept going. He was coming up Hardman Street and was turning right into Hope Street and in the process nearly ran me over. I still have no idea why he didn't stop. Why didn't he stop?

But I can tell you: it scared me so much that I screamed an expletive into the air, kept swearing all the way down to the Bombed-out Church and was still shaking when I got off my bike at Liverpool Central.

This wasn't my first near-miss (nor will it be my last), but the sheer fact that this is so normalised tells you everything you need to know about Liverpool city

street safety – for everyone other than cars, that is. I now approach every junction with trepidation, and I know from Twitter that I am far from alone.

It was Twitter that finally made us – Andi Armitage and I – decide we've had enough. Andi started posting KSI data: Liverpool has the worst outside of London. But when you drill down into the data, you realise that we have the worst in the country by kilometre. In Liverpool, for every kilometre of road you have one person either seriously injured or killed. That is a shocking enough figure. But what is worse is that since Andi posted this, we have had numerous more deaths of pedestrians and cyclists on Liverpool's roads.

Our 'enough' was the anger that was perhaps needed to get a protest organised, which we did for the 25 September 2021. Our aim was to just make our voices heard and to show the political parties and the Council that we need to be heard – for those 1118 people who had been seriously injured or killed in the last eight years.

We were positively surprised by the response: when I spoke to people on their bikes (I handed out flyers to anyone I saw on a bike), they all agreed: yes, we want safer streets. People kept telling me about the routes they take in order to avoid going through traffic. And they all said the same: it's gotten worse since Covid. People are more aggressive when driving. And there is some awful driving on show.

On the day, around 100 people came to the protest on the Pier Head – some on normal bikes, some cargo bikes, some on handcycles, some on scooters. It was a wonderful mix of people of all ages (the youngest ended up running around together, perhaps requiring another dispersal order...). We heard from the political

MOVEMENT

*Get back on the bike.
If you want progress, you must
keep moving forward.*

Madelaine Kinsella and Matthew Thomas Smith

parties, but also from organisations that drive change in Liverpool: individuals like Helen Wilkie who told us of the time she cycled through Europe and an Audi stopped for her. Kay Inckle from Wheels for Wellbeing who passionately and persuasively spoke for the role of accessible cycling. The JARG Poets Madelaine Kinsella and Matthew Thomas Smith read their amazing poems that reflected our daily experience.



Photo: Slim Smith

Ibe Hayter from Cycle of Life spoke of his experience of cycling with kids from economically deprived backgrounds and getting on trains with them – and what that meant. Aigburth Community Cycling told us of the success they had at giving more and more people confidence in cycling. All of the speakers highlighted that they wanted to see change, some presented the work they do to facilitate change. And all of us were united in one wish: that we can cycle – and also walk – safely, without having to fear for our lives so regularly.

It was wonderful seeing so many of us all there – supporting each other and getting a sense of the reality of our community. And one thing became clear in all of this: for the city, cycling is becoming increasingly important, not least because of climate change, but also because people want to cycle. So although we may fear the next junction, we will keep going.

Elke Weissmann



Photo: Elke Weissmann



Photos: LiverpoolWande1



Impossible Angles at St Nicholas Place

Riding the new Strand cycle lanes

On 5th November 2021, Liverpool City Council officially opened Phase 1 of the long awaited cycle lane on The Strand. After following the project closely, I was keen to check it out, so made the short trip to ride the new hallowed tarmac of what is undoubtedly Liverpool's flagship cycling infrastructure.

In general, the route is straight, comprising of a temporary painted section (that will be turned into true infrastructure during phase 2), and the official phase 1 route starting at the junction with James St.

Further to this, there are junctions at Brunswick St, Water St and St Nicholas Pl/Chapel St that accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists, but are of varying design and quality.

Firstly, when travelling the through-route, many junctions had left or right turns removed for vehicles, however some still remain. Heading northbound, vehicular traffic is on the right and drivers need to cut across the cycle lane to into side roads. Thankfully, a 'hold the left' system has been implemented, which means that through traffic and the cycle lane get a green light and left turning traffic has a red light.

This works well for the junctions at James St and

Brunswick St, but I feel like the priority at the St Nicholas Place/Chapel St junction is wrong. On a few test runs I have had green lights for most of the way north, only to be met with changing lights and a 90 second wait at St Nicholas Pl.



Brunswick St 'Hold The Left'

Junctions are a key part of this design as The Strand is a busy crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists moving between the waterfront and the city, but this is where the scheme really falls down. It's not that obvious to pedestrians to wait to the left of the cycle lane, meaning that you end up with them congregating in the lane.

It's a similar situation with crossing by bicycle. There's barely room for one cyclist to cross without blocking part of the lane and that's provided the cyclist can turn on a dime, due to the completely impractical 90° curves found ubiquitously on this scheme. During busy periods such as the rush hour commute, we could be seeing cycle traffic jams!

The council have said that this cycle lane will be used as a learning exercise for further projects, and we do have a lot to learn. Cycle infrastructure isn't a new thing in the world; the Dutch have mastered it,

and many other European cities are quickly catching on, including London. I see no harm in copying from the best.

Personally, it feels like the road was designed first and the cycle lane was an afterthought. Conflict points have been engineered into the scheme at the crossings, which will undoubtedly result in some kind of incident happening.

These improvements undoubtedly make cycling safer along this stretch of road, but I think it's clear to see that Liverpool still has the private car at the top of the hierarchy. For Phase 2 and further projects, the council really need to take inspiration from successful schemes elsewhere and put active travel at the forefront of their ideas so we can finally start the process of reversing decades of car dominance in the city.

@LiverpoolWande1



Cargo bike to the future

Back in May of this year we took the plunge as a family and invested in an electric cargo bike. I'd been researching them a lot for a project I worked on with Wirral Council in 2020 and, faced with endless questions from friends and family such as 'Yeah cycling is great but what about when I need to do the shopping? How do I get the kids to footy practice and the endless parties?'

It was time to step up my game.

There are lots of options in the cargo bike world but not a huge amount of suppliers. Pure Electric on Bold Street can get hold of them but I opted to go with Bambino Bikes in Salford. They had at the bike I wanted in stock and I'd met the owner through the council project.

We went for the rear loading Tern GSD. Why? Well, it's not much longer than a regular bike so a bit more practical for us. It's easier to store, could probably be taken on Merseyrail if needed and there's no learning curve – it handles like a 'normal' bicycle so I was confident that my wife would be able to ride it as well.

It wasn't cheap when compared to a bike (close to £5k once we had added a few extras) but you shouldn't compare it to the cost of a bicycle. These are replacements for cars. When you do the maths vs a second hand car then it quickly becomes a no-brainer. The running costs are basically zero. I've had a quick tune up on drive train that cost £5 plus a couple of punctures to fix.

Six months in and we're getting close to 1000 miles of trips, so how has it been? The short version – life changing!

The bike is stunning to ride. It can handle up to 200kg of combined weight. Two kids can be carried easily or loads of shopping/cargo. The Bosch motor just makes the weight disappear and the low centre of gravity in the cleverly designed frame makes balancing easy. If you can ride a bike you'll be fine on this.

I've taken kids bikes on the back to be serviced. I've loaded it with stuff to take to the tip. I've stuffed the bags full of sleeping bags and pillows for a sleepover. My personal favourite, as you may have



spotted on the cover of this edition of *Pedal Press*, was taking my 92-year-old grandma for a ride at the Leverhulme Summer Cycle.

The best thing about the bike that I wasn't really prepared for was the questions. I can't leave the house without people wanting to stop and ask questions about it. I live deep in the heart of suburbia where the car is king. Despite that, people are ready for change so, in my head at least, seeing a family using a bike to do everyday things like shopping, visiting friends and family, etc. is having a big impact. The question is, will we see others take the plunge?

We know that cargo bikes can replace a huge amount of jobs that our cars can do. We know that the costs are far lower than car ownership and we know that infrastructure is on the way to make cycling and active travel safer and far more convenient. What other barriers exist?

My main concern is whether we'll be able to make these things fast enough! The wait times are already quite long for the top end cargo bikes and for bicycles and their components in general. Costs

are high, yes, but money cheap at the moment and a low cost loan is quite easy to come by. Very few people buy a car in one hit and the same should be true of a decent e-bike.

I'm not all that comfortable parking the bike in public for long periods so we have work to do on the storage/parking front. Luckily a bike shop nearby recently became a Bosch approved mechanic so servicing is easy for me now. The brakes and gears are standard so easy to look after. Clearly we need more local dealers and retailers for these non-standard cycles.

I think the main issue, however, is in peoples' heads. 'Am I the kind of person that rides a bike like that? Will I look weird? What will my friends say? This ain't Amsterdam!' That kind of thing.

My main advice then is to just GO FOR IT. Get one as soon as you can. Get one while you can! The benefits go beyond personal – people see a cargo bike a switch flips in their heads. 'Oh! A bicycle CAN replace a car for all of those trips I do! Maybe I'll think about getting one!'

Ed Lamb



Leverhulme Summer Cycle 2021

Hundreds of people of all ages took part in this year's Leverhulme Summer Cycle, which was held on Sunday 12th September on the treelined tracks around the Leverhulme Estate at Brimstage Hall & Courtyard in Wirral.

Guests were also able to enjoy a feast of stalls run by independent producers including Ginger Cat Coffee, Penny-Lan Pork, Windsors Fruit Liqueurs, Hyacinth Vintage Ice Cream, Carriages Café Bar and The Chocolate Cellar.

Others taking part were Wirral Environmental Network, Positivtree, a wellbeing network for parents and carers, and Wirral Unplugged which laid on amateur dramatics and music including drum classes for children run by Rhythm Reaction and singer Bexi Owen.

Neston-based Just Riding Along was also kept busy running basic free bike checks for participants while Cycling UK was present to promote the benefits of cycling. Port Sunlight Rugby and Cricket Club was also in attendance.

This year's Leverhulme Summer Cycle built on the success of the only previous one held in 2019 with almost 1,000 people registering for the event and an increased number of stallholders getting involved.

Ed Lamb, MCC members and founder of Rethink Now CIC which organised the day, said, "We were absolutely delighted with the turnout. It was lovely to see multi-generational families coming out to explore the beautiful tracks of the Leverhulme Estate.



"It was great to be able to extend the course this year and increase the food and drink offering and other stalls available for people to enjoy.

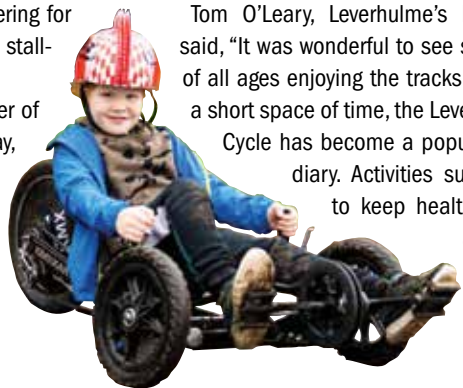
"I'd like to give special thanks to Claire House for kindly letting us use their car park as the starting point and for marshalling on the day. Thank you to everyone who made donations to the charity which were well over £500. We were also grateful to over 20 or so other volunteers who helped Rethink with the set-up and management of the day."

Councillor Liz Grey, Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport for Wirral Council, also took part and said, "The Leverhulme Summer Cycle was very good in 2019 and even better this year. The fact that hundreds of people turn up in the rain to such a cycle event shows how incredibly popular cycling is in Wirral and how great the need must be for us to make room for and to plan for cyclists as a borough.

"It was lovely to see families really enjoying themselves and so many cyclists of all ages and abilities. Inclusive and sustainable, this should be a sign of things to come."

Tom O'Leary, Leverhulme's Estate Manager, said, "It was wonderful to see so many families of all ages enjoying the tracks of the Estate. In a short space of time, the Leverhulme Summer Cycle has become a popular fixture in the diary. Activities such as this help to keep health and wellbeing at the top of the agenda."

Ed Lamb



Aigburth Community Cycle Club makes a successful start for its rides

After everything we've been through in the past 18 months what could be better than exploring our fantastic city on a bike together with new friends? So it's not surprising that Aigburth Community Cycle Club has had a great response since we started our Cycling UK affiliated club in June 2021.

We're running a variety of rides led by local trained volunteers starting at Greenbank Lane and Croxteth Park. Five-mile traffic free rides have proved popular with people who haven't been on a bike for a while, in some cases for decades. We're able to lend out bikes and helmets from the City Council cycle containers enabling those without a bike to join rides.

12 and 20 mile rides have given those who already cycle the opportunity to gain confidence

Feedback from 23 riders:

I've enjoyed being part of a group activity and meeting people	19
I've tried out new cycle routes	14
I feel better physically	13
I'm more motivated to cycle	11
I'm cycling more since joining the bike rides	10
I've got more confident on a bike	10
My mental wellbeing has improved	10
I've returned to cycling after a long break	10

and try out new routes. Family rides in Sefton Park and Croxteth Park have encouraged families to cycle together.

In total 260 people have joined our booking app Spond across both locations and 120 of these have joined at least one ride so far with 70% of these being women. We've run 43 rides over the past five



months and numbers on each ride are growing.

We've recruited a great team of volunteer ride leaders via the Next Door neighbourhood app, Facebook page and word of mouth. The City Council has funded us to train up new ride leaders via the Mayoral Neighbourhood Fund. We're still looking for more ride leaders so if this is something you're interested in email us at aigburthcommunitycycleclub@gmail.com

We asked some of our riders how they're benefitting from the rides:

"It's been great to meet new people and be out with people leading you. Its made me feel safer on the road its gave me confidence cycling to work and it's been great for my mental health I would recommend it."

"Given me confidence to go on longer rides. Have started using my bike to visit friends, commute locally and have got granddaughter to come with me sometimes. Each group ride makes me remember to use my bike as they remind me that it's safe and enjoyable as before I'd talk myself out of it."

If you'd like to join us on a ride go to these links:
Greenbank: <https://group.spond.com/GSDOY>
Croxteth: <https://group.spond.com/ODHSV>

Helen

The Loopline gets a tidy up



Activity on the Loopline at West Derby has seen the team of volunteers clearing the sandstone cuttings. Rhododendron, R. Ponticum, and Ivy, Hedera sp. have been dominating this vertical habitat and many of the other indigenous species have been suffocating. By controlling the growth of such species we will increase the biodiversity for both flora and fauna. The brash, all the material cut down, will be moved along the pathway to create a dead wood habitat which should attract and support a surprisingly wide range of local wildlife. We also discovered some Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* growing in the midst of the R. Ponticum

Some types of beetle will use the wood to feed and breed, while woodlice, centipedes and millipedes may take shelter in the dark, damp conditions it

provides. They in turn will attract predators such as hedgehogs, toads, mice and birds.

Merseyside Cycling UK has been pleased to support the Loopline Volunteers with a grant to purchase tools and wildflower seeds. If you wish to join them follow the link: <https://bit.ly/3HMBE00>

The Loopline provides a great route for so many riders – some like the local Cycling UK group use the traffic free green corridor as a direct route to the Lancashire Lanes, others, like the Croxteth Community Cycle Group and the Aigburth Community Cycle Group (cyclinguk.org/group/aigburth-community-cycle-club) use it as just as off ride route to introduce new or returning riders.

Don Thompson

Tubeless tyres; tu-be or not tu-be

As I realised my rear rim was thumping into the cobbles of Chester centre, I was overcome with the knowledge that no tyre and tube would have to come off, just that an oozing fluid would already be working its magic to seal the rent in my tubeless tyre. On this

occasion, hubris had got the better of me.

A few strokes of the pump clarified the position as the air oozed, stutteringly, through the cheeky orifice that the pundits claim should have already 'sealed', allowing one to then merely ride off'. A short walk to

a bench found my co-riders clustered around this theatre where I could set out my instruments and perform minimally invasive, tyre surgery.

First off I opened the emergency tyre plug inserter, brandishing it in the Cheshire sun for all to see. With unwavering precision I placed the device against the obvious site of the leakage, guided by dribbling, white 'sealant'. A quick thrust and... nothing. Another, sustained heave against the offending laceration achieved nothing. Several failed attempts to deliver my instrument and plug into the tyre brought only sweat, angst and embarrassment.

A simple answer was to enlarge the hole. With hindsight, I'd now say DON'T fix a tubeless tyre with a penknife. But with the drug of hubris spurring me on I brandished my glinting, mini Victorinox, ever-so-gently guiding it into the tiny hole. In it went, and suddenly there was room for the plug to be expertly manipulated into the tyre, deployed and withdrawn.

The carbon dioxide cylinder fitted snugly onto the valve and as I turned the knob a sudden 'whap' saw the tyre inflated and tight on the rim. "Aha" I said, expertly scrutinising the orifice as air and glue hissed out for a long second, then stopped. It was a wonderful moment and off we went.

The downhill from Chester centre was a blast as always. Until I went over a grid in the road, whereupon the rear tyre agonisingly deflated in what seemed a nano-second. Rarely had I been more deflated than my tyre.

Inspection showed the stubbornly fizzing orifice still preventing me from riding to lunch.

Retrieving my increasingly familiar puncture instruments, I slid another plug, neatly alongside the first. For a second or two, all was silent; perhaps we had attained continence? But then farty-spitty sounds again signalled my abject failure.

The only thing left was a messy tyre removal, valve removal and plug withdrawal followed by inserting a get-you-home inner tube.

Instead, I lazily and gingerly rode back up the hill and found my way to The Bike Shop. TBS had a squint at the tyre and then made a diagnosis: 'a slit can be difficult to fix with even two plugs and often an inner tube or new tyre is needed'. The decision was, kindly to fit a £39.99 new tyre for me. Plus I also had to buy the replacement sealant as there was 'none in the workshop'.

Learning points:

1. If you can't get the plug into the hole, just use something like a rounded awl to pre-dilate. Then use the right sized plug.

2. If there's still a leak around that plug, fit another plug alongside the first and ensure they sit at the bottom of the tyre for a while to allow the glue to 'bathe' them.

3. If (2) didn't work, take out the valve and fit an inner tube. You have to use the strength of Zeus to get the tyre off the rim.

4. If there is no inner tube (why not?), a last-ditch move is an internal patch, but that's a big job on the road. At home, I was able to hose out the old tyre's sealant (it's water soluble). There was an obvious slit in the mid-tread of the tyre, that my penknife can't have helped.

The two plugs I'd put in side by side looked like they couldn't make a seal in that slit. I removed them to fit a motorbike patch.

5. Carefully tighten the sealant bottle after use. When I got home TBS had cross threaded the lid of the sealant bottle so it leaked into the containing plastic bag. It went into the bin.

6. A tu-be is an effective, messy and cheap way to fix a puncture. I can't always say that about tu-be-less, but they're great most of the time; just be prepared.

Derek Gould





Cycling UK Merseyside rides

Rides are arranged on Sundays and Wednesdays. C/ D rides for beginners and families are arranged on the occasional Saturday morning and Trail rides on the occasional Friday. Friday and Saturday rides are a joint venture with Liverpool Century Road Club.

The official start of a ride will be the point at which the designated runs leader for the ride assumes responsibility. It is the responsibility of the individual rider to arrive at either the start location or at any pick-up point arranged for that ride. Riders who wish to travel to the start of a ride or to a particular pick-up point together should make arrangements using the club google group. The WhatsApp group and Facebook page can be used in addition.

A complete list of start locations and pickup points follows. Details of the pick-up point for a particular ride please refer to the final NB column of the runs list and explanation at the end of the runs list.

Pick up points

- 1 Birkenhead Central is accessible in a few minutes from James St Station on the Wirral line to Chester or Ellesmere Port. Meet outside the station.
- 2 Calisa coffee shop is 84 Childwall Priory Rd,

Liverpool L16 7PF. Opens 8:00am Mon-Sat & 9:00am Sundays.

3 Hunts Cross Station is in Speke Road, L25 ONN.

4 Sprout Café is within the grounds of Premier Plants Garden Centre in Ledsham, CH66 ONB, [www.sproutkitchengarden.co.uk] If travelling by train the café is 1.5 miles from Capenhurst Station or a 3.5 miles ride from Hooton Station.

5 Nets Café is on Burton March, Neston, CH64 OTG. It 5.5 miles from Hooton Station.

6 Ormskirk Station is at Station Approach, Ormskirk, L39 2YN.

7 The Dormouse tearooms, The Smithy, Chester Rd, Daresbury, Cheshire.

8 Spike Island car park is situated in Mersey Road, West Bank, Widnes Cheshire, WA8 ODG

9 Pickering's Pasture is in Mersey View Road, Widnes, WA8 8LP

10 Calderstones Park, Liverpool 18. Meet Yew Tree Lane car park.

11 McDonald's café, Aintree Shopping Park, Ormskirk Road, Liverpool L9 5AN. Nearest rail station is old Roan.

12 Otters pool Adventure Centre is on Otterspool Drive approx. 200 metres from the bottom of Mersey Rd. Aigburth

Category of rides (an indication of what to expect, though rides may be easier, or occasionally more difficult).

A: Challenging, major steep long hills, or >70 miles, or both. Average pace 12-15 mph

B: Moderate, less challenging shorter hills with less severe gradients), 50-70 miles. Average pace 10-14 mph

C: Flat, 30-50 miles: average pace 10-12 mph. Suitable for fit beginners/prospective members.

D: Flat: 10-20 miles average pace 10-12 mph, suitable for beginners and families.

to take the ride from the designated start point on the runs list. All riders should therefore check the google group, WhatsApp and Facebook for any alterations at about 7.30 am on the morning of the ride. If in doubt, contact the Ride leader by phone details below:

HF 07887 623870	DG 07817 072644
JH 07831098689	DJ 07972 163370
GJ 07597055683	KM 07400 797474
DT 07963 432568	SM 07503178369
SS 07914492319	PW 07779 718425
MS 07714246360	TS 07581 155311

N.B. Will all riders please note that they participate in the club activities at their own risk, and no responsibility can be accepted for any claim due to the negligence of the club or any its members.

All riders should ideally carry a pump, a spare inner tube or two and a puncture repair kit. Riders should also check the weather forecast and wear suitable clothing.

Date	Start	Depart	Destination	Leader	Cat	NB
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DECEMBER

Wed 1st	Sprout	10:30	Manor Wood C P	SS	B	
Sun 5th	Sprout	10:30	Walk Mill	GJ	C	
Wed 8th	Calisa	9:30	Little Farm Cafe	PW	C	
Sun 12th	Sprout	10:30	Cheshire Lanes	TS	C	
Wed 15th	Sprout	10:30	Xmas Lunch	HF	C	
Sun 19th	Calisa	9:30	Pimbo G C	DG	B	
Wed 22nd	Sprout	10:30	Oakland Hotel	SS	C	
Sun 26th	NO RUN					
Wed 29th	Ryde Café	10:00	AD HOC	DG	B/C	

JANUARY

Sun 2nd	Ham Sq. Station	10:00	Tour de Wirral	DJ	B	
Wed 5th	Sprout	10:30	OI Ma's	SS	B	
Sun 8th	Nets	10:30	Woodworks G C	HF	B	

[1] trail bike or MTB recommended

[2] Pickup for D riders at 10.30 at The Dormouse Tea rooms, Daresbury.

[3] pickup at McDonalds Aintree 10.30

[4] Liverpool riders depart at 9.30 from Calisa.

[5] this run is subject to change of destination and appointment of a runs leader

[6] Pick-up Broadgreen Stn for Wirral Riders



On Saturday 6 November, as part of the COP26 Global Day of Action for Climate Justice in Liverpool, cyclists formed a peloton and cycled from Sefton Park to the Bombed-out Church

Photos: Slim Smith