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Active Travel – what’s it all about?

Active Travel England [ATE] is responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around. ATE’s objective is for 50% of trips in England’s towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030.

Steve Rotherham, LCR Mayor says “I want to kickstart an active travel revolution in our area – one that offers better connected, safer routes that make it easier for people to choose cleaner ways to travel. Mayor Rotherham is investing nearly £70m in active travel improvements

“If we want our country to be a healthier, wealthier and more liveable place for everyone, then we need to give people an attractive alternative to the car...” says Andy Burnham.

Commissioners are asking for a political commitment to minimum infrastructure quality levels and the freedom to innovate by keeping road traffic regulations under review.

The Commissioners also ask that the true cost of car use to society is counted in economic appraisal models, and the benefits of car alternatives be fully recognised.

In this issue of *Pedal Press* we hear from Liverpool City Council’s Cycling Champion, Simon O’Brien with his own personal observations about the work he has been involved in across the Liverpool City Region [LCR] and how the Active Travel programme is growing.

The MCC committee has been active during the last year communicating with many local and national organisations ensuring the voice of the

cycling, in particular, is heard but other groups such as walking and wheels as they want to see infrastructure improved to encourage more active travel opportunities.

Earlier in the year I was in Wigan to hear Greater Manchester’s Active Travel Commissionaire, Dame Sarah Storey who was keen to ensure ‘road danger reduction’ was raised to a higher priority. She spoke about greater commitment to Vision Zero to make a more fair and just society and ensure the benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling are unlocked for all residents and communities.

The Liverpool CTC chair Prof. Derek Gould proposed at a Liverpool City Council meeting, a few years ago, that the Vision Zero Strategy be adopted and this was overwhelmingly agreed.

The LCR have also rolled out the VZ objectives across the LCR with the Mayor quoting “I want our roads to be as safe as possible for people to get from A to B, regardless of their means of travel. Whether you’re driving, cycling, walking, wheeling, or scooting, everyone has the right to feel secure while travelling in our area.

“While a big part of that comes down to people’s road safety awareness, there are lots of practical steps we’re taking to encourage long-term behavior change in how people choose to travel in our area.

We hope to meet with our Police & Crime Commissionaire, Emily Spurrell shortly to explore how this is developing

Don Thompson



MCC Committee

Co-chair: Kirsty Styles

Co-chair: Eddy Taylor

Secretary: Andrew Grimby

Membership Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Chris Beazer

Media: Don Thompson

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



Mini Roads – a children’s utopia

This amazing project has been many years in the making but it's here with thanks to the hard work and determination of Peloton.

“Mini roads opened in July and has been received and utilised better than I could have imagined” said Danny Robinson of Peloton.

The space has been brought to life by over 800 visitors in its first three weeks of opening and 50+ children have graduated from balance bikes to pedal bikes.

Clara, mum of two, said: “This is a truly an amazing place, three

hours here on Friday and now both my boys can cycle with confidence...”

It has also hosted a series of events for women, On Yer Bike, created to support women on their bike journey.

Danny Robinson told us more: “Alongside Liverpool City Council and British Cycling we’ve reanimated the old ‘fountains’ in Everton Park bringing the one of the UK’s biggest and best bike play parks.”

This summer parents and children are invited to join in the

fun. With free bike use, lessons and games sessions will be a great chance to get outdoors and let the kids play on the streets in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

There are balance bikes of all sizes, little bikes, proper bikes and trikes, all regularly serviced and good to go. Peloton will also be providing healthy nutritious food thanks to its partnership with HAF summer programme (Holidays Activities & Food).

facebook.com/PelotonLiverpool



Aigburth Community Cycle Club

Do you want to get back into cycling but not sure where to start? You don't need any special clothing or equipment to join our rides, you don't even need a bike as we've got some you can borrow for free. All our rides are led by trained volunteers and range from 3-7 mile mainly traffic free routes to 10-14 mile rides exploring Liverpool on roads and cycle paths to 25-35 mile rides venturing further afield into Lancashire, Cheshire and the Wirral.

Rides start from three cycle hubs at Greenbank Lane L17 1AG, Croxteth Park L12 0HB and our new venue the Florrie on Mill Street L8 4RF. Bikes and helmets are available to borrow for free from all three hubs.

"The group has given me confidence and a reason to get on my bike. I've learnt so much about my bike and the local area."

Gain confidence cycling on the road

From October–March we're running free Cycle Skills Sessions for adults funded by Liverpool City

Region Combined Authority. Join a session with a trained instructor to practise cycling in a traffic free environment or gain confidence with cycling on quiet roads.

Saturday 14 Oct – 11am–1pm and Saturday 21 Oct – 11am–1pm starting at our Greenbank Lane hub. Further dates tbc.

Learn to maintain your bike

Join one of our free Cycle Maintenance Workshops funded by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Suitable for anyone who hasn't done any cycle maintenance before.

Saturday 30 Sept – 10am–2pm and Saturday 28 Oct – 9am–1pm at Lark Lane Community Centre. Further dates tbc.

Email us to find out more or to book a place on any of the above: aigburthcommunitycycleclub@gmail.com

Cyclops junction opens in St Helens

A pioneering junction improvement scheme to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in a bid to encourage more people to choose active travel is set for completion this September.

In November last year, work started in Lea Green, St Helens, to install the Liverpool City Region's first Cycle Optimised Protected Signals (Cyclops) junction – an award-winning design layout being implemented in more and more cities and towns across the country – which prioritises the safety of pedestrians and cyclists by segregating them from motorists, reducing risk of collision and improving journey times for all road users.

Replacing the roundabout by the Bull & Dog pub on Marshalls Cross Road, the Cyclops forms an integral part of the £15m St Helens Southern Gateway scheme, a partnership between St Helens Borough Council, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Northern Rail to help make sustainable travel an easier choice for commuters who use Lea Green Railway Station, one of the borough's busiest stations.

How does it work?

The outer 'ring' of the junction is a cycle path, acting like a roundabout with signal-controlled crossings. This will allow those who cycle to cross over the junction or make right turns unrestricted by cars or foot traffic, creating a safe route to travel.

The inner 'ring' of the junction is dedicated to pedestrians, with those walking and cycling getting the same green light signal in all directions at the same time, but on a separate ring of paths in the middle of the junction.

There are well-defined zebra crossings on each side of the junction to provide a safe place to cross the cycle lane for pedestrians.

All motorised traffic stops at the lights whilst cyclists and pedestrians have their green light signal. Once pedestrians and cyclists have passed, motorised traffic will get the green light signal to continue driving and use the junction like normal.

The Cyclops junction will be fully open to traffic in September, with work on Lea Green Railway Station expected to finish this autumn.



The delivery of active travel schemes by Liverpool City Council



The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has confirmed that through funding provided by Active Travel England (ATE), Liverpool will receive a further £10.95m in capital and revenue funding for the delivery of walking and cycling measures.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council introduced three pop-up cycle lanes to provide socially distanced alternatives to public transport and encourage active lifestyles. The routes were:

- Liverpool Loop North (Vauxhall Rd/Commercial Rd/Stanley Rd)
- West Derby Road (Farnworth Street – Muirhead Avenue)
- Sefton Park (Sefton Park – Kingsley Road – Crown St – Towerlands St)

These routes were implemented using temporary infrastructure which has required regular

maintenance, and which is no longer fit for purpose. The Council undertook a public consultation to ascertain public opinion for converting the above three routes into fully segregated active travel corridors. The results of the public consultation exercise were presented to Cabinet in March

Sefton Park to City Centre

There is overwhelming support for the Sefton Park to City Centre route for which over 90% of the respondents to the public survey were supportive. No funds are currently allocated. It is anticipated that bids for funding for this route will be included in the next round of funding.

Vauxhall Road

Support was also strong for the Vauxhall Road route with 75% of the public in support of the scheme, but it is noted that additional consultation is required before this scheme can progress to a recommended way forward.

West Derby Road

For the West Derby Road route, 65% of the public respondents were opposed to the proposals. However, a large proportion of these responses were based on the assumption that scheme delivery would result in West Derby Road becoming one lane in each direction, as per the temporary / pop-up arrangement. However, the proposed layout maintains two lanes in each direction and retains traffic capacity at junctions. Approximately £3m through the Capital Works Programme was previously allocated for the resurfacing of West Derby Road.

Approximately £3m has been allocated from the Key Route Network Highway Maintenance Capital Funding Grant

2023 and demonstrated a clear desire to see improvements to the active travel network within the city (see box).

The allocation of funding, provided by ATE for the Active Travel Fund Grant Tranche 4 (ATF4), is £14.400m across the City Region for the delivery of walking and cycling measures.

The grant funding is for the following schemes in Liverpool:

- Princes Avenue Junction – £2m secured to upgrade the Princes Avenue roundabout to a cycle friendly junction with links to the previously completed Princes Avenue scheme and the proposed Croxteth Road upgrade forming part of the Sefton Park corridor.
- Croxteth Road Junction – £3m secured to upgrade the Aigburth Drive Gate and Croxteth Gate junctions and provide segregated cycle facilities between Sefton Park and Princes Avenue. Detailed design has been funded by a previous allocation from ATE through ATF 3*.
- Vauxhall Road Junction – £1m secured to deliver upgrades to traffic signal controlled junctions on the Vauxhall Road corridor. This builds on the detailed design work that is currently being undertaken to transform the existing pop-up cycle lanes on Vauxhall Road between Tithebarn Street and Boundary Street into a permanent segregated active travel corridor.
- West Derby Road Cycle Corridor – £4.9m secured to support delivery of a permanent active travel corridor between Low Hill and Tuebrook Roundabout to replace existing pop-up scheme. Preliminary design on this corridor has been done. The funding for the detailed design elements has been secured, however the detailed design work has yet to commence.

As far as MCC can tell, all these schemes (with the exception of West Derby), wouldn't actually be on site by the end of this financial year (31 March 2024). They would need a final round of design and then go out to procurement so that they would be ready to be delivered between April 2024 and March 2025.

Ed Gommon

Action Vision Zero

With regular meetings over the last few years Action Vision Zero [AVZ] has been able to learn more both locally and nationally about how it can campaign for safer, people-friendly streets and roads with a focus on urban areas. AVZ believes that what works to reduce road danger including eliminating casualties is already well known. Its aim is to make this knowledge freely available to campaigners. With a greater understanding of the problems we all face and developing a relationship with national groups with similar ethos, i.e. Cycling UK, Sustrans etc, there will be improved opportunities to meet with representatives of Police, PCC, Highways Engineers and others to pursue the work required to bring about the necessary change in the City Region.

actionvisionzero.org/about-us/

Life Cycle

This app provides an opportunity to listen and learn about those engaged in cycle campaigning across the UK. With many academic, professional and consultants all sharing their specific knowledge areas with links to research papers it can be very illuminating. Experiences shared do avoid reinventing the wheel at times? If you have a question then throw it out there – is it about LTNs or KSIs responses are guaranteed shortly.

Active Travel Café [previously Ideas with Beers!]

It's Tuesday, it's 5 o'clock, no it's not *Crackerjack* [oops], but an opportunity to hear from folk around the UK about local irks, success stories or campaigns. Attracting up to a 100 faces across the Zoom platform after the local banter they introduce a speaker [or two] for a short, but always interesting, presentation on a relevant and current topic. Come on it's only an hour and you could learn something?

The Active Travel Café will be back in September when Danny Williams, CEO of Active Travel England will talk about the organisation's priorities over the next 12 months.

Sign up but not until September as August is holiday time. Email ocn@cyclingsukoxfordshire.org

The commissioner's catch-up

Ok so where to begin? My role as Commissioner has, as ever, been an eclectic mix of challenges, rewards, frustrations and inspirations. On the plus side we have seen Sir Chris Boardman and the team at Active Travel England bed in and start to take effect, but looked on mouths agape as the crazy 15-minute neighbourhood conspiracy takes hold and despite this July being the hottest month ever recorded our Government has once more shown that they too are full of hot air by carrying on 'business as usual' with regard to our climate and environment.

Throughout the year I have attended several public meetings regarding new infrastructure across the region. What is always apparent is the level of vitriol aimed at such a benign agenda. This I find very puzzling and is almost exclusively voiced by people of my generation and the 'Boomers' before us. It can be hard work yet every time I put the case to the (rather too) angry local mob I am always eventually supported by softer and more often than not younger voices. This was personified at a public meeting regarding a new bike path through Crosby Coastal Park.

The most inoffensive intervention you could imagine to replace an already existing shared path but what bile it inspired 'race track!', 'danger to children!' 'environmental disaster!' The whole thing could have been a bit soul destroying but as well as the hard working council officers thanking me for my support there were also other voices to be heard. The people at the back who don't normally get a say 'I think it's a great plan', 'yes please!' and the meeting was concluded by an older man, with tattooed arms Popeye would be proud of, turning to face his peers and declaring 'our generation should be ashamed of ourselves'. Ultimately Sefton Council turned down its own application which is utterly baffling and disappointing but my point is



"I find inspiration from the groups and individuals passionately advocating change all over our region"

that the other voices are out there and they are youthful and still positive about the possibilities for a better future.

The whole messaging thing is my new obsession because for years the problem was lack of funding for decent cycling and walking initiatives however now the money can be found but it's the delivery that's the problem. This is largely due to the stalling effect of self-serving local politicians, negative press and bitter social media campaigns regarding anything about active travel and environmental interventions. I try not to get dragged down the rabbit hole on the Apps but sometimes I can't help wading in and I found it very interesting to note that the following one-liner I posted on Nextdoor Neighbour 'there is no such

thing as a motorist or a cyclist just people travelling around in different ways, most respectful and some disrespectful' was viewed nearly two thousand times in a day so maybe I should engage with the 'us and them' chats a bit more.

I wasn't sure where this piece would lead me but it's turned out to be a bit of a rambling missive about how to continue to keep things moving forward when it seems that whenever we see a glimmer of progress the backlash is bewilderingly fierce both nationally and locally. I search for strength visiting other UK cities and regions where change is really happening and our neck of the woods looks increasingly isolated and backwardly introspective. I find solace meeting and swapping experiences with the other Commissioners from around the country who I can tell you often feel as frustrated as I do even though their areas are by and large moving along at a faster pace.

Most of all though I find inspiration from the groups and individuals passionately advocating change all over our region. My spirits were truly lifted by the warm camaraderie when I went for a ride with Helen and the Aigburth Community Cycle Club. I always get good vibes seeing Don and all the old and new faces at the MCC AGM. Just recently riding down the hill at Everton Park and coming across kids of all ages riding the mini road area in merry-go-round of energy and fun created by the sheer determination of Dan from Peloton not only made my day it made my year. Just a few of the fabulous people I know are spreading the word and turning the tide.

So I choose to ignore the unreasonably angry voices determined to preserve a way of life which is not just unsustainable but also unjust. Instead I ride around our region meeting great people, focus on persuading those in power via the sheer force of rationality and carry on doing what I have always done. That is to enjoy riding my beloved bike, telling anyone I come across, on any platform or medium why more people should do the same and that is because it's just brilliant.

Simon O'Brien

Asylum Link

Asylum Link [ALM] is an organisation dedicated to helping asylum seekers and refugees. It offers a warm welcome, friendship and a place to belong. Its vision is to build a society where asylum seekers are accepted, understood and welcomed, for the benefit of the whole community.

Amongst the opportunities offered at ALM is an opportunity to explore the city with its bike club.

ALM can usually supply a bike if you do not have one; its volunteer team of bike mechanics who work on Tuesdays from 10:00 – 3:00 do their best to keep them all mechanically safe and reliable.

ALM accepts donations of bikes, accessories and cycle clothing – just get in touch with Rory or Emma at ALM.

ALM is very grateful for the £500 donation we received from Merseyside CTC [CyclingUK] this year which has provided many of the consumable items required in simple maintenance such as brake and gear cables, brake blocks, inner tubes etc.

Emma Leaper: emma@asylumlink.org.uk

Rory Goldring: rory@asylumlink.org.uk

www.asylumlink.org.uk

www.facebook.com/asylumlinkmerseyside

Sefton Council seeks to gain new Traffic Enforcement powers to make roads safer

The Council is applying for powers to enforce certain traffic offences, including enforcement of driving in pedestrian only areas, making illegal U-turns and ignoring 'No Entry' signs.

As part of the application the Council is proposing to trial these new powers at three locations. These are Stanley Road in Bootle, Hastings Road in Hillside and Birkdale's Windy Harbour Road.

The Council wants your views on the three locations.

Complete the online consultation via www.yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk, or email to transport.planning@sefton.gov.uk

Record your ride: “Distributed CCTV”



Video recording is familiar to us all, when we use a modern camera or a mobile phone, or when we strap a video camera onto our handlebars and seat-post before we venture out on the roads. In this way we become a network of data recording CCTV devices that can provide evidence of wrongdoing over a wide area and, where appropriate, allow submitting of evidence to the police: so-called, distributed CCTV. In this way our recording devices supplement fixed and other video-records that are maintained by police and others.

Why record your ride?

Hopefully, for the most part, our riding is uneventful. If an event does occur, it may be a non-contact event, or an impact event.

Non-contact: drivers of

vehicles can threaten cyclists in many ways. Speeding is disconcerting and dangerous. Driving through red traffic lights is a high risk error or might even be a deliberate act. Stopping in the advanced bike box removes an escape zone for cyclists. Driving close to a cyclist (a ‘close pass’) removes room for error on the part of driver and rider. But all of these incidents can be caught on camera and all can, or could, result in a warning letter, a fixed penalty notice, a driver awareness course, or prosecution.

Impact events: if you or your bike are unfortunate enough to be hit, your camera will record the event, even in a hit and run. Your rights to any prosecution or litigation could be predicated on the recording of such an event. For this reason, get in the habit of always creating a protected copy

of any files which might form the basis of a police submission. All video records must be unexpurgated; any alteration of the record could prejudice an action in court.

Which camera?

To be of value to cyclists a camera should be able to clip, identify, time-date stamp, and retain a short file of a specific incident that has raised concern with a rider. Typically this could use a button press with a short beep when the file is saved; ideally recording will use a loop so that recent events will always be recorded.

The required total duration and battery life for a camera varies but this could be 30 minutes for a commuter, up to six hours for a club rider. It is highly desirable that they are waterproof although not all are; this may be unnecessary when riding in a country of low rainfall.

I use Cycliq front and rear cameras which allow over five hours recording (front) and four and a half hours (rear), though any video device is better than none. They should be robust and able to withstand impacts, some use protective coverings, others are very solid though these can be quite heavy.

Some of these cameras are reviewed in Cycling Weekly: <https://tinyurl.com/2p84z3z3>

Anything I should do when riding and recording?

Ensure your camera batteries are fully charged, the memory card is formatted and not full! Mount the camera securely without any 'wobble' and to provide as complete a view, front and ideally rear, as possible.

Ride to a high standard that will ensure your safety. By all means politely talk to a driver who has come too close, but never get into an altercation with a driver as this will be seen in the video and might prejudice your case.

How and when to save data of an incident?

If you feel that a relevant event has occurred, a driver coming too close when overtaking, overtaking into oncoming traffic, speeding, a driver cutting a corner at a T-junction, you should clip or lock the file immediately. You can then consider whether you wish to submit it to the police once you have a chance to review and consider the file at leisure. Remember that the file you record should provide an unobstructed view of the incident and allow at least one minute of footage before and after the incident. Save the relevant clipped section to a computer hard drive, external hard drive or other device.

How to submit the data?

In Merseyside, you start here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8jr458>

The website provides a form

that will take 10-20 minutes to complete. Answer all the questions, especially stating where the incident happened; this can involve placing a marker on an on-line map. You should state from where you were cycling and your direction of travel. You must give full details of any vehicle involved, notably registration, make, model and colour and, if they are seen, the driver. For taxis and private hire, provide the driver details on the plate at the rear of the vehicle.

Fill in the form succinctly, accurately and honestly; remember that you may be required to go to court. Always provide complete details, including your visibility at the time (clothing, lights), as well as details of your camera and recording card. You will be asked, and must provide, detailed description of what is seen in your video. You can provide a short, reasonable analysis of what you thought the driver had done wrong, e.g. overtaking into oncoming traffic. Remember also that you can be prosecuted if you, yourself are seen doing something illegal, for example, riding through a red traffic light.

A useful resource is West Midlands Police at: <https://tinyurl.com/um6t28w2>

What next?

Once the form is submitted, you need do nothing more, unless you receive a request for further

information; in this case you will normally be given a link to submit your recorded video record to the relevant police authority. If, however, you hear nothing further, it will be likely that your description of the event was not considered to require any further investigation. If you disagree with this decision, you can ring the police and quote the reference number received when the form was uploaded; you can then discuss your concerns.

Once you have submitted your file(s), your video will be reviewed by a police officer who has had experience of this process. If you need to go to court you will be notified in advance. Your evidence will then form the basis of your contribution in court.

If you hear nothing further and, particularly if you have had a traumatic experience or just want to receive some follow-up, ring the police department to whom you submitted your data and provide the case record number you were given with your submission.

When to use a camera?

A video camera is your guardian angel, watching out for you and recording those around you. These days, I always use one, even riding to the shops. Once you are used to your personal angel, you will find it easy to take them with you, enjoying their companionship wherever you ride.

Derek Gould

What's the deal with helmet/handlebar cams now?

A few years ago a lot of people using bicycles regularly, became excited. Good quality, simple to use, cameras, helmet mounted or fixed to handlebar or seatpost, became affordable. The hope was that any report to the police (or other authorities) of "traffic offences", usually committed by car (or van or other motor vehicle) users, could be underpinned with some juicy video footage.

I remember years ago giving such a report in person: the sympathetic officer got a special laptop out to copy my SD card. There was great fear I might compromise the police IT systems with computer viruses. I was relieved when weeks later the offending youths who had threatened me and shouted abuse while pursuing me through night time Liverpool had been told off by one of their dads whose car they had used for their exploits.

More and more helmet or handlebar cam submissions led the police to come up with some guidelines on what they would accept for evidence:

- No swearing
- No retaliation
- Context (be a good videographer and don't leave what's happened before and after showdown of your incident on the cutting room floor)
- Discretion (don't put it on YouTube or other social media before we can prosecute)

Round that time (I remember a presentation with the above bullet points by the police in the Friends Meeting House in School Lane) I had some success submitting a video to a bus operator which was dealt with satisfactory, partly because buses record videos with more cameras than they have standing spaces.

Then a camera manufacturer had the idea of using a web-based submission system where a



report could be linked directly to a police force. I never used it and can't comment on its merit.

More recently the police replicated this online reporting system, except it's in two steps: first you report that you have video footage to support your evidence, and if you're lucky, you then get an invitation to upload this to their servers.

The guidelines still apply.

I recently had a particularly unpleasant encounter with a private hire driver who, after trying to overtake dangerously against oncoming cars in a narrow stretch, then showered us with foul language. On preparing the report we also found that the MOT of his vehicle had expired. Videos of mine and my partners cameras where cropped to the required sections to make a compelling case. After a couple of weeks of our initial report we were requested to upload this, and then...

We never heard more about it.

Now, this clearly means, at least how I interpret the terms and conditions, that this was not worth any police time: that man's conduct, to all intents and purposes, was acceptable to the investigators.

I followed with a poll on our email group and learned that quite a few of you have given up submitting anything anymore, for various reasons. I have also a much higher threshold, but this incidence was just above this bench mark. My mark will be higher now: the trauma of reliving something like this and prepare video and report for nothing, is not good for my mental well-being.

I guess then this non reporting will result in good looking stats: all is well on our roads, we're sharing it and respect each others space, so rest assured.

Martin Dunschen

Merseyside CTC Cycling UK

Our rides are every Sunday and Wednesday with local meet up points usually at a café for an early morning caffeine injection before cycling off.

New riders always welcome to join these rides. But, we also run shorter rides on a Saturday so check the latest details on the Club pages.

Sept 2023	from	time	to	leader	class
Sun 24th	Calissa	09:45	ME Cycles	DG	B
Wed 27th	Calissa	10:15	The Farm, Burscough	PW	B
Oct 2023					
Sun 1st	Hadlow Sta Cafe	10:30	Holt	DN	B
Wed 4th	Sprout Cafe	10:45	Walk Mill	PW	B
Sun 8th	Calissa	10:15	Halsal Bakery	DG	B

More information at www.merseysidectc.co.uk/ride-with-us



Big congratulation to Merseyside's own Jim Clarke who competed in the Transplant Games in the Summer and made the winners rostrum with a Bronze Medal. Well done Jim!

Merseyside CTC was very pleased to donate £500 to Asylum Link Merseyside. The money has been used to purchase much needed parts such as gear and brake cables [inner/outer], small tools, brake blocks and other consumable items.

Wild Wales Challenge 2023

This year will mark the 39th edition of this most prestigious cycling event, which features a different route each year, but always set amidst the spectacular scenery of North Wales. The event is not a race – but a traditional tourist challenge ride in which riders are invited to complete the course within a generous time allowance.

This year's event was on 27th August, time to get into training for next year if you fancy? The event is open to all riders, whether or not members of Cycling UK. It is organised on behalf of Merseyside CTC and any type of cycle may be ridden, provided it is roadworthy. Low gears are advisable, and special attention should be paid to brakes, wheels and tyres. It is a challenge event, but a reasonably fit rider should experience no difficulty in completing the course within the time allowed. Being set in the glorious North Wales countryside, riders should expect both steep climbs long descents and some non-metallic road surfaces so care is required at all times.

As always, this year there were two routes:

- Long Course of 95 miles and 9,500ft of ascent
- Shorter Course of 71 miles and 5,750ft of ascent.

If you want to check out the routes here's the link:

www.merseysidectc.co.uk/wwc

The preconceptions and reality of cycling in India



So, I've moved to Pune, India for the next couple of years.

When you say you are moving to India people have some strong preconceptions. What everyone talks about (those who don't assume that cycling is impossible at any rate) is oncoming traffic, potholes and cows! The reality in the world's most populous country as you might expect is more complex than that...

So, you are cycling down one side of the dual carriageway and suddenly a moped comes towards you. Then a car. A motorbike. All in your lane. They always turn off before you collide but it keeps you on your toes constantly. Many roads have continuous barriers down the middle without many gaps for people to U turn in. So,

people often just pull out into oncoming traffic as a short cut. Add to that the fact that many of them are on phones, motorists and motorcyclists alike. Meaning that constant vigilance is required to avoid crashing.

There's high traffic volumes and a wide variety of road users; cows, people herding goats, stray dogs, bareback horse riders, handcarts and mopeds carrying improbable loads. Cows are an interesting traffic calming measure! They are revered for religious reasons and are found on both city and rural roads. It's normal to see unaccompanied city cows at the same junctions each day with some painted in pink, orange and blue. Yes, the cows are painted! But cars just

move carefully around them.

Main roads have a good surface, just with occasional giant potholes and very long grids in the middle of lanes. Worst is when the potholes fill up with monsoon rain and you have no idea how deep they are. Best avoided. But the attitude of drivers alone compensates for the road surface: if you do make a sudden movement to avoid a grid or hole, you get a friendly beep, not anger. Moped and auto rickshaw riders often drive alongside you and you turn to be greeted with a smile, a cheery "hello" and a thumbs up! You'll overtake a slow moped and the driver will shout over apologetically "I'm saving fuel".

Local people say that Pune was a city of bikes 30 years ago and it was unusual to see one of your friends on a moped, never mind owning a car. Now cars, autorickshaws and mopeds dominate the road space. But don't get me wrong, it's not like this all the time. In the mornings before 9am people walk and jog down the road and the benches under the trees at the end of roads are full of people chatting. The heat here makes this an attractive thing to do and the shade is essential!

But probably the biggest difference is the attitude of drivers. The concept of 'right

of way' doesn't seem to exist – maybe because you can't argue who has right of way with a cow – and unlike in the UK where many car drivers are in a constant battle for territory, swearing and gesturing at total strangers for perceived infringements, in India everyone just gets along. Cultural and religious attitudes mean that people wouldn't pick a fight with a stranger. So no point getting worked up and shouting at someone coming the wrong way towards you, here they just manoeuvre round each other.

Cycling here is intense so it's best to leave early to avoid the traffic and heat, and if you do hit traffic on the return you just have to take a deep breath, be mega vigilant and go with the flow. And to keep it in perspective, just seven miles of city riding gets you to the countryside where beautiful landscapes unfold before you, straight out of a picture book.

Lou Henderson



Formby Bypass cycle path

Back in the 1930s what was then the Ministry of Transport, gave out grants for new bypass roads if a cycle lane was incorporated on the road segregated from vehicular traffic. The Formby Bypass was created, with a segregated footway and cycle lane both directions. The same happened on Dunning's Bridge Road from Switch Island to Old Roan and Bootle, and from Maghull towards Ormskirk. Sadly the various councils and Government failed to keep up with simple repairs, resurfacing and weed clearance.

Roll on 2023 and Sefton was allocated money by the Government to update the Formby bypass route on one side only, as a segregated cycle and footway. This has been done to a good standard, except for the roundabouts at each end, and the crossing points outside the

air force base. These crossings should be a give way/stop for traffic, not cyclists, as northbound cyclists are now expected to stop and look around to check for left turning traffic into the base.

Then there is the very dangerous junction at Coastal Road where left turning traffic has a separate filter and the beg to cross button takes ages to stop all traffic. This junction is the one where the Transpenine Trail crosses from Plex Moss Lane to Coastal Road, a mostly off-road route to Aintree and onwards to Hunts Cross. Part of this route has been resurfaced with tarmac, but there are still barriers in places.

Another failure is to not resurface the very narrow/muddy path from the Bypass into Hawksworth Drive into Freshfield alongside the drainage ditch.

Paul Rogers

www.youtube.com/thesadcyclist

World Car Free Day 2023

Merseyside residents are being encouraged to ditch their cars and embrace fun, friends, family and freedom by choosing fossil-free ways to get around this World Car Free Day.

A weeklong series of events will culminate with a free family friendly festival by the playground at the **Mystery Park on Sunday 24 September**. This will include

live music and entertainment, stalls and workshops, and ends with an all-ages bike ride to the new urban parklet at Mann Island.

Kirsty Styles, co-chair of MCC, says: "Today in most countries, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine our lives with fewer car trips. But imagine – and take action – we must."



More World Car Free Day events

Sunday 24 September

Merseyside CTC will have a ride leaving at 9.45am from Calisa coffee shop, 84 Childwall Priory Rd, Liverpool L16 7PF. It will arrive at the Mystery around 1pm.

www.merseysidectc.co.uk/ride-with-us

Wednesday 20 September

Ignite Liverpool is hosting a one-off special of their regular quick-fire talks series, asking people to

speak to the theme 'Merseyside 2030 – Zero Car City?'

igniteliverpool.com/2023/08/zero-car-city-20th-september/

Friday 22 September

Peloton Liverpool will be running a special 'Joy Ride' on World Car Free Day itself. Sign up to the Peloton group on the Spond app and keep an eye out for details.

group.spond.com/KIVGR

St Cuthbert's primary school is also planning to open a playstreet for the day on Church Road in Old Swan.

Car Free Sunday 24 September Schedule

9am Junior Parkrun

10am Market stalls open and Love Wavertree 'run-a-mile'

All day Childwall Emporium on arts and crafts and Living Streets family activities, bike skills sessions for kids, treasure hunts, playground, plus Liverpool Magic Circle member John the Great magician at 2pm.

11am-3pm Free Dr Bike sessions where local bike mechanics will give your bike the once over

12pm and 2pm Free bike maintenance workshops with Hollie from Energise Cycles

Music every hour from 11.30am, including Johnathan Kopf (11.30am), Liverpool's Cheery (12.30pm), Ukulele Club (1.30pm), local solo act Andrew Stride (2.30pm) and Dog Brainz (3.30pm), who are about to release their second album of "good time northern pop punk"

4pm Family bike ride leaves on National Cycle Route 56 to the town centre – register for the ride by signing up the Aigburth Community Cycling Club using the Spond app.

group.spond.com/GSDOY

The event is being supported by Cycling UK and local councillors.

On the day we'll have help from Aigburth Community Cycling Club, Cycle Liverpool, GoodGym, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Living Streets, Love Wavertree, ParkRun, Peloton Liverpool, the Penny Lane Wombles, St John's Ambulance, Sustrans, Transition Liverpool, Zero Carbon Liverpool and more.