



NEWSLETTER

October 2015

## **Review of the past year 2014-2015**

Cycleways has had a very good year:

- **Strong membership**
- **Healthy financial base**
- **Good Peace Festival**
- **WCC's new Cycle Network Development Plan for Warwick and Leamington.**

In our February Newsletter we reported on our assessment of WCC's transport strategy, STA4, for the WDC Local Plan. Our conclusion was that it could not deliver the objectives set by WDC:

- Maximise the number of journeys made by sustainable transport
- Deliver an integrated approach to transport.

Neither could the STA4 deliver the Government's transport strategy objectives of cutting carbon emissions or making travelling by bike more attractive.

Cycleways were not alone in their condemnation of WCC's STA4, other community groups also shared our concerns.

WCC heard these concerns which led to a series of workshops to identify a new transport strategy for the Local Plan for Warwick and Leamington. From this came a demand management strategy leading to the Cycle Network

came a demand management strategy leading to the Cycle Network Development Plan, WCC have also organised a training workshop in cycle infrastructure design for their engineers.

Rodney King

## **Editorial**

As the AGM is approaching – Thursday 5th November – we have a review of the past year from Rodney and a summary of the accounts both of which how that we are in a healthy state.

Let us hope that the coming year brings improvement in cycle infrastructure and that some sensible funding is forthcoming. At the moment it is unclear how much funding will be made available to cycling; there are lots of talk of the benefits of cycling and promises of action but apart from London and a few chosen towns little to see on the ground.

Locally it seems that K2L has been added to the LEP for improvements to the A425 so who knows maybe....

Bob

## Peddlamaniacs

At our inaugural AGM in November we had a talk from Michelle from the Royal Leamington Spa Cycling Club (RLSCC, not to be confused with the other RLSCC – the Royal Leamington Spa Canoe Club), about their cycle skills for children sessions. They're called Peddlamaniacs (for children that are able to pedal) and Pre Peddlas (for children that are not yet pedalling independently). What appealed to me is that they're based on ability, not age, with a wide mix of ages in each group. This means that kids aren't bored by being in a class that's too easy, or struggling to ride beyond their current ability. The skills are based on learning bike control with a focus on cycling as a sport (especially for the more confident kids), so they complement the later levels of Bikeability – which focus on riding on the road with other traffic.

We have two children, one six years old and the other three. The six year old is a confident cyclist, so she has loved the activities at her Peddlamaniacs sessions (or Bike Club, as she calls it). They've learned skills as diverse as different ways to mount and dismount, riding under a bar, riding with one hand, and last weekend they were on a course on the grass practising keeping their inside pedal up as they went round corners.

Her younger brother was much less confident. Until his first Pre - Peddlamaniacs session he wouldn't use his balance bike for much more than 30 seconds before complaining that it was "too wobbly."

So we were delighted and astounded when at the first session he was happy to spend the whole hour using his bike – even if he was mainly walking around with his bike between his legs rather than sitting on it and scooting. It wasn't long though until he was sitting on it and scooting (albeit slowly), keen to copy what the other children were doing and spurred on by the constant positive encouragement from the coaches. Then one week it all came together and suddenly he was scooting along, lifting his feet up, leaning to turn, and wanting to bike home from town with his older sister and me – a long one kilometre on small wheels. Now he's got the pedals on his bike and is just getting the hang of pedalling, but given that he already knows how to balance, and lean to turn, and brake, adding peddling isn't much more to learn.

Peddlamaniacs and Pre Peddlas are on on Saturday mornings during term time, at Ridgeway School in Warwick. For more information see the RLSCC website ([www.rlscyclingclub.com](http://www.rlscyclingclub.com)). RLSCC is supported by the Bike Yard, 75 Clarendon Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4PW.

Alastair



Ride London Trafalgar Square cycle jam!

# **Air Quality and Human Health**

By Dr Stephen Crooks, Respiratory Physician, Warwick Hospital

## **Context**

Air quality is close to the heart of the urban cyclist, in more senses than one, and is currently very topical. The scandal about Volkswagen's diesel car emissions stealth software has shocked the world recently, and ensured media attention on the subject for months to come. Also Warwick District Council has published a recent update on their Air Quality Action Plan (June 2015), which is a useful overview of the local issues. This article gives a brief outline of the current state of knowledge on the topic and a personal reflection on how some risks can be mitigated

## **Air pollutants**

Air pollution results from a complex mixture of thousands of pollutants. This mixture may include solid and liquid particles suspended in the air (PM)), and various gases: ground level ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>x</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and carbon monoxide (CO). The most important sources of pollutants are fossil fuel combustion (transport, home heating and power plants); industry, animal farming (chiefly ammonia); and natural phenomena (e.g volcanic eruptions, desert dust storms, wildfires). Due to the close proximity of people to the emissions, cars and trucks are the most important source of outdoor air pollutants in our urban environments with respect to health, and reducing transport emissions is thus very important. Air pollution is worse at times of air stagnation. Vehicle related air pollution is worse in areas with high traffic density.

## **Adverse effects on Health**

Effects noted can be divided into 'acute' problems *ie* develop within hours, days or weeks from exposure, and 'chronic' *ie* long term over months and years

Acute effects largely affect those with chronic heart or lung conditions and the elderly with studies showing increased heart attacks, strokes and exacerbations of chronic respiratory disease such as, cystic fibrosis, asthma, lung fibrosis and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Research has shown increases in emergency medication use (e.g. inhalers), doctor consultations, hospital admissions and death rates on days with higher pollution levels.

Evidence on chronic effects indicates that life expectancy is reduced in those exposed long-term to higher levels of air pollution (mainly from increased rates of heart attack, stroke, lung cancer and other respiratory illness). Children growing up in polluted areas are more likely to develop wheezing and asthma than those in less polluted areas, and their lung development is retarded. Chronic cardiorespiratory illnesses in the older adult are commoner in those exposed to higher levels of air pollution.

## **How to reduce the risks of poor air quality**

- Government
  - Promoting less-polluting transport – walking, cycling, electric buses, electric taxis and cars
  - Disincentivising drivers of polluting vehicles by using congestion charging, and vehicle and fuel taxation increases
  - Tackling the school run problem
  - Raising awareness of the health issues caused by transport choices in particular
- Walkers, Runners and Cyclists
  - Avoiding traffic congested routes if possible. Exercising increases exposure to pollutants by increasing the amount of inhaled (polluted) air passing into the body
  - If peak congestion routes are unavoidable try to walk or cycle as far as possible from the traffic – even putting 1 – 2m between you and polluting vehicles helps
  - Cycling masks may help but more research is needed Those with chronic respiratory illness e.g. asthma should avoid congested routes on days with a high pollution index
  - Challenge your friends and associates on the air quality issue, and lobby local and national government for effective changes to be made on air quality
- Drivers
  - Consider walking or public transport where possible
  - Avoid rapid accelerations except to avoid danger
  - Let local government, your employer and/or the school know that you would travel to work or would send your child to school walking, cycling or by public transport if this was made possible, and be specific about the changes needed
  - Consider buying a less polluting vehicle e.g. electric or hybrid car, or fitting a diesel particulate filter if you have an older diesel car
  - Remember vehicle pollution affects you as much as cyclists or pedestrians when you are stuck in heavy traffic
  - Car share

Further reading/listening:

- 1) Costing the earth BBC: ‘Lungs, Lies and Automobiles’ Oct15  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06flmf1>
- 2) Air Quality Action Plan. Warwick District Council June 2015  
[http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20505/air\\_pollution](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20505/air_pollution)
- 3) European Lung White Book ERS 2015  
<http://www.erswhitebook.org/chapters/outdoor-environment/>
- 4) European Lung Foundation <http://www.europeanlung.org/en/lung-disease-and-information/risk-factors/outdoor-air-pollution>
- 5) Air pollution, stroke and anxiety. BMJ March 2015  
<http://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h1510>

## Cycleways Accounts for Year Ending 30th June 2015

	-£1,000	-£500	£0	£500	£1,000	£1,500	£2,000
Funds - not ring-fenced							£1,621
Funds - grants ring-fenced for north Leamington							£1,280
Funds - grants ring-fenced for Kenilworth							£1,272
Subscriptions paid				£339			
Website			-£56				
Donations from Cycleways			-£41				
Peace Festival			-£50				
Newsletter and Printing			-£160				
AGM Catering			-£90				
Meeting room hire			-£20				
Kenilworth events		-£489					
CTC Affiliated Membership			-£60				
Funds - not ring-fenced							£1,482
Funds - grants ring-fenced for north Leamington							£1,280
Funds - grants ring-fenced for Kenilworth						£783	

## Eurostar bike carriage

From 1<sup>st</sup> November Eurostar is insisting that all bicycles are carried in boxes. Previously you could box your bike in a regulation bike box and carry it on with you, storing it on the luggage racks. Alternatively you wheeled the whole bike to a despatch office at the rear of St Pancras or Gare du Nord, paid £25 and left it to be put on the train. You could then collect it at the other end.

Obviously bagging a bike meant it was with you but meant disassembling as the size of the bag/box was limited. Also the luggage racks were frequently full.

Handing the bike in meant no disassembly and it usually went on the same train as you, and I believe for £30 you could ensure it did. This was probably the best bike train service I have found. We have used it a number of times for tours in France and Germany and it worked perfectly.

We usually took an afternoon train as we had to travel to London first and then spent a night in Paris before moving

collecting the bike the next morning and moving on, free storage at the station!

Now it appears that probably due to the new trains not having as much luggage space they will require all bikes to be boxed/bagged and the dimensions of the containers means disassembly, not much fun at the rear of the stations and when catching a train, a real backward step'

The CTC and European bike organisations have complained and Eurostar has had several thousand complaints from cyclists, maybe you would like to add your name to these complaints?

Go to - <http://e-activist.com/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=1689&ea.campaign.id=43067>

The Cycleways AGM is on **Thursday 5 November 2015 at 19.30, upstairs at The [Fat Pug](#), Guys Cliffe Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 5BZ** (used to be the Coventry Arms).

As well as the election of officers, there will be interesting talks, a movie, and a quiz – with prizes!



Orleans 2011

## Riding EuroVelo 6

There are a number of long distance cycle routes across Europe and EuroVelo 6 runs from St Nazaire at the mouth of the Loire to Costanta in Romania on the Black Sea a total of 6,251 Km!

Back in 2011 Karen, Tim and me decide to ride the section from Orleans to St Nazaire having already in 2009 ridden the section from the source of the Danube to Regensberg near the Austrian border.

The section from Orleans was mainly on either dedicated tracks or very quiet side roads and was a great trip. We stayed in a mixture of Hotels and chambre d'hote.

We rode between 30 and 45 miles a day and realised why most people start at St Nazaire – the prevailing wind is a Westerly!



Typical riverside path

Fast forward to 2015 and we decided to start to fill in the missing section eastward from Orleans. Unfortunately due to hospital appointments I did not have time to take the train down to Orleans and we only had about 10 days so we used the campervan to get there taking our Bromptons.



Orleans 2015

The initial idea was to camp up and ride out and return by train. Unfortunately we didn't realise that the line between Orleans and Gien is closed! The lines are there but no trains. So it meant riding out and back and then moving along to ride back to the point we had reached and back again, so twice the distance.

We managed to complete the section from Orleans to St Briar a town with the longest aqueduct in France designed by Eiffel of tower fame.



So next it's St Briar to Basle, maybe in two stages. Then Regensberg Vienna and final to Budapest as I think it gets a bit wild beyond there.