

BIKERIGHTS

**AGM: Wednesday
16th April @ 7pm**

**Arts and Resources Centre, Chapel Street,
Little Germany, Bradford**
**Come along and set the agenda for the com-
ing year.... ALL WELCOME!!**

WEST YORKSHIRES LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN - WE CAN BUT DREAM...

In mid December local authorities heard how much money would be in their allocation for the Local Transport Plan 2003/2004. A total of £1.6 billion is allocated to LTPs nationally. The settlement letter informing them also reflected on the Annual Progress Reports that they have produced. There was additional money for Integrated Transport to local authorities that have made good progress in delivering schemes and achieving targets and an announcement of Transport Planning Skills Initiative aimed at attracting people into the transport profession – badly needed if transport funding is to be spent.

Apart from major schemes (£348 million nationally) and the integrated transport block allocation to Passenger Transport Authorities all money for transport now goes into the Single Capital Pot allocation to local authorities. This means a total loss of control over what it is spent on. Local authorities may bid for transport schemes and then decide to spend the money on school roofs and other urgent projects.

The part of the letter dealing with regional matters congratulates local authorities on the quality of their Annual Progress Reports (APRs), cross-boundary

working and their efforts to consult with the public. West Yorkshire's allocation for everything including major schemes is £66,694,000. The only new major scheme in Bradford is the Manor Park Bends.

Criticism of West Yorkshire includes the fact that not all the money was spent last year! There is also criticism of the targets and indicators and a suggestion that more work is needed in developing these. The layout of the document could have been better. Bradford's allocation within West Yorkshire is £9,718 million.

Most of this money will go on small safety, traffic calming and maintenance schemes. The budget for cycling is a little over £200,000. BCAG has looked at the plans for 2003/2004 for this budget and concluded that if real progress is to be made *at least twice that sum should be spent each year*. The shortage of skilled traffic engineers is a factor here too as is the lack of political will to finish the Spenn Valley Greenway, the Leeds Liverpool Canal and the Great Northern Trail within a decent timescale. More money could undoubtedly be spent if those two problems were solved, particularly if everything were not left to one overworked officer. We can but dream.

Pam Ashton

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A news story from the dear old media: 'A Somerset woman has had her stolen purse returned after 10 years! The purse, snatched a decade ago in the car park of the pub owned by Maureen Baker, was returned to her by a cyclist who found it near a railway. The cash was missing but the credit cards were intact. They're expired, of course, and the purse isn't in good shape, but Mrs Baker has been given a gift that money can't buy: a sense of closure. Nice gesture, cyclist!'

UPDATE ON THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION ON VULNERABLE USER ROAD CROSSINGS.

Towards the end of November 2002 the Highways Agency (HA) consulted a short list of non-motorised user groups on proposals to improve key crossings of the motorway and trunk road network in this area. A similar consultation has taken place all over England and has been carried out by various firms of consultants. We are in Area 16 which is about half of the area of Yorkshire and the Humber and includes the M1, M18, M62, M621, M606 and the A63. The original consultees had been the Ramblers Association and the British Horse Society, but after pressure on the Highways Agency the CTC (Cyclists Touring Club) were included. I saw the consultation and responded although not consulted.

The study consisted of a letter setting out terms of reference for the exercise and about 100 maps of road crossings such as footpaths on pedestrian bridges, bridleways in tunnels, minor roads over motorways and motorway junctions. User groups were asked to identify the crossings that are most important for improvement according to three criteria. That is they should be part of a national trail or local route or should prevent community severance. No map references were given and the maps were extremely poorly annotated such that the motorway in question itself was not always labelled and the entity crossing it was named as "Field Lane" (one ridiculous example of many). Responses were required by 16th December 2002.

All campaigner consultees were contacted by a couple of us suggesting they might also like to complain and ask that no crossings should be closed.

As a result of my letter to the Yorkshire and the Humber HA complaining about the timescale, the lack of information about the scope of the study and the poor maps, I was eventually telephoned with news of how the study was progressing. The matter was also taken up at regional and national level by the Countryside Agency and the CTC. Cycle campaigners all over England have, almost without exception complained about the process and it turns out they were justified in complaining. The HA have now reminded all their consultants of

the need to give volunteers adequate information and timescales. I am told that all the information gathered from users (an incredibly high response rate of about 90%) will be sent down to HQ in London along with suggested priorities for improvements by the regional HA offices. Someone in London will make a decision, and at the same time Ministers will decide how much money will be allocated to improvements. Announcements in the form of press releases will be made in early summer.

Given the poor state of the economy and the cost of military action in the Gulf I am not very optimistic that a decent budget will be devoted to this process. I pressed the HA on whether the study might lead to a programme of rationalisation of crossings and was reassured that it would not. However there is a parallel process going on of upgrading trunk roads (such as A1) to motorway standard which definitely does result in stopping up. This has certainly created difficulties for cyclists in that crossings of such a road become more spaced out. It pays to remain vigilant.

Pam Ashton



A personal view on the Iraq War:

The war in Iraq is fundamentally a resource war - and protection/control of oil resources is central to the war.

In so far as we are oil dependent, and in a world of increasing demand for oil allied with reducing reserves, it makes perfect sense for our leaders to avoid electoral unpopularity by gaining control over oil resources. Remember the fuel protests?

To be consistent in being against the war in Iraq would involve being serious about reducing our oil dependency.

Unfortunately, this is likely to be only the first of many resource wars - there are plenty of other resources besides oil that there is likely to be severe competition for in the coming fifty years - water being one of the most obvious. And in so far as we Westerners don't want to change our lifestyles (e.g. use a bike not a car), these wars are inevitably 'in our name'. Steve Carr



TWO PIECES OF NEWS

1. Spen Valley Greenway

The Bradford section of the SpenValley Cycleway, from the Kirklees boundary to Bradford City Centre is not long. However this 4 miles or so is causing Bradford Councillors much more trouble than the entire Trans Pennine Trail (TPT). The TPT, which is 215 miles from coast to coast and 80% off-road, is now complete and open having begun life as an idea in 1987 and then made steady progress owing to the commitment of the leadership of the 27 local authorities through which the TPT passes. However Bradford's Environment and Scrutiny Committee, ably chaired by Councillor Keith Thompson, recently began to push the leadership of Bradford Council and has passed a resolution to confirm that the Spen Valley Greenway will be complete into Bradford by March 2006 and that the Executive should secure a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to enable the path alongside the Transperience site to be purchased and developed. The good news is that this CPO was agreed by the Executive without any problem. Roll on 2006 – I am looking forward to taking my Zimmer frame out on National Cycle Network Route 66.

Pam Ashton.

2. Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Alliance

I have just affiliated to this body as an individual. I am very pleased to say that West Yorkshire District Association of the CTC have agreed to pay the affiliation fee for me so I will be adding to the campaigning effort on their behalf and on behalf of all cyclists to keep the Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes from ruin by motor vehicles. YDGLA has a Mission Statement that states that these lanes are a precious resource and will only be safeguarded if the only motor vehicles that use them are farm, national park and emergency vehicles. One problem is the legal minefield of rights of way. Part of the case law surrounding rights of way has determined that if a highway is "once a road it is always a road". Unfortunately now that can mean that use by all vehicles is now possible including motor vehicles. If the road in question is a roman road and has been enclosed and exempted from taxation ever since, the illogical result is that motor vehicles may now use it. Does this seem illogical to anyone else?

Pam Ashton

BRADFORD'S CYCLING HERO - OF 1936!

If you visit the Industrial Museum up round the back of Undercliffe you can see a very historic bike - the bike on which Walter Greaves broke the world distance record for distance cycled in one year in 1936. The bike's quite a curiosity - it looks initially something like a standard bike, but then you notice that it is adapted in a curious way. Walter was one armed, having had a childhood accident, and his bike was adapted having only one handlebar. Otherwise it looks like a fairly standard road bike - not that different from today's machine outwardly at least. Not much in the way of brakes - but then he was trying to break a record and roads were considerably quieter then.

Walter was a member of the Vegetarian Athletic Club - which still exists and you can visit their homepage at <http://www.vegac.co.uk> - so fuelled by a diet of milk, brown bread, butter, tomatoes, apples, nuts and orange juice he slogged his way to a grand total of 45383 miles. He did a maximum mileage of 262 miles in a day, though some rides had been overnight and gone yet further. He cycled huge mileages over the Yorkshire moors in all weathers, braving ice, snowdrifts and gales. He finished his epic year at City Hall around midnight on 31st December.

The record was claimed, the very next year, by an Australian who obviously had climatic advantages... None-the-less, Walter Greaves entered into cycling history with his epic mileage.

In later life he was a blacksmith near Skipton. All in all, a heroic vegetarian cyclist.

Cycling in Bradford today may seem rather prosaic - but this city has not been without mention in the history of cycling achievements...

Steve Carr



