

Eynsham–Oxford Commuter Challenge

Wed 8th June 2011: THE RESULTS

CYCLOX organised a “COMMUTER CHALLENGE” from the village of Eynsham to Oxford city centre on Wednesday 8th June 2011.

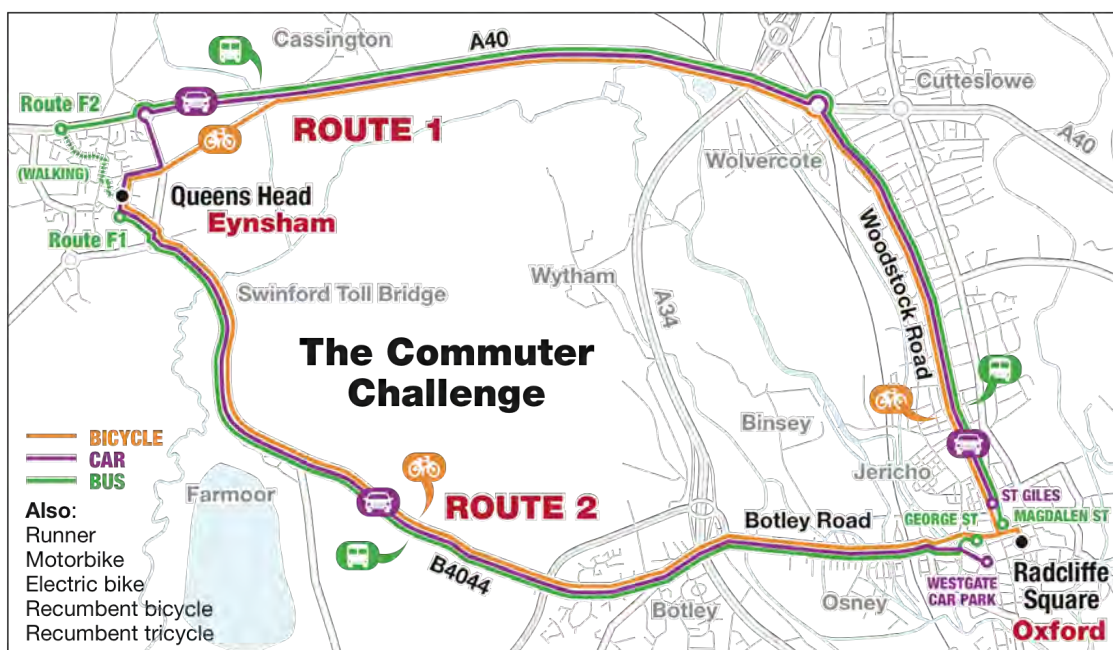
The idea was to time different modes of transport commuting from Eynsham into the city. The commuters used various vehicles: a handful of bicycles, a recumbent tricycle, an electric bicycle, a motorbike, two cars, two bus services – and one person even ran the five mile route! The city’s new Lord Mayor, Cllr Elise Benjamin, rode with the cyclists.

Media coverage

This year’s commuter challenge was reported live by BBC Radio Oxford and Heart FM. BBC TV News filmed the arrivals in Radcliffe Sq (watch the early edition of South Today this evening, Weds 8th June). The Oxford Mail and the Oxford Times covered the whole event. Look out for the Oxford Mail’s report with photos and map on Thursday 9th June.

The seven mile trip from Eynsham represents a typical short commute from an outlying village into the city. Most of the commuters took the A40 route into town, with its dedicated cycle track. Two cyclists, a driver and a bus rider also took the more direct route via Swinford Toll Bridge, Farmoor Reservoir and Botley into town. The destination was Radcliffe Square, where all 17 participants were treated to complimentary cooked breakfasts at the bike-friendly Vaults Café.

We thought the motorbike would arrive before the bikes, but in fact all of the first 11 arrivals were pedal-powered. The quickest cyclists, Kevin Moreland (of Walton St Cycles) and Paul Warren, came via Farmoor in an astonishing 21 minutes. Richard Buckner, riding a recumbent bike, took just 22 minutes along the slightly longer A40 cycle track. Steve Unwin, riding an electric bicycle, arrived sweat-free and wearing a business suit and tie. He came via the A40 in just 24 minutes.



Map Courtesy of and Copyright Oxford Mail 2011

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Oxford's first Green Lord Mayor, Cllr Elise Benjamin, arrived wearing her mayoral chain in a sedate 34 minutes. Kevin Hickman (of Witney BUG, and a national champion for disabled cycling) arrived on a recumbent tricycle under the power of one leg in a respectable 35 minutes.

The motorcyclist, Dr Richard English, provided the biggest surprise of the day. He came via the A40 and Banbury Rd in a super-slow 38 minutes – recumbent rider Richard Buckner had overtaken the motorcycle at the Peartree roundabout.

The first car driver, Honour Tomkinson (of Bainton Bikes) using the A40 route, arrived in 44 minutes after parking in nearby Broad Street. Next came Alun Ward (designer of Cyclox's revamped website). Alun ran the whole way in 47 minutes, just ahead of Graham Smith who had taken the bus via Farmoor and Botley. The last arrivals were Dr Simon Hunt whose S1 bus came via the A40 in 48 minutes, and Lucy Tennyson who drove via Farmoor and parked at the Westgate – her time, 51 minutes.



Paul Warren, Kevin Moreland and Steve Unwin tuck into a well deserved and very hearty breakfast – thanks to the Vaults Café.

Commuter Challenge 2011		cyclo ^x The Cycling Campaign for Oxford	
Eynsham-Oxford		www.cyclox.org	
7.5 miles		17 Car (F)	51'00
1	Bicycle (F) 21'21"		
2	Bicycle (F) 21'27"	9	Bicycle 34'00 The Lord Mayor (A40)
3	Bicycle 22'37" Recumbent (A40)	10	Bicycle 35'40 Recumbent (A40)
4	Electric 24'12" bicycle (A40)	11	Bicycle (A40) 35'40
5	Bicycle 24'12" Brompton (A40)	12	Motorcycle 38'25" (A40)
6	Bicycle (A40) 24'41"	13	Car (A40) 44'40"
7	Bicycle (A40) 25'22"	14	Running (A40) 47'00"
8	Bicycle (A40) 32'50"	15	BUS-S1 (F) 47'00"
		16	Bicycle 48'00"

Yet again, bikes were by far the quickest way of getting into the city. The bike is up to three times quicker than any other form of transport at peak commuting times into and within Oxford. On the Witney to Oxford route a few years back even cars were no match for a bike at peak commuter times. Even running can be faster than driving!

The Farmoor route is a popular rat-run, and although it is shorter than the A40, few cyclists risk it because it is narrow and drivers speed. Today's event highlights how Witney and Eynsham cyclists could quickly and safely access the city if a dedicated cycle route were built on the verge alongside the B4044. It would also be a boon for leisure cycling into west Oxfordshire. The challenge highlights how quickly regular commuters, even those with kids going to school, can get into the city easily and quickly along the A40 cycle track.

The event was also intended to publicise the bike rides that are happening every day of National Bike Week, 18th–26th June, with fun rides for cyclists of any age and ability. Cyclox and partners want to show people the little-known cycle routes that make cycling around Oxford and its environs such a pleasure. See the complete list of rides at: www.cyclox.org.



full arrivals chart on page 3



The Commuter Challengers prepare to depart, Eynsham, 7.45 a.m.
 Photo Jonathan Marks, A40 BUG.

commuter	vehicle/mode	route	time
1. Paul Warren	bicycle	Farmoor	21' 21"
2. Kevin Moreland	bicycle	Farmoor	21' 27"
3. Richard Buckner	recumbent bicycle	A40	22' 37"
4. Steve Unwin	electric bicycle	A40	24' 12"
5. Ed Wigzell	bicycle (Brompton)	A40	24' 12"
6. Ed O'Keefe	bicycle	A40	24' 41"
7. Jolyon Cox	bicycle	A40	28' 22"
8. Ruth Davis	bicycle	A40	32' 50"
9. Elise Benjamin, Lord Mayor	bicycle	A40	34' 00"
10. Kevin Hickman	recumbent tricycle	A40	35' 40"
11. Catherine Hickman	cycle	A40	35' 40"
12. Richard English	motorcycle	A40	38' 25"
13. Honour Tomkinson	car	A40	44' 40"
14. Alun Ward	runner	A40	47' 00"
15. Graham Smith	bus	S1 via Farmoor	47' 40"
16. Simon Hunt	bus	S2 via A40	48' 00"
17. Lucy Tennyson	campervan	Farmoor	51' 00"

Many thanks to all of you who took part, and to Dan Levy, Victoria Sowter, Tristram Wyatt, Lucy Tennyson and Phillipa Major for helping to organise the event. And especially to Will Pouget of the Vaults Café, who so generously provided a delicious cooked breakfast free of charge for about 20 of us this morning.

James Styring
 Chair – Cyclox
 Weds 8th June

Useful facts on Electrically Power Assisted Cycles (EPACs)

What is an Electrically Power Assisted Cycle?

There are two types of Electrically Power Assisted Cycles (EPACs); 'pedelecs' which provide assistance when the rider is pedalling, and 'twist and go' which have the added option of using a throttle to either completely replace or supplement pedalling. Most pedelecs offer different power settings and can be ridden like an ordinary pedal cycle with the motor switched off. Riders therefore, have complete choice in how much effort they put into their cycling.

Depending on the model and riding conditions, EPACs cover between 20 to 50 miles between charges. Most makes have removable batteries so no costly outdoor infrastructure is required for recharging.

Legally they count as bicycles so no crash helmet or licence is required and cycle paths can be used. Riders must be aged 14 and over.

Good for commuting and other local journeys

Like conventional pedal cycles EPACs can beat the traffic queues. EPACs are legally restricted to only provide power up to 15mph, an ample speed for urban areas where general traffic speed is around this figure or lower.

Across the UK most journeys are under 10 miles, a distance that can very easily be covered on an EPAC. National Travel Survey data shows that conventional pedal cycling tails off dramatically at around 5 miles. EPACs are good for commuter journeys that are tricky by bus such as going from Kidlington to Cowley Business Park.

Because riders can choose their level of effort, they can wear their usual work clothes and if there's no shower facilities at work – it's not a problem.

Several studies reveal hilliness to be the most significant physical barrier to taking up cycling. Hills such as Headington Hill or Cumnor hill need not be a barrier when riding an EPAC.

Reliable models using lithium-ion technology cost around £1000,- the upper credit limit of the Government's "Cycle to Work Scheme".

Replacing the car?

People can cover all their journey needs with an EPAC in conjunction with car club membership. EPACs can cover commuter and local journeys whilst car clubs, such as Streetcar and Commonwheels, can be used for carrying heavy loads and for longer distance outings. With ever increasing fuel prices this is a great option, particularly for two car households and where parking is a problem.

Health and Safety

Research has found that volunteers feel as safe on an EPAC as on a conventional cycle. EPAC riders are likely to stop at red lights too because starting up again is easier than on a conventional cycle.

EPACs are great for getting regular exercise into daily life. Riding a pedelec counts as moderate exercise – something the Chief Medical Officer recommends we do at least five times a week. They are also ideal for rehabilitation and for overcoming disabilities.

Give it a go

Oxford is fortunate enough to have a specialist shop – The Electric Transport Shop – in East Oxford (Magdalen Road) where people can try out different models. They also service EPACs whether bought from them or elsewhere.

Helping Oxford

Nationally congestion is costing our urban economies £11 billion per annum. Many localities around Oxford have poor air quality levels. Cycling, whether by conventional pedal cycle or EPAC, can do much to help tackle congestion and poor air quality.

Age UK says we are living longer, but we are not living healthily for longer. EPACs can help our growing numbers of older people lead more active, independent and socially connected lives.

Around 25% of Oxfordshire residents are obese. The local NHS is spending ever increasing amounts on tackling obesity and a third of all heart attacks are due to lack of physical activity. EPACs can help people get fit gradually.

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