

# Cycling in Oxford: Cyclox's position, October 2007

**with updates in blue, 1 December 2010**

Observations made during a cycle ride around the city with Cllrs Ian Hudspeth and Craig Simmons, 11 October 2007

A report by James Styring, Chair, Cyclox

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## WHAT'S GOOD

### Examples of good cycling infrastructure in the city

1. Marston Ferry Road cycle track: wide and totally segregated from traffic. Also Marston Road (1930s-built), where side roads give way to the cycle track.  
*But: tracks like this are useless when it's icy because of a County policy not to grit cycle paths. This and many other great routes could be kept usable year-round if you would grit them in winter.*
2. Donnington Bridge cycle track: narrow but segregated from traffic by a low barrier.
3. Barracks Lane, the cycle track across the meadow from Marston to University Parks, Meadow Lane: quality alternatives to road routes.
4. Bulan Road alternative to a parallel, much busier road (The Slade) – but poorly signed, especially southbound.
5. Queen's Lane.
6. Cycle traffic light by-pass on Botley Road (junction with Binsey Lane). Similarly, London Road, outbound past junction with Gipsy Lane.
7. ASLs: the UK's first is outside the King's Arms pub, Parks Road. These give bikes the chance to pull away and clear junctions before motorised traffic.
8. Some cycle lanes: the new eastbound Magdalen Bridge lane is very good indeed in no small part because its full width is usable (but it needs cycle logos painting in). We agreed that lanes should always be coloured green except in areas of particular historic sensitivity. (Having said that, a green patch of road hardly compares in terms of visual pollution with the cars parked in the middle of Broad Street!)
9. Road surfaces that are brand new, therefore no hazards to distract concentration from traffic due to road surface break-up, uneven drain covers, bumps etc. (e.g. Magdalen Bridge inbound and outbound; Jack Straws Lane) – although the effect of these surfaces on motorised traffic is (as you observed) to edge speeds up.
10. Contraflow cycling, as allowed in e.g. Little Clarendon Street, Pusey Street and a few other streets that are one-way for motorised traffic.
11. Signage on Sustrans routes through the city.
12. The insistence that new office and residential developments incorporate adequate cycle parking facilities (this is a City Council edict). *Actually, it transpires that the City does a poor job of enforcing cycle parking standards. Of 50 non-residential completions in 2008/9, only 58% were compliant with current standards.*
13. Cycle parking at the station (installed by the rail companies).

## WHAT ISN'T GOOD

### Examples of cycling problems in the city

#### 1. Botley Road railway bridge

Actually there are two distinct problems here:

**1a.** The roadway under the bridge is narrow and cycle access is dangerous, especially heading eastwards (into the city). This is the worst place for cycling in the city. A solution must be provided. Previous suggestions for a two-level bike track/ pedestrian footway have been rejected by the council.

**Solution** Cyclox has a novel proposal which is currently under development and which we will share with the council a.s.a.p. The proposal involves (amongst various other elements) closing the end of a road and re-routing a pedestrian footway. We think this is the solution we've all been looking for, but to be sure we are canvassing local residents' opinions on the scheme before proposing it formally to the council.

**Cyclox's revised position, in light of the adoption of a 20mph limit last year, and Government guidance (Local Transport Note 2/08), is that there is now room for provision to be made for cyclists in both directions (the advice is that 7.6m is required at 20mph, it's actually just over 8m at the narrowest point). Given the wall on one side, and the series of drain covers on the other, we'd suggest 1.2m cycle lanes on both sides, and 2.8m traffic lanes. It should be painted with slightly ridged/rumble-effect paint to warn off drivers (but not so much as to unsettle cyclists). This incredibly simple job would instantly transform what is widely regarded as THE WORST spot for cycling in Oxford. An instant and very cheap win. Please can you prioritise this work?**

**1b.** Roger Dudman Way: a recent cyclist death and many serious injuries have occurred at the junction of Roger Dudman Way with Botley Road by left-turning HGVs. These occur when drivers don't see cycles in the cycle lane and turn or when cyclists pass inside a vehicle which they don't realise is turning / about to turn. Clear signing warning both parties of the dangers here are essential. The dangers here are so serious that we must signal this to cyclists and drivers whether signs are DfT-compliant or not. The rumble-strip in the cycle lane is intended to warn cyclists of danger. But it doesn't alert cyclists to danger because it does not send the same signal to cyclists that it does to drivers – i.e., 'slow'. It makes cycling uncomfortable and potentially less stable / more dangerous and, if anything, cyclists will think it's an anti-ice surface. Moreover, the rumble effect is only in the cycle lane not in the motorised traffic lane, which is, apparently, against DfT guidelines.

**Solution** We would like to look again at this junction with the council a.s.a.p.

#### 2. Frideswide Square

**2a. The junction** is useless for all road users and it is well documented that it works best when the traffic lights fail. Cyclists frequently jump lights and cycle on the pavements for very understandable reasons. You can get there from East Oxford in less than ten minutes but it can take half this time again just to clear the junction and access the station.

**Solution** Consider a signal-free junction which makes it much easier for cyclist to cross, as well as quicker for pedestrians and cars. Several workable alternatives for this junction were developed as part of the OTS. These should be revisited.

**2b. The ASL** in the right-hand (cycle / bus) lane at the lights entering the square from the west (i.e., heading into town via Park End Street) has been lost. Cllr Simmons spent some time having this ASL installed in the first place to assist cyclists on a hill start.

Cyclists report finding it hard to get into the right lane to go straight on.

**Solution** Please reinstate this ASL. In general, council officers to check properly that all facilities are restored to the condition originally specified.

**2c.** It is not uncommon for **cycling infrastructure** (such as the ASL I refer to above) to get lost when roads are resurfaced. For example, Magdalen Road is supposed to be two-way for bikes but one-way for motorised traffic. The TMO for the resurfacing work carried out about ten years ago provides for this but, despite requests at the time and subsequently for this provision to be marked on the road, it has been lost. **Solution (1)** Please reinstate this two-way facility.

**Solution (2)** County to put in place Quality Control procedures to check that cycle markings, etc., are correctly reinstated after works. Should apply to both council and private contractors (i.e. utility companies).

Clearly the above has been superseded by Richard Mann's brilliant scheme for re-directing vehicle traffic via Beckett St and freeing up the square to create a proper and inviting gateway to the city, with just buses, peds and cycles using it. The preferred roundabouts schemes seems to us to fail to deliver the gateway effect (the square is still full of traffic). Plus there remain unanswered potential problems with cyclists and approaches to roundabouts\*, and cyclists meandering all across the 'pedestrianised' areas.

\* The Cowley Rd 'cyclists in the flow of traffic' concept is arguably, and sadly, a failure. Cars either want to go faster than 12–15 mph and so overtake (in excess on 20mph) or squeeze past. Or the traffic is paralysed and cyclists wobble dangerously along the offside and nearside trying to get through.

### 3. **Hythe Bridge Street cycle-only turn right into George Street**

This turn is dangerous and would not be permitted were it for cars.

**Solution** This turn needs clear signage for both cyclists and car drivers.

### 4. **Worcester Street north into Walton Street**

This is not so much a problem, more an opportunity, kindly suggested to me by Ian Hudspeth during our meeting 9 November 2010. We would love to see a cycle filter on the lights that allows bikes semi-permanent access to Walton Street from Worcester Street – i.e., all times except when there are peds crossing.

This principle would work very well at many city junctions. Can we try it with this one first and then roll the concept out if it works well?

### 5. **Magdalen Street East**

Buses continually block the east–west passage of bikes and pedestrians here, causing hundreds of dangerous manoeuvres to be undertaken daily.

**Solution** Yellow hatching at the end of Magdalen Street East / Broad Street to prevent buses waiting here. (The council's road safety team doesn't seem to want to ask the bus companies to tell their drivers not to wait across this junction, which is a pity as it would save a pot of paint.)

The traffic lights at the Broad Street end of Cornmarket Street have always been unpopular with cyclists and pedestrians alike. The left-only arrow signage at the Cornmarket end of George Street causes confusion and is potentially dangerous given that bikes are in fact allowed to go straight on, as well as right into Cornmarket Street at permitted times.

**Solutions** Remove/revise the left-only arrow signage to apply only to motorised vehicles. Consult Cyclox and OxPA (Peds' Assocn) about traffic lights options.

## 6. Cycle parking

We looked at existing cycle parking in Broad Street and how demand far outstrips supply.

**Solution** We agreed there is ample space for more cycle parking and that its provision is a win-win proposition. **There is a lot to say on the matter of cycle parking and we will write a separate analysis.**

Cycle parking remains a hot potato. There is clearly a lot of room in city centre locations. Giving up some car parking spaces for bike parking would make a big difference.

We are in touch with Aron Wisdom about the plans to remove underused Sheffield racks and move them to more popular locations, but much more than this is needed.

What about that S106 money that the County is sitting on?

The system for removing dead bikes isn't perfect but it is certainly making quite a difference to certain city centre racks, so thanks is due both to City and County for this.

## 7. Broad Street / Holywell Road / Parks Road junction

**6a.** We observed how unnecessary the traffic lights are, how and why cyclists jump the lights, and how ASLs offer a real advantage to cyclists.

**Solution (1)** We agreed that there were some immediate improvements that can be made to the junction by putting ASLs in on the three stop lines that lack them and by repainting the existing one. A thick white line before the ASL box might make drivers notice that they have encroached into an ASL, and they must be green whatever the area (Broad Street or not).

**Solution (2)** A more permanent solution would be the removal of the traffic lights and their replacement with a shared-use facility. This might take the form of a raised table (pavement height) at which pedestrians, cyclists and drivers have equal priority. This would provide both safety and cyclist behaviour improvements.

Ian Hudspeth and I discussed this 9 November 2010. Ian made the excellent suggestion of simply hooding the traffic lights and erecting temporary signs to the effect of 'no priority/merge with caution' and seeing how the junction functioned.

**This is a great idea. Please can we try this a.s.a.p.?**

**6b. HGVs:** With reference to Tsk Fok's death at this junction, it is probable that he died by being dragged under the truck, which did not have under-running sideguards. **See Appendix I for a detailed explanation of HGVs vs bikes.**

**Solution (1)** The council should object to the operators' licences of any trucks on county roads that are not fitted with under-running sideguards.

**Solution (2)** More importantly, the county should undertake to start a campaign with Cyclox as well as vehicle operators to make HGV drivers and cyclists well aware of the dangers posed by HGVs to cyclists. There exists a precedent for this campaign in London which we can adapt and adopt. On-vehicle rear nearside stickers (buses, vans, HGVs) alerting cyclists to life-threatening danger could help, supported by our publicity campaign.

## 8. Approach to the Plain roundabout from the west

We observed how most cyclists destined for Cowley and Iffley Roads find it hard to get into the right-hand lane at the end of Magdalen Bridge, so that they're in the right-hand lane at the roundabout.

**Solution** During phase 2 of the Plain works, reduce the number of lanes entering the roundabout to one. Council engineers suggested that this might cause traffic delays. Cyclox would be interested in seeing the traffic modelling data which suggests that such a change to the road layout would cause problematic congestion. And, even if there are small knock-on delays, we would urge the county to accept this for the sake of solving what is widely regarded as a big problem by tens of thousands of cyclists. This is an

accident waiting to happen and it is sickening to know that it must take a serious accident here before the county can afford to address the problem. It is also a major deterrent to cycling in Oxford.

[The Plain remains a tricky roundabout for all users, despite the works, though it is a little better than it was.](#)

### **Longwall Street / High Street traffic lights**

Before reaching the bridge (we forgot to point this out to you on the ride), it is worth noting that an effect of decluttering is that the traffic lights are very hard to see from the ASL box.

**Solution (1)** Phased cycle advance lights.

**Solution (2)** Always check facilities from a bicycle after they've been put in (the Hythe Bridge Street cycle-only right turn into George Street served to illustrate this point to you, I think). A member of the Cyclox committee has volunteered to be a facilities guinea pig to see what works / doesn't work from the point of view of a novice cyclist. Please take us upon this offer at any time.

## **9. Approach to Plain from Iffley Road during peak hours**

We didn't look at this but it is such a commonly cited problem that I've decided to mention it here. Queues of cars and buses waiting for an entry to the Plain roundabout stretch back 100m or more and crowd into the inbound cycle lane. Cyclists are displaced, often onto narrow pavements used intensively by schoolboys, bus-stop users and pedestrians. Vehicle crowding into the cycle lane is exacerbated because they attempt to pull in to avoid oncoming outbound traffic, especially HGVs, delivery vehicles and buses.

**Solution (1)** Remove on-street car parking for at least 200m on outbound lane.

**Solution (2)** Ban peak-hour drinks deliveries to Cape of Good Hope pub.

**Solution (3)** Reposition bus stop on outbound lane.

**Solution (4)** We have also debated the viability of a "third-way" cycle path (i.e. looks / feels different to the pavement – see [10] On-pavement cycle paths, below) alongside the wide pavement parallel to the University Sports Ground.

Going the other way (south-east, out of town) a combination of awkward road layout and cars parked at the side of the road beyond Jackdaw Lane cause cyclists to swerve sharply into the path traffic coming from behind.

**Solution** Use white hatching on roads to create "build-outs" around car parking to channel cyclists into a safe position to pass parked cars. This important principle is applicable to dozens of areas in the county.

## **10. Cowley Road**

The recent safety scheme has made the road safer, especially for pedestrians. However, the scheme has introduced new problems, the most serious of which is chronic congestion. Cyclists began to use the pavements during the roadworks and Cyclox regretted the inaction of both the police and the county in attempting to prevent this. Many cyclists continue to use pavements to avoid the gridlock.

**Solution (1)** Buses are the main cause of congestion. A rapid-ticketing system is needed to get buses loaded as quickly as possible. Cllr Hudspeth mentioned a possible roll-out of the Barclays all-in-one card, new in London. Can the county pursue this and have Oxon considered for immediate inclusion in the scheme? If not, can an Oxon Oyster system be developed (simply use the London Oyster system itself – same card, software and hardware)? Reducing congestion in this way will not only benefit bus users and tick many of the boxes required to get central government funding, but it will make the lives of thousands of cyclists and drivers safer and infinitely pleasanter.

[This system is in hand. Whether it can help with congestion that is much worse just 3](#)

years later remains to be seen.

**Solution (2)** Install small islands (similar to by Rectory Road) to stop dog-legging manoeuvres across Cowley Road, e.g. James Street to Princes Street. This not only holds up traffic but is in itself a manoeuvre which is very dangerous to cyclists.

**Solution (3)** Look at providing facilities to allow the safe overtaking of stopped buses by cyclists on the inside. Many continental cities have bus shelters located on small islands which allows cyclists to “undertake”. This idea was considered and rejected as part of the Cowley Road design on the understanding that cyclists would not be likely to overtake parked buses. This has proven wrong – they use the pavements in some cases and risk squeezes along the dotted white line in others.

**Solution (4)** Tinkering around the edges of Cowley Road will only ever have limited effects. The County should consider traffic restraint during peak hours to keep the buses and bikes moving. With congestion at current levels, Cowley Road is unpleasant and hard to negotiate for all. As noted above, the Cowley Rd ‘cyclists in the flow of traffic’ concept is a failure. Cars either want to go faster than 12–15 mph and so overtake (in excess on 20mph) or they squeeze past. Or the traffic is paralysed and cyclists wobble dangerously along the offside and nearside trying to get through. **The situation in Cowley Road really is dangerous and the County should act on this key arterial route which is a massive barrier to cycling (to mobility in general at peak times).**

## 11. On-pavement cycle paths

We looked at the on-pavement cycle path opposite the Cowley Road bingo hall, next to Bartlemas Close. This perfectly exemplifies the problems with on-pavement facilities. Bus passengers alight at the bus stop directly into the path of cycles, usually ridden by the least able cyclists who prefer quieter pavement routes. On-pavement cycle paths are in fact much more dangerous than on-road cycle lanes because they go up and down over drive accesses and they are interrupted by priority given to side roads (their danger has been demonstrated by studies in Germany). They encourage the least able cyclists to view pavements as a legitimate place to cycle – experienced cyclists prefer the road.

**Solution (1)** Only construct new on-pavement facilities that actually look like a third way between the pavement and the road. Use differently coloured and textured surfaces, and segregate the path from the road and the pavement with low raised kerbs of an appropriately safe design (Paris; Netherlands). Avoid building them altogether if at all possible. It is safer and preferable to make roads safe enough for cyclists – endangering cyclists and pedestrians by having them share pavements is a poor solution. **See Appendix II for more on cycle lanes.**

**Solution (2)** Put cycle symbols in the road adjacent to on-pavement facilities: it is important to signal to drivers that both routes are for bikes. Cyclox receives a lot of complaints about drivers attempting to bully them off the road and onto on-pavement facilities, and on our ride we witnessed a bus driver doing just this.

**Solution (3)** Where a carriageway unavoidably narrows and forces cyclists and vehicles to share the space, paint cycle symbols and/or green diagonal slashes across roadway to alert vehicles to the need to share. Example: junction of Holywell and St Cross Road as it turns the blind corner by the protruding walltower from Magdalen College. (NB Extreme hazard when pedestrians on east side try to squeeze past the tower on the wrong side of the road. **Solution** Barrier that corrals off this stretch of pavement and forces pedestrians to cross the road while there is still sufficient visibility.)

**Solution (4)** By-pass obstacles properly: the above-mentioned bus-stop path and the path on Woodstock Road which has a tree in the middle of it are examples of what must never happen.

**Solution (5)** Have a system for clearing paths of debris, especially broken glass, and start a reporting system so that it's easy for cyclists to report problems and have them resolved – the county's generic 0845 is not widely enough publicised, but is the number to call? Also, outside the city (e.g. A40), district councils are responsible for clearing paths: does your generic 0845 number cover these as well?

On-pavement cycle paths that end by disgorging cyclists back into the vehicle lanes, especially just before traffic lights at a junction, are treacherous (e.g. inbound lane outside Headington Junior School, before Headley Way junction).

**Solution** Lanes merging with traffic must always be protected by a kerb build-out.

## 12. Speed limits

We cycled up Divinity and Southfield Roads. Drivers drive too fast and aggressively on many residential side roads, even when they are as narrow as these roads. The parallel-to-pavement parking on both sides of the roads creates a "canyon" of cars through which drivers often feel the need to zoom

**Solution** We would like a 20 mph speed limit on all residential roads, self-enforcement to be effected by redesigning the streets to look like quiet attractive places where people live, where you wouldn't want to roar through Mr Toad-style. This will make it much safer to cycle on busy side road routes and is something that is particularly important on routes to schools.

Car-parking on both side of narrow roads means that impatient drivers 'chase' bikes up and down the roads, which is particularly stressful, especially for schoolchildren.

**Solution** Signs urging cars to give way to bicycles would be very welcome. Anything that can help correct the existing imbalance of perceived road hierarchy would help.

Cllr Hudspeth agreed that having a 20 mph on Cowley Road but allowing 30 mph on the side roads off it is a nonsense that needs to be addressed. We agreed it is extremely unhelpful that the police refuse to police speed limits lower than 30 mph.

**See Appendix III for the latest news on 20 mph.**

**HURRAY!** This has happened. Congratulations to the County for being so bold. It is now clear that councils around the country are going to follow suit, and new government guidance is for 20 mph in residential roads as well.

## 13. Cycle lanes

We cycled down Headington Hill and it is noticeable how inadequate the cycle lane feels when both bikes and motor vehicles are going quickly. Summer and autumn maintenance to prune protruding plant growth at eye height is essential, both uphill and downhill.

**Solution** Lane widths must be 1.5 m minimum of usable lane (see Appendix II) and they must be more regularly cleaned and maintained.

We didn't cycle down the hill on Headley Way (B4495) between Copse Lane and the JR roundabout. However, this is an intensively used car and bus route for hospital-bound traffic, yet on-street car parking on its west side is allowed at all times despite the congestion it causes. Cycling down the hill is hazardous because of the danger from opening car doors; uphill cycle speed is inevitably much slower than other traffic and yet cyclists have to share the roadspace. The same problem pertains on Morrell Avenue, which, although it looks innocuous enough, has a high accident rate and is very unpopular with cyclists. Drivers (often doing 40 mph +) swerve and brake sharply to avoid each other and it is all too easy for cyclists to get caught up in the melee.

**Solution (1 – Headley Way)** The two pavement levels up the hill on Headley Way could be re-engineered to provide a separate cycle lane.

**Solution (1 – Morrell Avenue)** Wide pavements could accommodate "third-way" cycle

routes which have priority over side roads and which remain falt over drive accesses. Alternatively, Cyclox has discussed the possibility of building a new cycle track under the trees down the southern edge of South Park (parallel to Morrell Avenue). A walking track exists. Local councillors (e.g., Cllr Nuala Young) have expressed support for this concept and it is on we will pursue via the dual-cycle network programme.

**Solution (2)** Ban on-street car parking or move it into bays that do not protrude into the carriageway. (And as an interim safety measure, paint hatched build-outs as discussed above to protect/guide cyclists around them.)

## WHAT OXFORD NEEDS

### 1. Greater political commitment to and proper investment in cycling

We understand that there are no cycling targets in LTP2.

**Solution** At present, 20,000 cyclists ride in to or out of Oxford city centre each day, compared with 50,000 cars. A target could be to reverse these numbers.

Last year, we understand believe that £2 million of cycling measures were cut from the council's budget – ironically this was done to save money to qualify for funds to ease congestion. The cycling community was dismayed at these cuts and has suffered as a result since:

- the vital “dual-cycle network” scheme is on hold
- the new cycle map is on freeze
- important out-of-town routes were axed.

Section 106 money has been earmarked for cycling projects but they cannot go ahead as they rely on matched funding from the council – but the council's budget is not there. Is this accurate and fair?

**Solution *Promote cycling!*** The council has done well to get people out of cars and onto buses. Now it is time for the council to get people onto their bikes. Cycling infrastructure is cheap. Cycling is healthy – indeed, this week's announcement about expected ballooning girths by 2050 names cycling and walking in cities as the main way we're going to get our weight down. Cycling is “green”, quiet and bikes do not cause serious accidents (these occur in conjunction with motor vehicles). Local and national government cannot lose by investing in cycling, and nowhere moreso than in Oxfordshire where the appetite for cycling is already great.

**We are pinning great hopes on LTP3.**

**We would love to have a Cycling Champion with sufficient space in his/her case load to really make the most of this post.**

### 2. Cycle training

We wouldn't need any cycling facilities at all if everyone was trained to a national standard! However, it is in fact very difficult to get cycle training of any description in Oxfordshire and what exists relies (I believe) on volunteers. The council provides limited training at schools, but for younger children and anyone aged 15+ there is nothing available.

**Solution** Cyclox is beginning to offer cycle training, but we're a small organisation. Really the council should find a way to fund this very important activity as a matter of urgency. Other councils do offer training – it can be done.

**We are aware of the County ongoing work in schools with Wendy Jennings's team. BikeAbility is going to survive the Cycling England closure (Spring 2011). The**

County can therefore continue to get involved in BikeAbility schemes.  
We are very pleased to note the great success of Oxford Cycle Workshop/Cycle Oxford in providing BikeAbility training for all age groups throughout the County.

### 3. A dual-cycle network and a decent east–west cycle route

For years Cyclox, promoted the dual-cycle network concept. This means a coherent and joined-up network for “fast” cyclists on main roads and a quieter, backstreet network for less confident cyclists. Cyclox has drawn up and thought through how the entire network could work, including where land needs to be acquired and from whom. The council adopted the project in 2006, but it was then shelved before it even got going.

**Solution (1)** Secure new funds for the project and revive the project team – Cyclox is ready to participate again.

Richard Mann and Craig Rossington have discussed the possibility of signing the routes around Oxford. **We would welcome a formal arrangement for taking this process forward in 2011.**

**Solution (2)** Avoid drawing detailed engineering plans for options before more strategic questions have been settled. E.g. 8 alternative plans, outsourced to costly consultants, were drawn up for the section of Old Road between Churchill Drive and Gipsy Lane/Old Road junction. All were rejected out of hand at consultation because fundamental issues of carriageway width and join-up to existing and prospective cycle routes had not been properly considered.

The fact that it's tortuous to cross town east–west is a barrier to cycling that needs to be addressed. Cyclists arriving at Carfax have to divert considerable distances down St Aldates and then up the hill at St Ebbes, or along busy Turl Street / Broad Street, to cover the short distance of Queen Street between 10 am and 6 pm.

**Solution** Despite recent press shock-reports, cycles and pedestrians can and do mix safely both in this country and all over Europe. The buses should be ejected from Queen Street and the street returned to pedestrians, with cyclists travelling along a median lane. There are many ways in which this controversial-sounding suggestion can be effected safely.

In February 2010, Cllrs Arash Fatemian and Rodney Rose, with James Styring and Alison Hill, observed the difficulty and needlessness of the Queen Street detour for bicycles. They observed the way in which many cyclists illicitly but entirely safely and slowly used Queen Street (midday weekday). In fact the road width means it is easier for cycles and peds to mix with equanimity than it is on St Ebbes St, which is part of National Route 5. Later, after admiring Richard Mann's Fridewside Square with Cllr Keith Mitchell, we all agreed that, when the buses have finally gone (how soon?), it would make good sense to trial all-day bike-access in Queen Street. In conjunction with a Bike Polite system, this would be a good use of the street.

### 4. A bikes and HGVs/buses safety campaign

London can provide a model for us to follow.

Cyclox produced “Bikes and buses”, a safety-promotional video, last year. We are going to launch “Bikes and buses” in early 2008 and this can form a part of an HGV safety project (see **Appendix 1, below**).

Cyclox and the bus companies launched a “Bikes and buses” leaflet on 10 June 2008.

## 5. Sensible bike prioritisation

### “Don't require bikes to stop at junctions where it isn't really necessary.”

Too many cyclists jump red lights. Consistent police enforcement would help, but the only real solution to this problem is to remove the need/desire to jump red lights. If we only ask cyclists to stop at junctions where they really need to stop, but allow them to proceed at junctions where there isn't a real need for them to stop (which is when they jump lights) then we can quickly engender a respect for red lights.

Conversely, we should of course make cyclists to stop at junctions like Longwall Street / High Street, where jumping a light is dangerous.

**Solution (1) Remove traffic signals.** For example, cyclists continually jump the red lights at the Broad Street / Holywell Street / Parks Road junction because they can see that there's nothing coming and waiting for a minute on red for no reason doesn't make sense on a bike. Here, the pedestrian / cycle traffic volume is high and motorised traffic volume very low: the lights should be removed and the junction converted to a shared use design where all users slow and proceed with caution.

**Solution (2) Create junction / traffic light by-passes.** For example, cyclists continually jump the red lights heading northbound on Parks Road at the T-junction with South Parks Road. Here, a by-pass around the inside of the traffic light would allow bikes to keep going without breaking the law or disrupting the flow of motorised traffic through the junction. In this instance, one pavement would need to be compulsorily bought from the University to create sufficient pedestrian footway, and in most cases there are ways to create by-passes if we have the will.

Another example: bikes heading west out of Frideswide Sq and headed for the ped/cycle bridge don't really need to be stopped (note that the lights, plus the Becket Street traffic, a slalom of bollards and the many pedestrians using the bridge, make this an unpopular cycle route into the station).

**Solution (3) Adjust signal phasing** at all lights that have pedestrian-controlled buttons, including Toucans and Pelicans, so that pedestrians and cyclists stop the traffic within a very few seconds after pressing the button, except just after a traffic interruption in the previous 60 seconds or so, or when an emergency vehicle or PSV takes priority, in a SCOOT area.

[Let's start with Ian Hudspeth's idea at the junction of Worcester and Walton Streets.](#)

## 6. More cycle parking

There is undeniably a desperate need for more cycle parking in Oxford (see **Appendix IV**).

[See also the Excel file of bike racks and how they were being used, compiled by Cyclox December 2009. We may revise it with 2010 data.](#)

Both councils should insist that the Westgate development includes provision for a “bicycle hub” for 300+ bicycles: an easily-accessed, indoor, secure, pay-as-u-go cycle park, with attendant mechanic and map dispensary, as in other major European cycling cities. Even Cambridge has one (<http://tinyurl.com/yrvqcg>).

[Cyclox continues to chase bike hubs via the City \(Town Hall, etc.\) and notes the County's strong support for such provision. It may be that we can install something automated and massive underneath a revamped railway station using railway/national funding.](#)

## 7. Lower speed limits

Our streets should be a shared space in which pedestrians and cyclists are not threatened or made to feel they're “in the way” of motorists (see **Appendix III**).

At 20 mph, drivers make eye contact with and engage with the people in the street they are passing through. This contact really matters: people in the street know they've been seen. At speeds over 30 mph, drivers begin to become dissociated from the area they are passing through – and anti-social driving habits, especially speeding, creep in.

Hit by a car at 40 mph, a pedestrian has an 85 per cent chance of being killed while at 20 mph the risk falls to 5 per cent. Children's deaths and injuries could be reduced by 67 per cent if 20 mph were the speed limit on residential roads. (Health Development Agency)

Cyclox is a member of "Life Begins At 20" – Oxford's campaign to lower the speed of cars to 20 miles per hour on residential roads. Life Begins At 20 is part of a movement in towns and cities across the UK working to civilise our streets.

Kingston-upon-Hull has implemented more than 115 traffic-calmed zones with 20 mph limits for a quarter of all its city streets. Fatal crashes and serious injuries have been cut by 90%. Child pedestrian casualties are down by 74%. Portsmouth has introduced a city-wide 20 mph limit.

Reducing speeds from 30 mph to 20 mph helps traffic run more smoothly: This seems impossible at first glance. But according to transport planners, in a city where the limits are 20 mph not 30 mph, there is less need for traffic signals and the queues they cause. Slow-moving cars require fewer controls and allow a more efficient city. There's little sense in speeding from one queue to the next as we do now. Slower speeds make it easy for motor vehicles to merge with ease, for cycles to co-exist with motor vehicles, and for pedestrians to cross roads.

**Hurray! Thank you! (Enforcement?)**

#### 8. **A Bike Polite programme**

Bike Polite is a code of conduct that would encourage cyclists to (for example) use lights at night, not to jump red lights and not to cycle on pavements. It would be a positive campaign aimed in part at easing concerns in areas where cyclists and pedestrians share space without become an 'anti-cyclist' measure.

We got the idea from Edinburgh and Glasgow where a successful Bike Polite campaign was launched a few years ago. In Oxford, the idea is that the police and councils would get a responsible cycling message across by using PR such as back-of-bus adverts and branded cycling trouser clips.

There was a lot of enthusiasm within the County (mainly Cllr Arash Fatemian) for Bike Polite a year ago, but the trail has run completely cold. We would love to rekindle this worthwhile project with the County.

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18 October 2007  
updated 1 December 2010

## Appendix I

### HGVs

HGVs and bicycles don't mix. Trucks are involved in 80% of all fatal cycle accidents in the UK. In Oxford, they were involved in two of the three most recent cycling deaths.

Tsz Fok died in April 2007, and Rachel Barker was killed in 2000 by a lorry turning left off Botley Road into Roger Dudman Way. The vast majority of cyclists killed by HGVs are dragged under the lorry when it is turning left.

There are three things we can do:

- (1) make HGVs safer;
- (2) make the roads safer; and
- (3) make HGV drivers and cyclists very aware of the dangers.

HGVs have a blindspot on the nearside which prevents the driver from seeing cyclists at certain crucial moments. In particular, when a truck is about to turn left, the driver is trained to check in the nearside mirror before proceeding with the manoeuvre. Whilst turning, the driver has to look ahead to make sure that the front of the vehicle is clearing vehicles waiting at the junction of the road that the HGV is entering. It is at this moment that cyclists can enter the blindspot. Even if a driver is travelling slowly enough to check a second time in the nearside mirror, the cyclist may remain invisible. Cyclists can get caught between the kerb and the left-turning vehicle, and be dragged under it.

In several northern European cities, HGVs are required by law to have additional mirrors which enable drivers to see into this blindspot. The councils should insist that lorries which operate in the city have retro-fitted blind-spot mirrors.

All the UK's lorries, except rubbish trucks, must have under-running sideguards or (better) reinforced plastic skirts. These are the barriers between the front and rear wheels of a lorry which, in the event of a crash, prevent cars and bikes disappearing under the rear wheels. Cyclists who hit the side of a lorry with sideguards generally bounce off and survive. Those who go under a truck without sideguards rarely survive.

Rubbish trucks are exempt from the sideguards law because they become all-terrain vehicles at landfill sites – sideguards get in the way. However, removable sideguards are cheap, quick to fit, and no HGV need be without them. A lot of Oxford's rubbish trucks haven't got sideguards. The council should ensure that all refuse trucks which operate in the county are fitted with them.

The council should erect signs at certain dangerous junctions warning cyclists to take extra care with left-turning vehicles. Despite a recent non-fatal accident (in fact, an unborn child was lost) at Roger Dudman Way, there is no sign warning cyclists of the danger of left-turning vehicles. Such a sign did exist at the junction of Speedwell Street and St Aldates (I have reported its removal). This is where Sarah Broadway was very seriously injured by a left-turning HGV in 2003. She was in the cycle lane when the lorry turned across her path without warning.

The council should instigate an awareness campaign to help cyclists, hauliers and bus operators minimise the danger to cyclists. Cyclists need to be made aware of just how dangerous large vehicles are. Under no circumstances should a cyclist pass along the nearside of an HGV or a bus, particularly if it is moving, even if you are in a cycle lane. A stationary HGV can suddenly turn and take a cyclist with it, and they often pull out right before turning sharply left.

## Appendix II

### Cycle lanes

Experienced cyclists don't need them but inexperienced cyclists love them even though they don't really 'do' anything. My view is that they serve to signal to drivers the existence of cyclists, but I don't regard many cycle lane widths as adequate or really usable. The measly width of some lanes is effectively more than halved when one takes into account non-flush drain covers and cobbled gutters.

A working minimum width should be 1.5m minimum (adjacent to 3.0m traffic lane). In some instances (e.g. Botley Road eastbound) as narrow as 1m is just about OK because the car traffic is normally near stationary but this is an exceptional case. The overall width of the traffic lane is a relevant factor. As is them not disappearing, swapping on and off pavement, or otherwise creating conflict with other road users – Banbury and Woodstock Roads come to mind. The new outbound Magdalen Bridge Lane is very good indeed. Acceptable: Botley Road eastbound from Binsey Lane to Roger Dudman Way (outbound there are a couple of pinch points). Eynsham Road (0.7–0.8m) is bad.

There is a problem with the resurfacing of Woodstock and Banbury Roads because a ridge has created between the cycle and main lanes and in some places within the cycle lane itself.

## Appendix III

### 20 mph

A report was issued this week by the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, which contains a wide ranging and authoritative analysis of road safety and proposes actions for 'beyond 2010'. A key set of recommendations concerns traffic speed limits. In particular, the report recommends:

- that default speed limits of 20 mph in all built up areas are implemented in ways that achieve high levels of compliance.
- that priority is given to early type approval of time over distance cameras for use at speeds below 30 mph.
- that, in the next round of Local Transport Plans, advice should be given to local authorities to look at extending application of Manual for Streets.

The report points out that "The reduction in limit has a positive effect on casualty levels. A TRL study found that, in a review of 250 20 mph schemes across England, Wales and Scotland:

- average speeds fell by 9 mph
- accidents fell by 60% (a year)
- child accidents fell by 67%
- cyclist accidents fell by 29%
- traffic flow was reduced by 27%
- flows on the surrounding boundary roads increased by 12%."

The report can be seen on <http://www.pacts.org.uk/>

See also [www.lifebeginsat20.org.uk](http://www.lifebeginsat20.org.uk).

## Appendix IV

The extract below shows the position 3 years ago (Sept 2004). Cyclox is updating this information and will deliver its assessment of where we've got to and what needs to be done, and share this with the council a.s.a.p.

[Six years and still waiting, though we note recent plans to re-use exiting hoops to deliver parking where it is most needed.](#)

### Cycle parking in Oxford city centre: why and where more is needed

2,109 were cycles stolen in Oxford city in 2003, 755 of those in the city centre. If an average cycle costs £250, that's £527,250 of stolen cycles last year. Across Oxfordshire, the figures is nearer £1 million annually.

There are parking places for 1,035 cycles in Oxford. More than twice that number is needed to provide secure parking for all cycles in the city centre. Of those 1,035, 191 are butterfly ('wheelbender') racks – these need to be replaced with secure 'Sheffield' racks (black metal pavement hoops).

The *Oxfordshire Local Plan 2001–2006 Cycling Strategy*, pages 28–29, states:

“The risk of theft can deter people from using their cycles, and it is not uncommon for people who have had a cycle stolen to cease cycling altogether.

... It is expected that improvements in both the quantity and quality of cycle provision will lead to a reduction in cycle theft in Oxfordshire. This is desirable not only in transport terms (reducing one of the barriers to greater cycle use) but also in terms of the Council's responsibilities within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.”

The loss of a cycle is also a major transport inconvenience and loss of freedom.

The following extract is copied from Oxfordshire County Council's 'Oxford Cycling Pages'

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cyclemaps/index/whycycle.htm> .

**20,000 cyclists ride into or out of Oxford city centre each day.**

**Half an hour's cycling each day will halve the risk of heart disease:**

- Good Exercise
- Improves Strength
- Reduced Stress
- Healthy Heart

**19% of the population of Oxford cycle to work:**

- Quieter Roads
- Safer Roads
- Accessible Services
- Roads Last Longer

**Regular cyclists are as fit as people 10 years younger:**

- Feel Good
- Fun
- Sociable
- Saves Money

**Oxford has 1800 public cycle parking places:**

- Cuts Congestion
- Saves Space
- Better Environment
- Less pollution

If there are 20,000 cyclists riding into or out of Oxford city centre each day and if Oxford has 1,800 public cycle parking places, where on earth does everyone park? Even though some cyclists are leaving not entering the city, some have private cycle parking, and most cycling is short-term for shops, that

still leaves rather a lot of cycles with no parking.

Oxford city centre urgently needs at least 600 more cycle parking spaces. A survey published by Oxfordshire Green Party on 5 April 2004 showed that on an average day, 995 bikes were vying for 335 cycle parking spaces in the city centre. In other words, demand outstrips supply 3:1. And over 1,100 more racks are needed to make cycle parking easy in the most popular destinations.

Oxfordshire County Council has done quite a lot so far: dozens of butterfly racks have been replaced by Sheffield racks and dozens of new racks have been installed but Cyclox does not believe that the Council has met its target for new cycle rack installation (from *Oxfordshire Local Plan 2001–2006 Cycling Strategy*):

**TARGET 5B: The Council will provide, or secure the provision of, 500 new cycle parking places per annum** at locations which are accessible to the general public. Priority will be given to key destinations such as town centres, shopping developments, employment locations, public transport nodes (stops/stations/interchanges/Park-and-Ride sites), schools and colleges, public buildings, hospitals and leisure.

The County's target of achieving 24% of journeys to work by bicycle by 2012 is also sadly a very long way off, currently at around 8% (not 19%). But Cyclox wants to work with the County to help it achieve those targets. And Cyclox hopes that – unlike Central Government's cycling targets – these targets are not unceremoniously abandoned.

#### **Recommendations to members (Sept 2004)**

- 1 Councillors are asked to note the huge cost of cycle theft to Oxford cyclists.
- 2 Councillors are asked to verify whether the Council has installed 500 cycle parking racks per year in the county (Cycling Target 5B) since 2001.
- 3 Councillors are asked to instruct the Director for Environment & Economy to install:
  - 150 cycle parking places by November 2004 (prior to Christmas shopping);
  - 450 additional cycle parking places by May 2005 in the following locations: Carfax; Broad St; Magdalen St East; Queen St (replacing the existing butterfly racks by the library).

Cyclox also recommends that Oxfordshire County Council considers the installation of 563 additional cycle racks in the city centre (making a total of 1,163), perhaps using temporary bolt-down racks till it finds the sites which best satisfy the demand.

At a full council meeting, councillors did vote in favour of Cyclox's proposal (3) and an installation programme started. We will assess where it got to and report back a.s.a.p.