



**Cyclox  
Cycle Parking  
& Abandoned Bikes**

**Winter 2008/09**





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## **Summary 2004 and 2009 figures**

- The number of Sheffield stands increased from 434 to 548 giving an extra 228 parking spaces.
- The number of abandoned bikes increased from 92 to 163.
- The number of broken racks reduced from 23 to 0.
- In 2009 a total of 995 bikes were parked against railings or loose within the area surveyed.

## 1. Introduction

Problems with cycle parking comes up repeatedly in conversations with cyclists, so the Cyclox committee felt it was time to build on the survey undertaken in 2004. Committee member Simon Banks offered to do this for Cyclox and compiled the following report with input from James Styring and Andy Chivers. Readers of this report are urged to read the original 2004 document which puts the case for an extra 600 cycle parking spaces in the city centre. The document is available electronically on request.



Approximate area covered by survey

## 2. Purpose

This report was mainly aimed at assessing the numbers of abandoned bikes in central Oxford bike racks. It was also an opportunity to find out what increase there had been in the numbers of bike racks. Direct comparison is not entirely straightforward but we have made some conclusions.

## 3. Timing

The survey was carried out over two separate time periods:

- Fri 2 January 2009 3–4 pm
- Mon 5 January 2009 4–5 pm

The reasons for choosing these times were:

- Cycle use is seasonally low.
- Students are away on holidays.
- City centre is generally quiet.

## 4. Results

Full results are available in an Excel spreadsheet available separately (contact Cyclox for a copy) and summaries are in the appendices. This shows the data from the 2004 survey as well as the 2009 follow-up, and itemises:

1. All the sites in the city centre where there is designated cycle parking.
2. Number of Sheffield or “toast rack” racks (or similar, with large hoops) at each site.
3. Other cycle parking – usually Butterfly (“wheelbender”) racks.
4. Number of parking places unusable because of damage / obstruction.
5. Number of bikes parked at 1 and 2 above.
6. Number of abandoned cycles (\* and see appendix 3) occupying parking spaces.
7. Percentage of cycle parking places blocked by abandoned bikes.

In addition, comments are made where there are considerable numbers of abandoned cycles or other notable or significant factors.

*\* Abandoned cycles – as defined (see appendix 3) is more than one tyre deflated and one other significant defect (rusted chain – missing component [not wheel], etc).*

## 5. Summary tables

### 5.1 Cycle parking places and numbers of abandoned bikes

Total number of cycle parking places (each Sheffield stand = 2 places)	1284
Total number of cycle parking places in area covered in 2004	1034
Cycle parking places blocked by abandoned cycles	200
Proportion of stands blocked	8%

### 5.2 Top seven abandoned bike locations

Site	% of parked bikes which are abandoned
Outside Lamb & Flag pub, St Giles	75%
Outside King’s Arms pub, Parks Road	46%
Gloucester Street	43%
Said Business School	31%
Carfax	30%
St Ebbes Street	30%
Magdalen Street East	21%

### 5.3 Comparison of 2004 with 2009 using comparable areas

	2004	2009
Sheffield stands (spaces)	434 (868)	548 (1096)
Other (including “wheelbenders”)	166	188
Broken stands	23	0
Abandoned bikes	92	163

#### 5.4 Available racks and bikes parked other than on stands in specific streets

	<b>Racks</b>	<b>Bikes parked 'loose'</b>
Magdalen Street East	26	120
Broad Street	108	142
Turl Street	0	90
Brasenose Lane	34	33
Radcliffe Camera	0	104
Catte Street	0	46
Ship Street	12	14
Market Street	0	13
Cornmarket Street	0	12
George Street	25	42
New Inn Hall Street	9	20
Shoe Lane	0	2
St Michael's Street	12	16
Queen Street & High Street	97	141
St. Aldate's Street	11	34
Pembroke Street	0	6
Brewer Street	0	2
Pembroke Square	6	87
St Ebbe's Street	23	44
Pennyfarthing Place	17	27
	<b>380</b>	<b>995</b>

#### 5.5 Newly surveyed areas

	Sheffield stands (spaces)
St Giles	67 (134)
Hythe Bridge St	27 (54)
Said Business School	104 (208)

#### 5.6 Total cycle parking including railings to demonstrate shortage of spaces

	Sheffield stands	Bikes on railings (or butterfly stands)	Broken stands	Total parked bikes on racks	Abandoned bikes
City centre	1490	1262	11	753	200

## 6. Comments

### 6.1 Damaged and unusable stands



Broken cycle Sheffield stands (toast rack) account for a small number of all places. However Sheffield stands are usually too narrow for easy use, and those with horizontal ground bars make it difficult for a bike to be well positioned, so the bikes tend to fall and then protrude into the road or fall onto the pavement. On the other hand many butterfly (wheelbender) parking places become unusable because the fixing bolts get loose. They also offer inferior security and risk damage to the front wheel.



Some Sheffield racks are so badly positioned they cannot be used whereas other parking places get used for waste bins.

## 6.2 Abandoned bikes



There are four sites where the number of abandoned cycles is considerable – arguably, unacceptable. It would appear that whoever is clearing abandoned cycles is not working from a comprehensive list of sites and the locations in table 5.2 need to be reviewed more frequently.

## 7. Conclusion

To encourage cycling to work or shops, potential cyclists need to be offered a complete start-to-finish cycling ‘package’. This package must include having somewhere safe to leave their bike at both ends of the journey, as well as having a decent bike, knowing how to ride safely, and having routes that they regard as acceptable. One of the most crucial elements of this package is having secure cycle parking at the destination. No one is going to leave their bike in the street if it can’t be locked securely.

The comparison with 2004 figures show a welcome extra 114 city centre bike rack but there were still 1000 bikes parked on railings or loose throughout the city centre, demonstrating the need for more local stands close to people’s destination. Abandoned bikes remain a common problem and city centre racks need more rigorous checking for abandoned bikes: particularly bad sites are highlighted above.

Ultimately, even if the abandoned bikes problem is solved and even if the council can persuade each college to require each of its students to park on-site (both big ifs), there will still not be enough cycle parking at key sites such as Oxford railway station, Carfax and Cornmarket Street. Like it or not, more cycle parking is needed. Some should be sited inside buildings in the new Westgate and West End developments, but more on-street parking will be needed. Car parking spaces will in time need to be ceded to bike parking. This is not a hard argument to make: a car parking space is equal in size to 8–10 cycle parking spaces.

There is a good economic argument for increased cycle parking, apart from the fact Oxford cyclists lose over £1000 worth of cycles every working day from the city centre. (Proper cycle parking can help prevent these thefts.) If it’s easy for cyclists to park next to a shop, the shop will thrive. Shopping is limited to how far one can carry purchased goods to the cycle rack, car park or bus stop. A shopping trolley only helps if you are physically able to lift it to the next mode of transport (P&R bus or car). The majority of Oxford residents could use a pedal powered shopping trolley – i.e. a bicycle with rear rack and/or panniers or basket. Bikes panniers are designed to carry 40–60 litres capacity of goods. But to encourage the majority of Oxford residents to cycle, more cycle racks are needed.

Cyclists want to park outside the shops they use, partly to prevent cycle theft but also to wheel the goods bought onto the next shop.

Research in London in 2003 showed that approximately 25% of cycle commuters on any one day also use their cycles for shopping activities. Retailers are aware of inappropriate customer bike parking (No Bikes Please signs) and many would welcome cycle parking racks located conveniently close to their shops.

## **Further Cycle Parking Report Conclusions Oct 09**

The findings of this study confirm that there is insufficient provision for cycle parking in the city centre retail areas, for the number of people who need it.

The report also identifies that there is no effective management of the facilities, demonstrated by the very large number of abandoned cycles found occupying cycle parking places.

Observations suggest that not only is there insufficient cycle parking but that it is a basic model constructed and installed to absolute minimum standards. It is largely unsuitable for the needs of the wide variety of people who cycle.

There are no specific cycle parking stands for

Differing types of bicycle:

- Tandems
- Family group cycle parking
- Bicycles carrying young people in rear child seats
- Disabled tricycles
- Cycles with shopping baskets on the front or rear
- Women's frame bicycles with no cross bar, or open frame cycles such as "shoppers"
- Brompton style or children's bikes

Different time requirements:

- Short stay / drop-off
- Long stay
- Intermodal commuter parking
- Worker parking
- Retail visitor parking
- Over night parking

The minimal standard of cycle parking results in many bicycles falling over, spread-eagled across the pavement causing an obstruction & hazard to pedestrians. Once damaged, cheaper bicycles are often abandoned and unclaimed.

Large masses of cycle parking, as seen in Queen Street, do not necessarily make for good order and seldom appear attractive.

Present cycle parking provision is not generally convenient. Retailers expect customer car parking outside their local businesses. The perception is that customers can always drive to an out of town shopping centre and doubtless some cyclists do just this. There is therefore a strong case for individual cycle parking outside every business, not just the County Council Library & New Road Offices.

Retail businesses need to be positively encouraged to provide customer cycle parking immediately outside the entrances, with grants and subsidies and planning controls; just as new commercial office premises are required under planning law, to include cycle parking. The city and county authorities should work together towards this.

### **Post script**

During the summer while this document was being finalised, the city council, supported by county council funding, made significant inroads into the problem of abandoned bikes. For example, the rack on Parks Road outside the King's Arms pub had 30 abandoned bikes in January, and now has only one. The replacement of racks throughout Carfax and Queen St has meant that all those are now clear, whereas there were 20 abandoned bikes there in January. We would like to thank the councils for their efforts, and for inviting the public to tell them about abandoned bikes by ringing City Works dept on 01865 252900. We would encourage Cyclox members to use this facility

## Appendix 1 Cycle Parking figures 2004

(Each Sheffield stand takes one bike on each side, i.e. two bikes in total. This chart shows total spaces not total stands.)

	Street / position	Butterfly & others	Sheffield spaces	Broken stands	Abandoned bikes
1	Pennyfarthing Place		34		4
2	St Ebbes (S)		18		1
3	St Ebbes (N)		12		1
4	Queen Street (W)	38		7	3
5	Queen Street Subway (N)	5		3	0
6	Queen Street Subway (S)	22		3	1
7	Queen Street (W) (N)		20		3 + 1 Wheel
8	Carfax				
9	New Inn Hall Street			1	0
10	r/o Argos Shoe Lane	43		2	1
11	Wesley Mem Hall		16		
12	St Michael's Northgate Hall		12		3
13	Broad Street 11-14		138		2
14	Parks Road		64		5
15	King Edward Street		12		
16	Blue Boar Street		12		1
17	Pembroke Square		12		
18	Christchurch College				
19	Rose Place	4			3 Wheels
20	Rose Place (W)	16		5	
21	Albion Street		14	1	
22	Littlegate Street		14		
23	Turn Again Street		22		
24	Gloucester Gn Bus Station		14		
25	Yates Yard		32		3
26	Queens Lane	38			6
27	Queens Lane		24		5
28	Magdalen St East (E)				8
29	Magdalen St East (W)		150		
30	Gloucester St		32	1	4
31	Gloucester Gn Sq		20		3
32	Gloucester Gn Sq	25	50		4
33	Old School Square		24		6
34	Worcester St / Hythe Br St		12		
35	George Street		50		7
36	New Road		16		
37	County Hall		24		
38	Carfax - NationWide (W)		18	0	3
39	Carfax - NationWide (E)		18		5
40	Carfax - HSBC		10		5

## Appendix 2 Cycle Parking figures 2nd and 5th January 2009

(Each Sheffield stand takes one bike on each side, i.e. two bikes in total. This chart shows total spaces not total stands.)

Street / position	Butterfly & others including railings	Sheffield spaces	Broken stands	Parked bikes	Abandoned bikes	% spaces blocked
Pennyfarthing Place		34		21	6	18%
St. Ebbes (S)	4	52		34	5	9%
St. Ebbes (N)	7	36		40	12	28%
Queen Street (W)		52		38	6	12%
Queen Street Subway (N)	1	8		7	1	11%
Queen Street Subway (S)		24		11	1	4%
Queen Street (W) (N) <sup>1</sup>	3			3		0%
Carfax	7	36		40	12	28%
New Inn Hall Street	1	12		5	6	46%
r/o Argos, Shoe Lane	41			7	1	2%
Wesley Mem Hall	1	16		9	1	6%
St Michael's Northgate Hall		15		12	6	20%
Broad Street main street		148				
Parks Road	11	86		74	33	41%
King Edward St		12				
Blue Boar Street	7	12		26	8	23%
Pembroke Square		12		10	2	17%
Christchurch College	9			6	3	33%
Rose Place	4			6	2	50%
Rose Place (W)	7			0	0	0%
Albion Street		14		5	1	7%
Littlegate Street		14		1		0%
Turn Again Street	9	22		11	2	6%
Gloucester Green Bus Station		14				
Yates Yard		32		5	1	3%
Magdalen St East (W)	4	142		92	19	13%
Gloucester St		32		23	10	31%
Gloucester Green Sq		62		14	2	3%
Old School Square	2	24		13	7	27%
Worcester St / Hythe Br St		18		4	4	22%
Park End Street	2	8		8	3	30%
George Street	1	50		28	3	6%
St Giles		134	11			0%
Hythe Br St	3	60		12	3	14%
Upper Fisher Row		8		1	0	0%
Said Business School		208				0%
St Peters	7			7		0%
Shoe Lane	3			2	1	33%
Broad Street opp Waterstones		24		32	3	2%

### Notes

1. Queen St N & W Sheffield stands were moved around the corner to St Ebbes St

### **Appendix 3 How to identify an abandoned cycle (item 1 and one other).**

1. Are both tyres flat?

Reason: strong evidence that a bike is abandoned. (This criterion is used by the police.)

2. Are the chain and gears particularly rusty, that is: bright orange rather than dirty brown (assuming it is not raining)?

3. Are two critical components missing, e.g. wheel and handle-bars (not the saddle)?

Reason: if a wheel has been stolen, other components are soon to follow (if the bike is not removed to a bike shop or home for repair). A rear wheel (value £16) includes tyre, inner-tube, rim tape, gear block (£15).

Total value of rear wheel loss: £40. Front wheel (£25).

4. Is a critical component significantly damaged (e.g. severely bent wheel that has been jumped on) and bike in disordered position?

Reason: as above and risk to public safety esp. blind or infirm persons.

Also causes major problems for other cyclists trying to park

5. Are handlebars askew?

Reason: unsafe bike or frustrated regular bike stand user needed to get to their legitimately parked cycle.

6. Is rubbish dumped in / on the bike (e.g. dated flyers in the front basket)?

Reason: evidence bike is abandoned?

7. Is there anything that would make other road users unsafe if the bike was ridden, e.g. no brakes (not just a broken brake cable)?

Reason: public safety. (Apparently the police will also use this criterion [cited at the pensioner's forum 26.2.04].)