

We are based In the Friends of the Earth building:

'The Warehouse'
54-57 Allison Street
Digbeth
BIRMINGHAM
B5 5TH

24 hour answerphone: 0121 632 6753

E-mail: contact@pushbikes.freeserve.co.uk

As we are a voluntary organisation, the office is not manned on a regular basis. The most effective means of contacting us is by e-mail.

We hold meetings on the first Tuesday of most months at 7:30 p.m. including: 3 July, 7 August, 4 September

Members' Discounts From:

Bike Shop	Location	Exceptions
Action Bikes	Northfield	Bikes
Bike Pro	King's Heath	None
Fletchers Auto Store	City Centre	None
Harborne Cycle Surgery	Harborne	None
Red Kite Cycles	Shirley	Bikes
Scott's Cycles	Rubery	Bikes
	Shirley	Bikes
Sprocket Cycles	City Centre	None

Membership Application Form

I/we* wish to join Push Bikes

Name(s) _____

Address (inc. Post Code) _____

Home Telephone _____

Mobile Telephone _____

Work Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

I/we* enclose one year's subscription:

Individual, waged (£11)

Individual, unwaged (£5-50)

Joint/Family (£14-00)

Voluntary donation (optional)

TOTAL £

Signature _____ Date _____

I heard about Push Bikes from _____

I/we* would like to help by: (✓)

() Letter writing () Helping on Push Bikes' stall () Organising activities for Bike Week
() Reviewing plans () Writing articles for Newsletter () Setting up a Bicycle User Group

Bike Week 2007 in Solihull

Saturday 16 June, Cyclesolihull Cycling Information Stand

Free advice on cycling at the Solihull Environment Day event, 09:00 - 16:00, Meriden Park, Chelmsley Wood,

Sunday 17 June, Cyclesolihull Summer Cycle Ride

Family/children's short ride, a six mile leisurely ride along reasonably quiet roads. 14:00 - 16:00, meet Malvern Car Park, Solihull

Tuesday 19 June, Cyclesolihull Evening Cycle Ride

Meet Balsall Common Library at 19:00 A nine mile evening ride along quiet country lanes.

Thursday 21 June, Cyclesolihull Family Bike Ride

19:15 - 21:00, The Glades, Lugtrout Lane, Solihull
A leisurely evening ride (four and nine mile options) specially suitable for beginners and families. Free buffet afterwards.

Sunday 24 June, Cyclesolihull Summer Cycle Ride

Meet Elmdon Lane Car Park, Marston Green, 14:00 - 17:00, a 15 mile urban ride visiting the green spaces of north Solihull and east Birmingham.

For more information on Cyclesolihull rides please visit:
<http://www.cyclesolihull.org.uk/>

Useful Numbers

Birmingham Cycling Officer	0121 303 7485
Solihull Cycling Officer	0121 704 8291
Sandwell Cycling Officer	0121 569 4021
Sandwell Potholes	0121 569 4129
Birmingham Potholes	0121 303 6644
Smokey Diesels	0121 789 7999
Emergency Line	0121 303 4149

Beacon Road Club	John Hitchcock	0121 427 5590
CTC N. Birmingham	Harry Child	0121 353 5814
CTC S. Birmingham	John Bennett	0121 459 9319
Royal Sutton Cycling Club	Bill Jinks	0121 681 7401



Cycle rickshaws in Brum: from A to B for free! see p.5

If you would like to help make the newsletter happen, please contact any of the Newsletter team.

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Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect official Push Bikes' policy.

Newsletter Team:

Graham Hankins,
Michael Groll

Birmingham Cyclist has a readership of nearly 1000 cyclists. We offer competitive advertising rates. For more information regarding advertising please contact us by phone, e-mail or post.

From the Office

Summer of course is always a busy time for Push Bikes, with many leisure rides, festivals and other events taking place around our area. Again this year we are trying to have a presence at as many community events, such as the Family Cycle Day at Sutton Park, as possible to make people aware of the work we do and opportunities for cycling.

New webmaster, David Little and other committee members, are working on a new web site for Push Bikes. However, until that comes on-line in a few weeks time, a temporary info. 'page' is available on Graham Hankins' cycling site to list imminent events:

<http://www.brum-by-cycle.co.uk/page7.htm>

On a national level as we went to press there was positive news on a high-profile campaigning success from the CTC. The Government has agreed to amend the Highway Code to improve cyclists' safety and to encourage drivers to take more care around vulnerable road users. The proposed wording now makes it clear beyond all doubt that cyclists are not obliged to use cycle facilities where it would be unsafe to do so. This is highly significant and very welcome. Many individual Push Bikes' members will also have made a contribution in lobbying for these improvements, so well done to all!

Michael Groll



Cyclists from far and wide gather at the Push Bikes' AGM

A.G.M.

Push Bikes' annual general meeting, May 1st

Howard and I had given the 2007 AGM considerable thought and decided that a strong attractor was needed. But, as the Americans say, why have one when two will do? So a veggie buffet was ordered as a 'social' before the meeting, with two professional traffic engineers invited to answer questions after the AGM.

With the AGM due to begin at 7:30, Howard and I were slightly nervous as we stood in the Warehouse Cafe at 7, beside three laid tables, with two further tables covered with buffet. Would we need very large 'doggie bags'? Would the AGM be barely quorate, or even postponed? So there was some relief when a couple of members did arrive a few minutes later. That couple of members eventually swelled to around twenty, the tables filled, the buffet gradually emptied, with everyone already in intense chat and hearty eating before being herded down to the Meeting Room, which had to lose a table to fit everyone in!

We understood that there were names prepared to fill most posts, so after the reports Howard was voted as Chairman, the other positions also filled with minimal delay, after a bit of a pause at 'Treasurer'. This had been Howard who now wished that another volunteer would take this on. Luckily, David Wilkinson, whom I had known for many years on other committees and was there, he said, as a "warning to others" (not to get involved in committees I think!) voiced those brave words: "Ok, I'll give it a try". So at last a new committee, with some fresh faces, was decided.

Graham Lennard, Birmingham City Council's Sustainable Transport Team Leader and Adrian Lord, a Transport Consultant, then fielded questions from the by definition informed and intense audience. Howard, with some foresight, had a few prepared questions to 'break the ice' but these were almost not needed because many hands went in the air as the 'Question Time' progressed. Inevitably, some questions on cycling can be difficult to answer, but this part of the meeting was 'off the record' so our experts spoke fairly freely both factually and 'politically'.

Thank you everyone who came along, all those who joined the Push Bikes committee for the first time, and to Graham and Adrian who put themselves 'in the stocks' ready for the tomatoes!

For the new committee list please see page 11.

Graham Hankins

Push Bikes' Rides

Sunday 17th June 2007 ~ 'Alcester and the Arrow' led by Nick Wattison

A return to Alcester and the excellent 'Holly Bush' public house. This ride is mainly flat as it loosely follows the course of the River Arrow. Meet: Hare & Hounds pub in Rednal at 10:00am. Total distance of about 37 miles at a steady pace.

Sunday 24th June 2007 ~ 'Weatheroak' led by Nick Wattison

A much shorter ride for the second Sunday in 'Bike Week'. Meet at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, at 11.00am. We shall then cycle to Weatheroak, taking lunch at the 'Coach & Horses' public house. Total ride distance of some 15 miles with a few hills.

Sunday 15th July 2007 ~ 'Bournheath' led by Nick Wattison

Meet at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, at 10.30am. Our destination will be the 'Nailers Arms' at Bournheath. Expect a few hills and a total round trip of about 20 miles.

Sunday 5th August 2007 ~ 'Feckenham' led by Nick Wattison

Meet Nick at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, at 10.00am. We shall then proceed on a ride to Feckenham to visit a well-known 'Great Outdoors' shop. Lunch will be taken at the 'Rose & Crown' public house in the village. Total round trip of about 35 miles, with a few hills.

Sunday 26th August 2007 ~ 'Bromsgrove' led by Nick Wattison

A short but slightly hilly ride to a pub in the Bromsgrove area. Meet Nick at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, at 10.30am. Ride distance of about 25 miles in total.

Wednesday Evening Rides

Wednesday 20th June 2007 ~ to the **Clent Stone Circle** and the **'Bell & Cross'** pub in Lower Clent

Wednesday 27th June 2007 ~ to the **'Weighbridge'** pub, Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch

Wednesday 4th July 2007 ~ to the **'Peacock Inn'**, Icknield Street, Forhill

Wednesday 11th July 2007 ~ to the **'Coach & Horses'** pub, Weatheroak Hill, Weatheroak

Wednesday 18th July 2007 ~ to the **'Holly Bush'** pub, Stourbridge Road, Belbroughton

Wednesday 25th July 2007 ~ to the **'Crown'** pub, Withybed Green, Alvechurch

Wednesday 1st August 2007 ~ to the **'Victoria'** pub in Barnt Green

Wednesday 8th August 2007 ~ to the **'Bartons Arms'** pub, High Street, Newtown

Wednesday 15th August 2007 ~ to the **'Bull's Head'** pub in Earlswood

Wednesday 22nd August 2007 ~ to the **'Black Eagle'** pub, Factory Road, Hockley

Wednesday 29th August 2007 ~ to the **'Hopwood House'** pub, Redditch Road, Hopwood

All Push Bikes rides are free, open to members and non-members and are undertaken at the rider's own risk. Please ensure that your bike is roadworthy, has good brakes and working lights. Wearing "Hi-vis" clothing will improve your safety by making you more conspicuous to other road users. If you have doubts about wearing a helmet, wear one. Ensure it is in good condition and is a proper fit. It may help protect your head should you have an unscheduled dismount. All participants are expected to take great care and observe the Highway Code. The organisers do not accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal property, for personal accident or injury, or for any public liability.

Further advice on ride participation and changes to the Rides Programme can be found on our web site at: <http://www.pushbikes.freemove.co.uk/Cycling/rides.htm> Details can be obtained from Nick Wattison on 07837414236 on the day of the ride.

Committee

Chairman:	Howard Boyd
Secretary:	Graham Hankins
Treasurer:	David Wilkinson
Vice Chairman:	John Bennett
Rides Co-ordinator:	Nick Wattison
Solihull Co-ordinator:	John Tozer
Webmaster:	David Little
Newsletter Team:	Graham Hankins, Michael Groll

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(amount in words) _____
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quoting reference _____ and debit my/our* account accordingly:
Name of account to be debited _____
Account number _____
Name _____
Signature _____
Date _____
Please cancel any previous Standing Order in favour of Push Bikes under the reference given above.

Please write clearly and send the forms to Push Bikes,
54-57 Allison Street, BIRMINGHAM, B5 5TH
*Delete as applicable. contact@pushbikes.freemove.co.uk Telephone: 0121 632 6753
Thank you.

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Bike Week 2007, 16-24 June

Bike Week is the UK's annual 'celebration of cycling', with more than 1,500 events expected to attract over 250,000 participants. A great opportunity to discover (or re-discover) the appeal of cycling, the easy way for so many people to feel healthy and keep fit. All you need to join in is a bike! The following events will be taking place in the Birmingham area:

Sunday 17th June, Family Cycle Day

To celebrate national Bike Week and 'Sutton in Shape' week the city's Sustainable Transport Team and the Sutton Central Group are getting together to run a family cycle day in Sutton Park.

On Sunday 17th June (Father's Day) the area around Sutton Park Visitors' Centre (entrance Town Gate) will be transformed into a festival of all things pedal powered. Kids and grown-ups can pedal for smoothies with Blendavenda, explore Sutton Park and try out a range of weird and wonderful bikes, trikes and tandems.

Bring your own wheels along and take part in one of the family-friendly rides around the park with a free goody bag for the first 200 and a certificate for everyone who takes part.

All this, plus Friends of the Earth, the Push Bikes campaigning group, Park Cycles shop and the Bishop Walsh School's bike recycling project. Bring the whole family!

The event runs from 10am to 4pm. For more information visit www.suttoncentralgroup.org.uk or call the Sustainable Transport Team on 0121 303 7485.

Bike2Work Challenge (runs for whole of Bike Week)

Beat the jams and boost your health with the Bike2Work challenge.

Last year, 112 residents and workers in Birmingham cycled a stunning 5,500 miles commuting during bike week 2006 – the distance from Birmingham to Shanghai! Our challenge now is to beat that figure.

To take part, grab a ride log card from your local library, leisure centre or download one from www.birmingham.gov.uk/cycling or call the sustainable transport team on 0121 303 7485. Your card will entitle you to a free bike safety check at participating cycle shops and for entry into a prize draw for fantastic cycling goodies, and every completed ride log will take us one step closer to cruising through last year's total.

Wednesday 20th June, Bike Breakfast

From 07.30 at On Your Bike bike shop, 33-40 Bradford Street, Digbeth (tel. 0121 666 6933)

Push Bikes organised leisure rides:

Sunday 17th June 2007 ~ 'Alcester and the Arrow' led by Nick Wattison

A return to Alcester and the excellent 'Holly Bush' public house. This ride is mainly flat as it loosely follows the course of the River Arrow.

Meet at the Hare & Hounds pub in Rednal at 10:00am. Total ride distance of about 37 miles at a steady pace.

Wednesday 20th June 2007 ~ to the Clent Stone Circle and the 'Bell & Cross' pub in Lower Clent

Meet near the MAC (Midlands Arts Centre), in Cannon Hill Park, at 7.45pm. You will find us between the lakes, on the park bench. Please bring your lights!

Sunday 24th June 2007 ~ 'Weatheroak' led by Nick Wattison

A much shorter ride for the second Sunday in 'Bike Week'. Meet at Kings Norton Railway Station car park, at 11.00am. We shall then cycle to Weatheroak, taking lunch at the 'Coach & Horses' public house. Total ride distance of some 15 miles with a few hills.

www.cycleinjury.co.uk

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Sustrans' Rides

A series of short rides, mainly on traffic free routes, is planned for different parts of Birmingham during the summer. Led by members of Sustrans, the national cycling charity, they start at 11am on Saturdays and will last about 2 hours covering a distance of 10 or so miles. They will be gently paced suitable for any adult cyclist and competent children. There will be a chance to have a break and hopefully a café stop either during or at the end of the ride. Please come along, and bring your friends.

Further details from John Bennett (0121 459 9319) email: jmbennett@sumari.co.uk

- 30th June from Brookvale Park to Sutton Park and back, meet: Town Gate
- 21st July from Sarehole Mill to Ackers Activity Centre and back, meet: car park
- 4th August from Sandwell Valley Country Park to Jewellery Quarter and back, meet: car park / café
- 18th August A circular tour of Sutton Park, meet: Town Gate
- 1st Sept from Cannon Hill Park to Kings Norton Park and back, meet: outside Midland Arts Centre (MAC)

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National Standard Cycle Training

A few years ago, Sir Edward Stourton, 'Today' presenter on Radio 4, began an interview on cycle training with the words: "You get on a bike and you ride it, don't you?" - thus voicing what still is a widespread view amongst adults. But those same adults still remember with affection the 'Cycling Proficiency Test' they took as a child, and still ask about it for their children today! Today, 'Cycling Proficiency' has been replaced by 'Bikeability', the name for the latest National Standard Cycle Training. Divided into three Levels, NS training will help anyone to cycle, from the absolute beginner up to confident cycling on busy roads. But who trains the trainers? A National Standard Cycle Tutor Training Course, of course; I went to one in Wolverhampton.

There were twenty of us, all cyclists and mostly experienced cyclists too. Andy and Dave were the Advanced tutors (to train the tutors - so who had trained Andy and Dave? We won't go there.....remember "I've got you" - Superman; "If you've got me, who's got you??" - Lois Lane. Andy and Dave were actually tutors of considerable experience) It was a four-day course, part indoor - theory, legalities, discussion and part outdoor - cycling and 'teaching' the three levels to the groups into which we had now been separated, each to 'role play' as tutor to their group. And of course, as we were experienced cyclists and some of our number were tutors in other fields (there was a rock climber and a driving instructor) some elements of strong opinion quickly surfaced. The 'helmet or no helmet' ding-dong threatened to set the course back a whole morning, so did views on performing a 'Risk Assessment'; another was do you lower a bike sideways away from you (as taught) or, our rock climber insisted, towards you? Andy and Dave admitted that the easiest groups were council road safety officers, who just

tended to listen and accept, not re-write the course!

The National Standard Level 1 is for the very beginner and covers essential bike safety - getting on and getting off (yes - there is a 'correct way' to do these!) will it go and will it stop; are wheels and tyres OK, are handlebars and saddle tight. Then basic starting position, controlled riding, gear changing, looking and signalling. Level 2, which needs to be taught on a 'quiet road' introduces 'Primary' and 'Secondary' cycling positions - and the 'snake'. At Level 3 we were negotiating dual-carriageways and large roundabouts as paired riders - 'tutor' and 'trainee' and, as experienced cyclists already, there was 'discussion' between ourselves and our tutors throughout - more next time.

Graham Hankins

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Cycle rickshaws in Birmingham

April saw the launch of a cycle rickshaw service in Birmingham offering free journeys for up to two adults and a child plus luggage within the City Centre. These modern 'City Cruiser' rickshaws have already proven popular in other major world cities such as Berlin, London, Tokyo and Barcelona. Two pedal-powered people carriers have been introduced to the city by Black Country businessman Gary Wager, who thought his idea would work because the rickshaws were able to access the city's extensive pedestrian areas.

"Birmingham is the ideal city for something like this. It's quite spread out but it has a large pedestrianised area that the bikes can operate in".

The rickshaws (costing £7-8,000 each) and drivers are financed purely through advertising on the bodywork of the vehicles. This does mean that they only operate when there is a promotion running or advertisers using them. Gradients can present a challenge: the City Cruiser bikes weigh 21 stone (133 kilos) unladen, though they do have an electric motor to assist when needed.

Mr Wager explained the benefits of this novel form of advertising:

"We call it 'advertising in motion', because it's like a moving billboard and it's so unusual people stop and stare."

The environmental benefits of this new (or rediscovered) form of transport were also recognised and appreciated by advertisers, as Mr. Wager added:

"Many companies use our services as the Ad Bikes are environmentally-friendly therefore giving a good outlook to its customers"

Push Bikes wondered if there had been any opposition to the City Cruisers from local taxi operators, but the response from Mr. Wager

was that this hadn't been the case as their service was free and they had even been dropping passengers at taxi ranks. As the new service didn't charge users a fare there was also no need to register as a hackney carriage. By way of comparison, the burgeoning pedicab fleet operating in London's West End has not been universally welcomed, with concerns about parking, safety of vehicles and lack of regulation.

Look out for City Cruisers in front of the Bullring, between 10.00 and 17.00 Monday to Saturday.

For further details about Birmingham Ad Bikes:

E-mail:
GaryWager@BirminghamAdBikes.co.uk

Tel: 0121 550 4966 or 07837380728

Michael Groll



A different way to travel

As reported in the last edition of Birmingham Cyclist, Push Bikes have been working with Community Services Volunteers (CSV) to provide skills training, maintenance and leading rides to the City Centre. The CSV Environment Community Cycling final session took place in Small Heath.

These sessions had been running at different venues since late last year and have been very well-intentioned, but the response from the community has been extremely variable and certainly no adults have come along for cycling guidance or the 'cycle into the city centre' concept. Ruth Wilson's 'final' Community Cycling session was held at Somerville Road School in Small Heath and in pure number terms, this was the busiest yet - around thirty kids (but again, no adults on bikes) were whizzing around the play area; Terry Stanley, one of Dene Stevens' crew of tutors, was there to deliver the training but initially was very busy making what repairs he could to many of the bikes until the 'official' cycle repair van arrived.

As for the 'training' - well Terry did his best with a small group of six to follow the National Standards Level 1 but it wasn't easy. Most kids on bikes and away from a formal school environment just want to play and impress their mates - the scenario was not really conducive for delivery of very much in terms of safe riding tuition! Ruth had them slow riding and braking but kids were breaking away all afternoon on bikes that in many cases were unsafe anyway!

This has been the case at each of the events: the state of the bikes has been nothing short of shocking. Kids have arrived with bald or punctured tyres, bikes that did not fit their stature, ineffective and in some cases no brakes - yet they were 'riding' these machines every day, on the pavements, on or straight across the roads, presumably with the knowledge of the parents - but who knew nothing about riding, maintenance or adjustment of a bicycle anyway. I would not have taken any of these children on the road, even after some training. There is certainly no perception of a bicycle as a mode of transport in the children; some parents do know that it can be, but are very reluctant to give cycling a try.

Is there an educational and training task to be done in the community? Certainly, but it will be a mountain to climb.

Graham Hankins



Brakes are so passé - one of the bikes brought along to a session

Cycling Strategy

A draft skeleton document and maps indicating suggested corridors for a strategic network have been circulated for comment. The strategy will have two main strands:

- working with people, e.g. companies, partnerships with the NHS, alignment with other strategies;
- infrastructure, e.g. a strategic network.

There is also a desire to strengthen the health aspect of the cycling strategy with strong links and cross reference to the sport and physical activity strategy

Bike Land

This will be a multi-disciplinary cycling facility containing a range of cycling related attractions for all ages and skills, including mountain bike adventure rides, cycle training, pedal-powered boats, themed riding areas and national cycling events. A feasibility study has now identified a site for Bike Land: the Hilltop Manwood site near to Junction 1 of the M5, a green breathing space between the Black Country and Birmingham conurbations, on National Cycle Network route 5.

There is a lot of potential to tie Bike Land in with other projects and facilities in this area, and possibly to create a regional sports hub.

Other cycling schemes:

- Cole Valley Heybarnes - work will be starting soon
- Cole Valley resurfacing - going to consultation soon (on the back of a cable agreement)
- Harborne Walkway - some councillors requested that the walkway be left in its natural state, the Ramblers' Association wanted footpath status, and cyclist wanted shared use for pedestrians and cyclists. However a restricted byway with conditions and restrictions to permit cycling is being sought.
- City Centre - some Advance Stop Lines are going in on the ring road and Colmore Row, and a contra-flow cycle lane on Grosvenor Street West.

- Cycle Parking - parking is going in at approximately 40 sites. Some were requests from members of the public, some were identified by mapping local centres with little or no parking provision. Parking provision at New Street Station is being investigated.
- Cycling Development Programme - looking at the Hill Street contra-flow; scoping work on the North Birmingham route to link in to Connect2; development of cycling strategy and strategic network; Penn's Lane to Newhall Valley,
- Safer routes to Good Hope Hospital - crossing on Coleshill Road and link through Rectory Park.
- Safer routes to City Hospital - shared use from hospital entrance to canal towpath.
- Subway removal programme - various locations.

Connect2

The North Birmingham route between Good Hope Hospital and Pype Hayes has been included in the final list of 79 projects, for a Connect2 lottery funding bid. If successful £650k will be made available over 5 years on a matched funding basis. In addition, Sustrans will use the route as one of the flagship projects in the Connect2 bid.

If the Connect2 bid is unsuccessful Birmingham City Council will still carry out work on the North Birmingham route, but it will take longer.

Cycling & Walking map

A third print run has just been undertaken in time for Bike Week. A few amendments have been included, the main ones being the addition of gridlines (requested by Mike Paley) and a scale indicating cycling and walking times.

Contact details

If you have any comments, questions or queries, please feel free to call the Sustainable Transport Team on 0121 303 7485 or email: cycling@birmingham.gov.uk

Will Martin