GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

by Michael Evans, Chairman DCN

Quite a lot of this newsletter is taken up by news from Bournemouth, reflecting a big change in that Council’s attitude towards cyclists compared with when DCN was founded in 1992. Consultation is now possible through a new Cycling Forum, and there is regular communication between DCN and the Council on detailed issues. There is more good news in the shape of what cyclists are doing voluntarily - you can read in this issue about volunteers who are transforming the former Somerset and Dorset Railway, and the petition being organised by DCN Christchurch for a continuous coastal cycle route.

The bad news only confirms what you know already - that South West Trains are intransigent about their restrictions on carrying bikes. They failed to notify DCN of a recent consultation, and we got our word in by e-mail at the last minute when we heard about it second-hand. Their reply was less than thrilling! Peak hours are to be extended, and they failed (not for the first time) to answer our question why half-empty carriages cannot be adapted to carry cycles outside peak hours as in some other European countries.

Can I make a plea to all members to give more support to your local DCN Branch. Your Branch representatives work hard on your behalf, but they need your input. Please get in touch with them and help them to arrange a local meeting occasionally so that they can listen to your needs and do not have to rely entirely on their own resources when dealing with the Council.

Finally, in the interests of your safety, have you checked your lights for the winter, and got your reflective clothing ready to put on?

Happy Cycling, Michael.

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The newsletter is compiled by the Chairman and published in February, May, August and November.
Deadlines are 1st day of January, April, July and October. Send copy by e-mail or clearly typed to Chairman DCN. Images in JPG please. Send s.a.e. for return of photos, cartoons and other artwork.
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Visit www.dcn.org.uk (click on Diary of Rides and Events) for an update of events
Add your cycling or environmental event to this page free of charge.
Send by e-mail or clearly typed copy to the Chairman
To place other adverts in the newsletter please see page 11

5 to 10 October
London - Paris Cycling Challenge 2004 (5 days/4 nights). The Royal Bournemouth Hospital Jigsaw Appeal to raise £2.5 million to purchase additional life-saving scanners. Diana Newbury Jigsaw Appeal Office Royal Bournemouth Hospital Castle Lane East Bournemouth BH7 7DW 01202 704060

17 October
DCN Wimborne Branch. Easy 12 to 15 mile ride. All are welcome free but please book by phone. Chris Buckland 01202 601620

Sunday 8 May 2005
Wimborne British Heart Foundation annual ride
Jill Whitfield 5 Birchdale Road, Wimborne BH21 2PH 01202 886771

Saturday Mornings in the New Forest
Meet 8.45am every Saturday at the Pioneer Store Car Park, Christchurch or 9.0am near “The Oak PH”, Burton. Return to start by noon. 20 miles Car park available
Just turn up (Joint event by CTC Wessex DA and DCN Bournemouth-Christchurch Branches)

Dear Sir, re Bikes on Trains
This letter from Bruce Jensen of DCN Wimborne illustrates the article you can read on pages 18 and 19. Please continue writing to your MP and anyone else you can think of to try and make them design trains better in future!

This trains & bikes issue is doubly important for cyclists in Dorset since South West Trains are now considering banning cycles from commuter trains during peak times. They're officially in the 'public consultation period'. I saw the announcement yesterday morning.
The old slam-door trains have an enormous holding area for bikes - easily enough room for a dozen bicycles, and they are very easy to get in and out of.
The newer Southwest trains have only a closet-sized guard's room with a wall rack that can hold 6 bicycles. The fact that just before stops the guard must be in this tiny cubicle to make announcements and control the doors makes it especially difficult for a cyclist to get ready to get off the train. Add to this the fact that the exterior door swings inward and blocks the bike rack and you can see that it is a real nightmare during busy times to get bikes in and out of a SW train. Quite often the train is kept longer in a station than it needs to be because cyclists have to go through a contortionist's act to get on and off the train. It's no wonder that the train companies, and SW Trains in particular, want to get rid of cyclists.
But, as you point out, environmentally friendly travel is in the public interest. Train companies, including Southwest Trains, receive massive amounts of public money and have a duty to act in the public interest. The answer, in my opinion, is to make it easier for cyclists by giving them more room, not taking away their right to ride on the train. Besides being environmentally friendly, it is convenient and fun to travel by bike & train. Yesterday, just before I got off the train, a Southwest Train employee got on, with his bike.
I shall take up your advice to write to Mr. Bowker. Regards, Bruce
Hello from Keith Bichard

I have recently taken on the role of contact for DCN in the Bournemouth area. I am a cycling commuter and a leisure cyclist with my young family. I have enjoyed cycling for many years and think it has a very important role as a means of transport in the future. There has been much progress in our area in recent years due to the efforts of the council who now are placing cycling higher on the agenda, especially with several councillors who are cyclists (not forgetting the former chairman of the Bournemouth branch John Hayter).

There is also now the Bournemouth Cycling Forum where important issues can be discussed and which can influence future plans for the area. This is a good opportunity for DCN members to put forward ideas. Without such feedback it will be difficult, so we need to meet and discuss. How that will happen is up to the membership; we used to meet monthly in the Fiveways in Charminster. It was always an informal and social gathering which enabled us to discuss local issues and to get to know people. I would like to rekindle some form of regular get together. If you have any ideas or would like to come along to a meeting please let me know.

Having recently returned from Holland it is clear how much more there is to be done if the government really wish to reduce the number of car journeys and encourage more cyclists back onto the road. Cycling over there is a joy, and that is not just because of the lack of hills! Nearly every route has an accompanying cycle track and there are many extra tracks to join up different areas, all well sign posted. It was great to see so many children and families out cycling. We did get some strange looks in our cycle helmets on our single speed upright bikes. The only other cyclists in helmets were a local racing team out on a practice. It felt safe and the motorists all seemed to respect bikes and were happy to wait. It sounds like a dream! Maybe one day!

I look forward to hearing from as many members in Bournemouth as possible. Keith Bichard

Bournemouth Borough Council Cycling News
from Richard Barnes

6563 people registered for bike2work day on 16 June this year, slightly fewer than in 2003. The Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Community Services both participated. For the fourth year in a row the weather was good.

The Cycling event in Bournemouth Square on Thursday 17 June was well received – over 200 croissants were distributed to those who cycled and there were a number of favourable comments regarding cycling infrastructure in Bournemouth compared to other towns, particularly the number of safe off-road routes. The event received positive publicity through the Echo and BBC website.

The first meeting of a Bicycle User Group (BUG) for Council Employees took place on Thursday lunchtime. Around 15 attended and a number of positive proposals were put forward which will progress issues for cyclists. Those who attended did think setting up a BUG was needed and it is hoped that another meeting can be held later in the year.

Council employees who would like to make a contribution to the BUG should contact Richard Barnes tel 01202 454645 richard.barnes@bournemouth.gov.uk

More Bournemouth news
Pages 9 & 10
Poole Family Bike Ride
On the last Saturday of Bike Week, 19 June, a family bike ride on the Heritage Cycleway took place from Baiter car park to Upton House. This was organised by Sally Funnell, Poole Cycling and Walking Officer. Members of DCN and CTC helped with marshalling the ride and assisting any cyclists needing help. All participants received a refreshment voucher for use at Upton House at the finish. The weather was kind to us and some 188 people took part, setting off from Baiter at about 11a.m. and arriving at Upton House in due course! Some 30% of participants were children from age 3 years and upwards. Everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable morning, and Sally is to be congratulated on a most successful event, and she hopes that this will encourage more people to cycle in the borough.

NCN25 signing improved
For a long time DCN has asked Poole Council to add a direction sign for cyclists on NCN25 on the embankment just south of Broadstone. Many cyclists, not realising they had to turn right to get to Poole have blithely continued straight on only to find themselves in Upton Park! At last Sally Funnell has been able to get a sign (see photo) funded partly by Poole Leisure Services, and has taken the advantage at the same time to put in news signage at the junction with Roman Road which was another confusing point.
Thanks Sally for all your efforts to get this done.

NCN25 danger spot at Merley
On the shared footpath next to the Willett Arms, Merley, cyclists need to be specially alert to cars coming out of the pub car park. Their view of the cycle path is obscured by a hedge and there is no warning sign to motorists that cyclists may be passing. Several DCN members have written to us for some months now. We passed their complaints to Poole Council, who in turn have told the pub management to do something about it before a serious accident occurs. At the time of going to print nothing had been done and the Council Enforcement Officer is following the matter up.

Lamppost falls on cyclist's head
It was reported in August that a cyclist was in a critical but stable condition in hospital after a car crashed into a lamppost, which then fell over and landed on his head. The 47-year-old holidaymaker from Belper, Derbyshire was cycling with his wife in Sandbanks when a Renault Laguna collided with a Ford Focus, sending it into the lamppost.
We don’t know whether he was wearing a helmet, and if so, what protection it gave.

Cycling on Canford Heath
A DCN member asked us what the rules were on the heath. Sally Funnell has told us:

“Cycling is only permitted on the Bridleways. Leisure Services, who manage the heath, in conjunction with English Nature are keen to minimise extensive cycling and other activities that could have a detrimental effect on the environment of the heath and also the excessive use of signs. There are 3 bridleways - No23 stretching between the end of Award Road and the Gravel Hill Crematorium (Bourne Valley Greenway route). BR 118 between Francis Ave and Arrowsmith Road and BR 24 linking BR 23 to Wheelers Lane in Bearwood. We are working on upgrading Footpath 123 (Longfleet Drive) to a Bridleway but this is a long legal process due to land ownership issues. This links Canford Heath Road to Magna Road and will be fully signed when complete.”
**Purbeck**

*DCN contact: John Thraves*

Yellow lines in Wareham town and causeway.

It appears that when the lining is renewed the old line is not burned away and the new line is painted over the old line. This causes a build up of material and endangers cyclists riding over the lines. We are asking the County Council to look into this.

**Rides**

Next year we are planning to try and do an accompanied ride per month on a Sunday during May, June, July and August and also an evening ride every week during the same months. This would be open to holiday makers and local people but specifically aimed at families. Please ring me with any other ideas for rides and activities.

**Next Purbeck Branch Meeting**

17 November 7.30pm at The Antelope.

*(continued on page 19)*

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**Volunteers continue their work on the Somerset & Dorset**

With their coordinator Nick Brown, of Dorset Cycles (*see advert on page 18*) volunteers of the **Rail-to-Trail Campaign** have been doing sterling work on sections of the old railway, notably in the Shillington area where 2km have been surfaced making it a first class and attractive path. The campaign includes cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

A volunteer work party is planned for 17 October from 10am to 4pm to clear part of the old line near Candy’s Lane, Corfe Mullen.

**Anyone willing to help Nick should contact him on 01963 362476.**

*(More about S&D on page 13)*

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<td>Tent provided Sleeping bag included</td>
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<td>BRING YOUR OWN SHEET SLEEPING BAG</td>
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<td>Bring your own tent limited space</td>
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In high season, bicycles are limited but groups wanting a day in the Purbecks or Isle of Wight are encouraged in the shoulder months.
You can now cycle from Wimborne all the way to Bournemouth Square, rarely having to use main roads. Much of the route is along good gravel tracks through attractive countryside and is an improvement on the car in busy traffic.

However, although there are signposts, they are lacking at some key points. Without local knowledge, even with a map you may not get the route right first time. But Malcolm and Michael & Valerie did it separately and agree it’s worth finding out! We advise taking a Bournemouth street map with you as well as the OS Landranger 195. A compass might also be useful!

The route
Going via Magna Road on the cycle path on the north side, we turned right at Wheelers Lane which leads to Canford Heath where there were no signposts (though we understand there may be now) so we had to find the track leading to Knighton Heath Golf Course, Francis Avenue and the Mountbatten Arms Roundabout.

There are two ways you can cycle on shared paths from there, but no sign to tell you which to take. You need to take the right-hand one and go down the hill to a subway which takes you left under Ringwood Road, then cycle straight on as far as Alder Road.

Cross at the traffic lights, head for Sainsbury’s and take the track next to the Harvester pub and continue via Winston Avenue and Dalling Road. Turn left, under the railway arch, into Coy Pond Road and immediately right into Havelock Road (No Through Road) and into Bournemouth Upper Gardens.

Turn right and after a few yards do a U-turn at the end for the final leg of the journey along a shared path on the far side of the gardens, and enjoy a delightful ride all the way through to Bournemouth Square.

The return journey
Malcolm cycled home by the same route, but Michael and Valerie took the Dorset Belle Ferry to Poole (the bikes were very gently loaded by staff and there is no charge for them) and cycled home from there by the Castleman Trail, Willetts Road and Julian’s Road.
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Cycling access times
A cyclist recently wrote to DCN “I was wondering why the access to Bournemouth Sea front for cyclists has changed from “Cyclists - take care” to “No access from 10am to 7pm.” Obviously there are more sun-bathers in the summer, but I have just started to try and cycle to Bournemouth from Swanage occasionally and this timing would affect my return journey.”

Martin Dover of Bournemouth Council explained the situation: “The original bylaw for the Bournemouth promenade banned cyclists altogether. However, in 2000, as part of the council’s cycling strategy, we managed to get a relaxation of the bylaw to permit cyclists to use the promenade out of the peak months of mid-June to mid-September. Within this peak period, to prevent conflict with pedestrians and beach hut users, cycles were allowed only outside the hours of 10am to 7pm, i.e. when possible conflicts are significantly less.

Poole council has followed suit and we both have similar bylaws in operation. The Bournemouth Highways section has tried to further increase the hours in the summer where the seafront is available to cyclists so that commuters can use this route on their way home.

In this we have failed, partly due to the minority of cyclists that speed along the seafront with little or no regard for other users.

However we are still trying to reduce the ban so that it only affects the main holiday months of July and August - discussions with Seafort Services and Councillors are on-going.”

Cycling Speed limit
As readers of the Daily Telegraph (3 September) will know, enforcement of the 10mph limit by speed camera has become an issue. Clearly some control over cycling is needed given the special nature of the prom, but we have asked the Council why 10mph? Is this figure scientifically based? Does it have to apply even if the prom is empty? Why not use video cameras to catch cyclists cycling badly at any speed rather than fast safe cyclists? Should speed be the issue when most cyclists don’t have a speedometer?

We hope to have the Council’s answers in the next issue.
We would like to welcome Keith into the post of the DCN Bournemouth rep and thank Bob Frew for the help he has given us whilst covering the vacant post.

The Bournemouth cycle forum has been set up to consider cycling issues. It is attended by Council Members and officers, the Police, representatives from major employers, the University and members of the local cycling and youth groups. At the last meeting they agreed several new routes which have now been added to the cycling facilities programme.

We have also been busy on the ground and have completed the following works within the last year:

- 1000m of new cycle paths across Turbary Common which has created a traffic-free route from the Wallisdown Road area to Turbary Park Avenue. This route was part funded by a grant from the New Opportunities Fund of the National Lottery.

- The surfacing on the existing Sheepwash un-bound cycle path from Christchurch Road to Riverside Avenue has been improved.

- In co-ordination with Poole and as part of the local “Greenways” initiative Bournemouth has constructed 1000m of new cycle path through Upper Gardens. This route links Bournemouth town centre with the Poole cycle network and it is hoped that its creation will encourage commuters living to the west of the borough to cycle to work.

- Cycle parking facilities have been provided for an additional 260 cycles in various locations around the town centre and along the seafront. The latter has provided cycle parking all the way from Southbourne to the Poole boundary along the route of NCN Route 2.

- The Council again supported a number of events in National Bike Week and these were well supported. As a new initiative this year we handed out promotional information and the area cycle map together with a “continental bikers breakfast” to any cyclists who visited a cycle stand display located in Bournemouth Square. This was promoted in the press and on the Council’s website and attracted well over 250 cyclists. The Bournemouth Cycle Forum group also hosted a cycling promotional event near Boscombe Pier to link up with a health ride.

- The big news for this year is that in September we opened NCN Route 2 across the borough. This coincided with a “trailblazing ride” organised by Sustrans and led by their director, John Grimshaw. A high profile reception was held near Bournemouth Pier to promote the route and increase awareness of cycling. DCN and others were invited to attend and join part of the ride towards Dorchester via the Sandbanks ferry.

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**NEWSLETTER CHANGES**

*from Michael Evans*

As I have some heavy personal commitments in December and January, I apologise that the newsletter usually published in January will be unavoidably delayed. This gives the opportunity to alter publication dates by one month to February, May, August and November. This will overcome the clash with the Christmas post, and allow us to give a more up to date account of Bike Week events. Regrettably, advertising charges have to be increased next year to catch up with recent increases in postage, paper and printing costs. The new rates can be found on page 2.
Councillor John
DCN member John Birtwistle has been elected to Weymouth and Portland Borough Council to represent Weymouth East Ward. No group has overall control of the Council but John is a member of the Liberal Democrats, the largest group. His election is excellent news and I am able to report some promising discussions with the Council's Engineering and Harbour Services Manager, Martyn Gallivan.

DCN AGM and Charity Ride 20 June
We were pleased that the DCN AGM moved west this year to Weymouth but disappointed that the attendance was low and that there were so few entries for the Great Weymouth Charity Cycle Ride which followed the AGM - disappointing given the efforts of DCN members Clarice Wickenden and Mike Martin and the support of Tim from Raleigh Cycles. Clarice, Mike, Rob and I will be discussing with Peter Robinson of Dorchester Cycles how we can do better next time.

Cycle Routes
I am in discussion with W&PBC about the possible production of updated cycle route leaflets for the south Dorset area. Facilities and information for leisure cycling can strongly promote an area's tourism appeal (Padstow and Barnstaple being particularly good examples). Dorset needs to match those facilities especially as we have a better climate!

Speeding on Portland
W&PBC are supported in their decision to reduce speed limits on many Portland roads following four deaths and 22 accidents involving injury in the last 5 years.
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HIGHWAYS AGENCY DROPS CYCLE SAFETY PROJECT

by Michael Evans

Many DCN members know how risky it is to cross the A31 and A35, not to mention many other main road crossing points throughout the County.

Last year, John Pritchard and I, together with CTC representatives, put a lot of unpaid work and hours into a consultation organised by the Highways Agency about desirable safety improvements to dozens of crossing points on the A31 and A35.

Now we have heard that the Highways Agency have “shelved” their Non-Motorised Users Crossing Improvement programme! The reason given is that the government have cut their small schemes budget. Along with the CTC, DCN is appalled by this decision and we will join them in writing to the government urging them to reinstate the project to improve cyclists’ safety.

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Hire Bikes
It seems that our front page article in July came out too late. A decision had already been taken, and it was to go ahead with work on the track in the East Dorset area. When our article was written the matter was still in abeyance, but as we publish only quarterly it can happen that an item is old hat by the time it is printed and distributed. Thanks anyway to all members who did bother to write to EDDC, who will be gratified that they have taken a popular decision!

William Wallace, Planning Officer at EDDC told us:

In July the Council set aside £150,000 for various parts of the Community Partnership to bid for, with £50,000 of that for environmental projects. Mrs Heaton of the British Horse Society proposed that money should be used for ramps and gates and clearing the track on the DCC owned section, and planting to enhance wildlife. A bid of £13,000 was approved. It is likely to be paid direct to DCC as the work is carried out. Andrew Bradley at DCC is likely to be the person working with Jean Heaton and Rod Webb (the rights of way officer). I understand Giles Nicholson, also of DCC but based in North Dorset, is interested in organising clearing days by volunteers in October and January. The track is intended for use by horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists.

Mrs Hilary Chittenden, Chairman of the Environment Group of the Community Partnership, will monitor progress of the project.

Sturminster Marshall Parish Council has met Guy Beresford of the Highways Agency to press for improvements to the A31 between the Lake Gates and Roundhouse Roundabouts, including a bridge across the road where the DCC portion of the former railway line reaches the A31.
**Bringing up Harry the right way**
Mrs Jill Mitchell of Wimborne cycles daily to take her 4½ yr-old grandson Harry to his play group. “I don’t drive, and cycling is easier anyway”, she told Michael Evans, adding “It’s nice that we can do it together, and we like going down the Castleman trail to Broadstone. Harry’s mum cycles too. I hope when he gets bigger he’ll cycle to school.” (*photo by Susy Ellis)*

**East Borough problem**
DCN has asked Dorset County council to look into the problem of entry into East Borough from the Square. Although there are No Entry signs, East Borough is nevertheless a two-way street. Cyclists use it to avoid being among heavier traffic of West Borough. They can do this legally by dismounting until they are past the No Entry sign, then get on their bikes again - only to be met by a car coming the other way and cutting the corner in the belief that it is a one-way street (contrary to Highway Code para 136).

It would be difficult to put a cycle lane round the corner, but a simple solution would be to add a white arrow on the northbound surface which would make it clear to southbound drivers that it is two-way. This is what we have requested be done.

**Cycle Training at QE Leisure Centre**
A DCN member e-mailed to say that when he rang the number on our web site to enquire about cycle training at the Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre in Wimborne, he was told they had no plans to do it at all! This was in spite of the fact that it is included in the County Council’s Cycle Training leaflet.

We asked DCC Road Safety about this and they replied “QE are offering the cycle training scheme. They have given us some teething problems, but are almost up and running. The best person, if you speak with someone at the centre, is David Brodie.” I phoned David Brodie on 4 September, and he confirmed that cycle training will be available in October, but he could not say how often it could be provided.

**A nice ride**
Seventeen DCN members from Wimborne Branch enjoyed a scenic if rather up-and-down ride from Wareham to Lulworth Castle and back on 11 July. We went at a very gentle pace, so that the 18 mile trip was done in about 3 hours, plus an hour’s stop for lunch at the castle. Four others felt like a shorter ride, so they had a great time on the flat down to Arne and back.

*(photo by Ian Lawrie)*
Peggy gets the prize!

by Michael Evans

Readers may remember we featured our oldest member Peggy Hovell last year.

In her 93rd year, as a result of her ride for the British Heart Foundation Peggy has been awarded a shield by the Mayor of Bournemouth for the cyclist who had done best for the British Heart Foundation. Well done Peggy!

Unfortunately Peggy hasn’t been quite well enough to do much cycling since then, but when I spoke to her recently on the telephone she sounded as bright and young as ever!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The DCN AGM was held on 20 June in Weymouth this year, and was rather poorly attended despite the nice weather. Your committee was reelected, and we heard an interesting talk by Doug Fremlin of the English Regions Cycling Development Board.

Under “Any Other Business” a member asked what the DCN procedure is for determining policy. It was explained that the committee, which represents all DCN Branches and meets regularly, is responsible for deciding policy matters. If members think that a policy should be changed or a new policy introduced, they can bring it up at a Branch meeting, or make a proposal at an AGM. The way DCN is run is openly set out in our web site, and any member who wants a copy of our Constitution can download it or request a copy from the County Secretary.

The next AGM will be on Saturday 18 June 2005 in Wareham.

E-mail giosprimera@hotmail.com

10% discount for DCN members
Government abandons cycling targets
In July a new Transport Strategy was announced in which all national targets to increase cycle use were ditched. Government commitments to quadruple cycle use date from the National Cycling Strategy targets of 1996, which were later included in John Prescott’s 10-year-plan. They are to be replaced by as yet undisclosed local targets.

MPs report on obesity
The Health Select Committee of the House of Commons stated in May that if the government managed to treble cycling by 2010 it could achieve more in the fight against obesity than any other measure they could think of. (visit www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmhealth.htm

YHA shows the way to travel
Over 90% of visitors to our National Parks arrive in private cars, spoiling the very beauty of the places they have come to enjoy. But those who use Youth Hostels are different. Almost 50% of hostellers came by bus, train, cycle or on foot, with 11% using bicycles. The YHA has an Empty Roads Initiative promoting alternative ways to enjoy our countryside. Details from 01629 592600 or andybickerstaff@yha.org.uk

Cyclist pressure succeeds in Wiltshire
The A303 improvement scheme past Stonehenge did not originally take heed of cyclists. They were banned from using the proposed tunnel, and offered only a grass surface track to bypass it. Also, the A344 which passes close to the Stones would have been closed to all except pedestrians. Pressure from cyclists groups has persuaded the Highways Agency and County Council to rectify both these problems.

Cycling offences down
Every year from 1998 to 2002, the number of people prosecuted for cycling offences has fallen (from 2,380 to 636.) (Hansard 10/3/04)

Micro folders
Sir Clive Sinclair has launched a folding bike that is lighter and more compact than anything currently available. Built from plastic and aluminium, the A-Bike weighs 12lbs and folds to a small rucksack size. It has “micro” wheels. Visit http://tinyurl.com/4oc8g for details

Dahon folders
In the first half of 2004 Dahon, the world’s largest producer of folding bicycles, sold almost as many bikes as during the whole of 2003! Folders apparently account for one in ten bicycles sold in Japan and Taiwan. Rising fuel prices and environmental pressure make it likely that this trend will continue.

Cycling up in London
London has seen a record 23% increase in cycling between June 2004 and June 2005. This is the sharpest one year increase in cycle use ever recorded for a British city.
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South West Trains
SWT have issued a draft policy which bans cyclists on even more services by extending their definition of “peak hours”. The tone of the document is entirely negative and it is clear they regard cyclists as a nuisance to be dissuaded from even considering using their services. DCN has written to them in these terms and asking them why they are neglecting to adapt their carriages and for staff to be be more helpful so that they would attract more fare paying customers.

London cyclists also suffer on SW Trains!
The following e-mail to DCN was received from a cyclist in London
Dear Mr Evans,
I am sure you are probably aware of the rather draconian measures planned by South West Trains... the tone of their policy document suggests a very negative attitude to cyclists, for instance they distinguish between them and passengers (as if cyclists travel free) and they comment about the time it takes to load cycles as impacting upon their services. This latter issue is a particular concern on the services from London to Weymouth (which I use regularly - hence my interest in this matter) as these trains have woefully inadequate cycle space... it can take some time to get your bike into this space. It is therefore rather unfair to lay the blame for delays on cyclists when it is the very poor facilities for cycle carriage that causes the delays. I hope that the Dorset Cyclists Network will be contributing to the SWT consultation and will take a robust stand upon their lamentable proposals and attitude to cyclists. Best wishes
Stephen Taylor (name and address supplied)

Wessex Train bike ban
Wessex Trains now ban bikes on trains arriving in Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter, Plymouth and Truro from 7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm. Cyclists who use those services are not happy about it and are protesting.
(CTC Cycle Digest no 40)
However, this summer Wessex Trains ran 2 diesel-hauled trains from Bristol Temple Meads to Weymouth and back, all days except Sunday. With a guards van, it had space for 25 cycles.
(continued next page)
Bikes on Trains

- it gets worse!
(continued from previous page)

SRA Cycling Policy
The Strategic Rail Authority recently consulted on its draft policy on bikes. This fell short of what we need. It omitted any objectives to increase combined rail-bike journeys, improve station access and reservation systems, or ensure improved service for bicycle carriage on trains. DCN and several individual members wrote to the SRA asking them to beef up their policy.

CTC takes up the issue
Why are train operators making it harder for commuters to take bicycles by train? This was the question that CTC posed on Radio 4’s Today Programme on 2 September. They pointed out that three rail operators in the Southeast are extending bans on the carriage of cycles on their peak time services. The CTC called for the companies involved to take a lead from overseas rail operators who use a combination of common sense, charging and reservations to tackle the issue.

What is DCN doing?
We’ve lost count of the years over which we have written to SW Trains. We wrote again in July to complaining about the increased restrictions by extending the definition of “peak hour”, and their failure to consider making space for more bikes outside peak hours, and issue which they have avoided answering despite a number of letters. We have had no reply to this letter.

We wrote to North Dorset MP Robert Walter about it, and he has received a bland reply from SW Trains which states “in no way is South West Trains against cyclists”. Yet they continue “we carry a maximum of 5 cycles on our Wessex Electric trains . . . on trains serving Gillingham we have a cycle compartment for only 2 cycles.” Furthermore, the letter still does not answer the questions
1. Will they try and improve cycle capacity in future train design
2. Why can’t unused space in off peak trains be used to carry more than 2 or 5 bikes?

Other countries can do it - why not ours?
Meanwhile, letters in other papers continue to highlight the difference in other countries. A Mr Moss of Staffordshire wrote to The Times recently that in France the leaflet “Train + Vélo” confirmed that he could take his bike from the airport to the Gare du Nord on the RER at all except peak times, and when he wrote to Amiens for information he received a map and train timetable including the fact that cyclists were welcome on French trains.

(continued at foot of next column)
A Coastal Cycle Trail in the East of Dorset

Three or four years ago Christchurch Council proposed a cycleway of about 3 miles that would run from Mudeford Quay to the Chewton Bunny in Highcliffe. Incredibly, the local residents association set about stopping the project and succeeded. The vast majority who were in favour of the cycle trail just never made their voices heard. Another obstacle was a piece of cliff top land near Highcliffe Castle that the council needed to buy.

In early 2004 the council finally bought the piece of land near the castle which made cycling this route possible. It’s a beautiful route that takes you along much seafront, through woods and castle grounds. And you can extend the ride. At Highcliffe you can continue through Naish Caravan Park, along Barton cliff top, on paths to Milford and Keyhaven and on a designated cycle path to Lymington. At Mudeford the ferry crossing welcomes bikes so you have 20 miles of 85% off-road cycling from Lymington to Sandbanks.

The route is wonderful, but there are “No Cycling” signs near Mudeford (on 5m wide tarmac) and in Highcliffe (on 5m wide hardcore). In June 2004 some local residents joined forces with Christchurch DCN to do a petition to present to Christchurch Council, asking them to make this a designated cycle trail, and the petition is largely completed. If anyone wants a petition form to collect some signatures or can come to the council meeting then please get in touch with us.

To create a great cycle trail for the local community and tourists Christchurch and the County Councils don’t even need to spend any money. The route is already there – they just need to remove the no-cycling signs.

Jim Kelly  james.kelly15@btinternet.com

(more on next page)

The Crown at Winterborne Stickland
(formerly The Shire Horse)
17th Century thatched traditional family run pub
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DORSET POLICE’S SCHEME FOR IMPROVING DRIVER BEHAVIOUR

For this newsletter we have decided to steer away from cycle news as most of us also have a car and we thought this might be of interest to you.

Until recently if you were involved in a road traffic accident in Dorset, and you were considered to be at fault, there was only one course of action: to prosecute you for careless driving, which would result in a court appearance. If found guilty it would mean points on your licence, a fine and costs.

However, there is now an alternative course Dorset Police can take: the “Driver improvement scheme”. If the accident didn’t result in serious injury, and the driver considered at fault has a good driving record, he or she can be put forward for the scheme. A letter would be sent to the driver concerned, offering a place on the course. This costs £150.00 and lasts a day and a half. A driver can still request a court hearing if they feel they were not at fault for the accident. The other parties involved are also contacted and told that the driver considered at fault has been offered a place on the course. They are encouraged to write back if they do not agree with the planned course of action.

The course is partly classroom-based and involves looking at the driver’s behaviour, observations etc. The second part involves going out with an advanced driving instructor, who will point out where the driving could be improved and where he or she is going wrong.

Once the course is completed, the driver concerned is expected to have taken an interest in the course and some improvement seen in their driving. If all this has happened, Dorset Police takes no further action. However, should the same driver be found at fault in another accident a further course cannot be offered, and court action is then the only option.

Editor’s footnote: Wimborne’s “Better Driving & Speed Pledge” Scheme will be launched on 22/23 October at the King Street Learning Centre. All good drivers should come! Enquiries to 01202 880966

WILTSHIRE CYCLIST ADMONISHED BY POLICE FOR NOT USING CYCLE PATH

by Michael Evans

Our friends in COGS, the Salisbury Cycling Campaign, reported a case of a cyclist being threatened by a police motorcyclist with a fixed penalty ticket if he didn’t use the cycle path beside a main road, as he was holding up motor traffic. However, the cycleway was overgrown with shrubbery and led through two villages which were out of the cyclist’s way.

We asked Dorset Police for their comments, and it transpires that the Wiltshire policeman mistakenly thought that cycle paths were mandatory. Dorset Police confirm that cyclists do not have to use them if they don’t want to. However, they ask cyclists to be reasonable, and use a cycle path if it’s in good condition, when necessary to aid traffic flow on a busy road.

Wiltshire police have apologised to the cyclist concerned and the policeman is now a bit more knowledgeable about the law. The incident got quite a lot of publicity, as a result of which the Council have promised to clear the footpath.

Christchurch

continued from previous page

Following on from Jim Kelly’s article on page 20, I would just add that the main focus of activity over the summer has been the coastal route from Mudeford to Chewton Bunny. During ‘Bike Week’ we organised an evening ride on the proposed route which attracted seven members.

Petitions have been sent out to all DCN members in the area (ring Chris if you didn’t receive yours) and these will shortly be presented to the council. So far over 500 people have signed up in favour of opening the coastal route to cyclists.

Members have continued to attend the community partnership forum on cycling to ensure DCN’s voice is heard.

Chris Birkhead
USEFUL CONTACTS

COUNCIL CYCLING OFFICERS
Poole Borough Council
Sally Funnell 01202 262066

Bournemouth Borough Council
New cycle schemes
01202 451431
Safe Routes, Green Travel Plans
Richard Barnes 01202 454645

Christchurch Borough Council
Bob Baker 01202 495083

Dorset County Council
Andrew Bradley 01305 224269 / 01305 224837

ROAD DEFECTS
Bournemouth 01202 451463
Poole Potholes & overhanging vegetation 01202
262200 Litter and glass 01202 261700
Christchurch 01202 495054
Rest of Dorset 0800 232323 (CLARENCE)
New Forest 0238 063388

NEW FOREST
Route closures, safety advice 02380 284476
Camping information 02380 283771
Tourist Information 02380 282269

RAIL, BUS, FERRY INFORMATION
0870 608 2608 www.traveline.org.uk

DRINK-DRIVING, DRIVING WHILE
DISQUALIFIED AND
OTHER ROAD CRIME
Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

SMOKY COMMERCIAL VEHICLES
01506 445216

SUSTRAINS RANGERS
Poole, Bournemouth, Christchurch
John Vuagniaux 01202 476404
johnv@spindles.fsnet.co.uk

Purbeck, East & North Dorset
John Thraves 01929 554550
purbeck@dcn.org.uk

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland
Anne Eccleston 01305 266632
anne.eccleston@cafcass.gov.uk

North Dorset
Jude Hopkins 01747 830617
dropkins@talk21.org

DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL
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www.carsharedorset.com

NATIONAL BLOOD SERVICE
08457 711711

CYCLE TRAINING

Dorset County Council
Phase 1 (Year 3 and above, off road) Phase 2
(Year 5 and above, on road) To enquire about
training for young people, contact your local
Leisure Centre
For phone numbers visit www.dcn.org.uk or get
a leaflet from 01305 224558 or
roadsafety@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Bournemouth
Claire Elkins Transport Group,
Development Services, Town Hall
Annexe, St Stephen's Road,
Bournemouth BH2 6EA
01202 454636

Poole
Sally Funnell 01202 262066
Phase I and II and individual adult scheme

East Dorset
All ages and levels. Fees include bike hire and
refreshments and may be reduced if you have
your own bike. Cycle hire available. Booking
essential
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Ashley Heath, Ringwood, Hants, BH24 2ET
01425 470721
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Address: ____________________________

DISCOUNTS FOR DCN MEMBERS

The cycle shops below offer discounts on production of a current DCN membership card.
Please ask at the shop for details.

Bikes (Branksome), 431-433 Poole Road, Branksome, Poole BH12 1DF  01202 769202 fax 762377
Cycle Experience Brookley Road, Brockenhurst  01590 624204 and Barrack Road Christchurch  01202 486278
Forest Leisure Cycling 38 Ashley Road, Boscombe 01202 399345 & Village Centre, Burley  01425 403584
Horswills, 1 Ensbury Avenue, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth BH10 4HE  01202 512761 fax 514234
Lawsons Cycles, 29 Somerford Road, Christchurch, BH23 3PF  tel & fax 01202 486633
On Yer Bike, 88 Charminster Road, Charminster, Bournemouth BH8 8US  01202 315855 fax 319533
Primera Sport, 244-248 Charminster Road, Charminster, Bournemouth, BH8 9RR  01202 775588 fax 7755991
Samways & Son, 70 Leigh Road, Wimborne BH21 1AJ  01202 882960
Shepherds, 319 Ashley Road, Upper Parkstone, Poole BH16 6EL  tel & fax 01202 742180
Raleigh Cycle Centre, 42 St Mary Street, Weymouth DT4 8PU  tel 01305 781831 fax 01305 767062
Westham Cycles, 128 Abbotsbury Road, Weymouth, DT4 0JS  01305 776977 fax 775477
Xtreme, 111 Commercial Road, Lower Parkstone, Poole BH14 0JD  01202 741744 fax 749569
NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members whose support adds weight to our efforts on behalf of all cyclists.

Karen Barr *Bournemouth*  Mr & Mrs K Aves *Christchurch*
Mr P Dade *Blandford Forum*  Mr & Mrs Otter *Poole*
Mr C Howell *Wimborne*  Ms Jude Hopkins *East Knole*
Mr M Sherred *St Leonards*  Mr J Hancock *Christchurch*
Mr I Todd *New Milton*  Mr T Barrett *Weymouth*
Mr & Mrs A Dugdale & family  Miss S Moat *Poole*
*Wimborne*  Mr I Wellard *Poole*
Miss H Catalan *Dorchester*  Mr Graham Fisher *Bournemouth*
Mr & Mrs T Sills *Bournemouth*

**ALL MEMBERS:** Please tell the membership secretary (see page 2) if you change your postal address.
Please notify change of e-mail address to chairman@dcn.org.uk

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The annual subscription is £6.00, payable to DCN, addressed to the Treasurer. Renewals are due on or before 1 October. This change of date is necessary so that we can get subs in in time to pay our annual CTC affiliation and insurance bill, which is based on the number of members we have.

*It helps us if you take out a standing order.*

If you already have one for £5.00, please send a new one to your bank to replace it.

**STANDING ORDER**

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