# Compulsion?: Did 1930s British Officialdom Want to Compel Cyclists to Use "Leper Ways" Thereby Banishing Them from Britain's Roads?

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Between 1934 and 1943, Britain's Ministry of Transport majority-paid for the creation of up to 500 miles of cycleways, many of them 9-ft-wide (2.74m) and protected with kerbs.[1] **[Figure 1]** In the nomenclature of the day these protected cycleways were called "cycle tracks" and were modelled on the Dutch protected cycle infrastructure of the same period.[2] British cycling organisations and prominent cycle journalists were opposed to the provision of these cycle tracks in the UK, fearing cyclists would be forced to use them, and forbidden from using the "public highway".[3]

The so-called "right to ride" was a highly charged issue for the cyclists of the 1930s. The right had only been officially granted in 1888 with the passing of the Local Government Act.[4] Section 85 of this Act declared that "bicycles, velocipedes, and other similar machines are hereby declared to be carriages within the meaning of the Highway Acts." [5]

Defined in law as carriages, cycles from 1888 onwards could then be legally ridden on the public highway, a concession which had been lobbied for by the Cyclists' Touring Club.[6] In the year of its passing, the Local Government Act was billed as the "Magna Carta de Bicyclists" by a writer in the *Law Journal*.[7]

For cycle organisation officials of the 1930s – many of whom remembered the passing of the 1888 Act – the right to cycle on the roads of Britain had been hard won, and it was not something to be surrendered.[8] Today, the provision of protected cycleways is seen by most cyclists as a benefit and is welcomed; in the 1930s, similar provision was vociferously opposed by organised cycling because it was perceived as an attack on the rights granted only fifty years earlier.

In the 1880s there were no motor cars on the roads of the UK, but by the 1920s the growth of motoring had led to increased danger on the roads for cyclists (and pedestrians), and there were calls from motorists for cyclists to be provided with dedicated infrastructure, the equivalent to pedestrian-only footways. In the 1920s, cycle tracks were first championed by the Roads Improvement Association, an organisation founded by officials from the Cyclists' Touring Club and National Cyclists' Union in 1886, but which was by 1903 a wholly motoring organization. .[9]

Throughout the 1920s, motoring columnists in national and local newspapers argued for the provision of separated cycle tracks, ostensibly for the safety of cyclists.

In 1929, a cycle journalist writing in the *Daily Herald* (a tabloid national newspaper which later morphed into *The Sun*) reported that a "special cycle path" was to be built along a short stretch of London's Great West Road. "It is all made to sound most fascinating – a special track for cyclists – no danger of being run down at night or hustled off the road in the day by scorching motorists …"

But, the writer felt there was, in fact, an ulterior motive for the provision of such tracks:

*"It would be all very well if with the special track there remained the right to ride on the road, but it is certain that the latter would go with the opening of the former. Once this process starts it will continue under pressure of the motoring bodies until cycles are forbidden to ride on the public roads."* [10]

The fear that there would be compulsion to ride on the "special cycle tracks" and thereafter there would be a general extinguishment of rights to ride on ordinary roads coloured the views of many cycling officials in the 1930s and, it could be argued, up until just a handful of years ago.[11]

**The Official View**

In the mid-1930s there were 12 million cyclists in Britain, and fewer than 2 million motorists. Cyclists dominated on many British roads, including the new "arterial" ones.[12] On approaches to large factories and dockyards, cyclists at clocking-off time would clog the roads solid.[13] According to a 1935 Ministry of Transport census, cycles accounted for 80 percent of the vehicular traffic in some English towns. The Minister of Transport admitted: "It is indisputable that the number of cycles on the road is far in excess of the total of all other classes of road vehicles, public and private, passenger and goods." [14]

And, for motorists, this dominance by "hordes" of cyclists was deeply irritating. A census conducted by the Ministry of Transport in 1935 found that there were 65 A-roads where cyclists outnumbered motorists. On the northern approach to the Tees bridge near Middlesbrough, the Ministry counted 1,839 motor vehicles but 4,907 pedal cycles. On the A1086 at Hartlepool, there were 644 motor vehicles and 2,150 cyclists. Between Leigh and Pendlebury, at the junction between the junction of the A579 and the A574, there were 2,002 motor vehicles and 3,343 cyclists.[15]

Framed as a measure to reduce what was a dreadful death toll among cyclists, cycling organisations believed the true motive for any cycle-track building was to force cyclists to use narrow, inferior paths to increase the utility of motoring. A pamphlet produced by the Cyclists' Touring Club voiced this concern:

*"It is impossible to escape the conclusion that most people and organisations who advocate cycle paths are not actuated by motives of benevolence or sympathy. . . If they did, as they suggest, recommend them merely because so many cyclists were being killed, they would naturally recommend separate paths for motor cyclists as well, for the death rate among motor cyclists is the highest of all road users and fifteen times as great as that among cyclists. A great deal of the cycle-path propaganda is based on a desire to remove cyclists from the roads. That is why the request for cycle paths is so often accompanied by a suggestion that their use should be enforced by law. Therein*

*lies a serious threat to cycling."* [16]

The CTC also believed in the out-of-sight, out-of-mind theory that once cyclists were removed from some roads, motorists would not want to see them on any roads:

*The provision of some roads with cycle paths would naturally confirm inconsiderate motorists in a false belief that they need have less regard for other classes of road users. Driving would become faster and more reckless on all roads, including the majority of roads that could not be provided with cycle paths.*[17]

Transport minister Leslie Hore-Belisha admitted that cycle tracks would not be built on every road, but denied there was any plan to banish cyclists from the highway. His private secretary told one letter writer: "It should be obvious that it will never be possible to provide separate tracks for cyclists on more than a small percentage of public highways of Great Britain and there is therefore no question of the permanent exclusion of cyclists from the roads as a whole. In view of these facts it is Mr Hore-Belisha's earnest hope that the cycling organisations will not persist in opposition to these cycle tracks." [18]

*Figure 1. This 1-mile cycle track was built in 1937 beside the A1 "Great North road" south of Neville's Cross in northeast England. (Durham County Archives)*

**Track Building**

In February 1934, Colonel Bressey, the Ministry of Transport's chief engineer, contacted the director of the Dutch infrastructure ministry to ask him about the wide cycle tracks the Rijkswaterstaat had built beside new arterial roads in the Netherlands. W. G. C. Gelinck responded with plans, maps and other advice, all in English. "In Holland, with the great number of cycles . . . all modern roads are provided with special cycle-tracks apart," Gelinck told his counterpart. "No traffic betterment for motor traffic can work unless the cyclists have left the main roads. [They are] a perpetual danger for themselves and for the traffic." [19]

Impressed, Bressey commissioned the building of Britain's first off-carriageway cycle track, a two-and-a-quarter-mile stretch of uneven concrete from Hangar Lane to Greenford Road in Ealing, London, kept separate from, but adjoining Western Avenue, a relatively new arterial speedway (today's A40).[20] The nearly–9-ft-wide cycle track was operational by May, 1934. A brochure produced for the official opening in December of that year puffed: "For workers travelling between their homes and the factory, for children proceeding to and from school, for holiday-makers intent on a country jaunt, these tracks should prove a boon and a safeguard." [21]

A voiceover on British Pathé cinema news said the Western Avenue cycle track was "a new safety innovation" and that "motorist users of the road will be equally appreciative of this new boon." [22] A small crowd witnessed Hore-Belisha, the new Minister of Transport, cutting the ribbon officially opening the experimental "cycling track." [23] He said the track was for the "comfort and safety" of cyclists.

The impetus for building such tracks came from motorists, who wanted to drive fast on the new arterial roads that had been built in the 1920s. The first, and greatest number, of these roads radiated out from London, where there were the greatest number of motorists but also where political power resided. London's new arterial roads were often used by members of the upper classes to speed them twenty miles or so from Mayfair to novel and decadent "roadhouses" with their swimming pools, clubrooms, and all-night drinking, where "high-rolling, metropolitan members of London society" would "race down" for a night of debauchery.[24] The Ace of Spades roadhouse at Heston on the Great West Road, close to Western Avenue, did a "roaring trade" with these high-rollers, and had been built at a time when many parts of Britain were enduring desperate poverty.[25] "One of London's richest men, Lord Londonderry, who kept four chauffeurs for his Park Lane home, was happy to drive himself along arterial roads at great speed," recounts the motoring historian Michael John Law.[26]

The high-speed socialites were often the same politicians who demanded that cyclists should be removed from roads "for their own comfort and safety." They blamed cyclists for the fact that fast travel on the arterial roads was becoming more and more difficult. The numbers of cyclists on these roads did, indeed, increase in the 1930s – the average number of cyclists on Western Avenue at one point increased from 1,772 in 1931 to 6,515 in 1935 [27] – but there were other, probably greater, reasons for the slowing in driving speeds, including the increasing number of cars on the roads. In London's Home Counties there was a 400 percent increase in car ownership between 1926 and 1938.[28] As suburban car ownership increased, progress on the arterials was interrupted by motor vehicles entering from the side roads that housed new homes and factories.[29] Cyclists, in effect, became scapegoats for the congestion that they didn't cause, a blame game that's still played today. **[Figure 2]**

"There is a universal demand made upon me. . . for cycling tracks," Hore-Belisha told the British Electrical Development Association in 1938.[30] "I find the pressure irresistible." Ernest Snowden of the Anfield Bicycle Club suggested this was so motorists could drive faster:

"It needs no prophetic ear to detect the knocking of the enemy at our gates.. . clamouring that we should forfeit our freedom of the roads, that he may.. . hurl his death-dealing machines across this fair land of ours, utterly regardless of the lives and rights of the great non-motoring majority.. . ."

Snowden urged that individual cyclists and cycling groups should stand together to fight against the tracks. "We are a disintegrated whole, possessing neither abundant strength, nor far-reaching power, yet by unity both may be attained. Already the two great bodies which represent cycling interests are joining forces against the common menace.. . ." [31]

A mass meeting of cyclists was held in the centre of Liverpool in January 1935. Another was held in London – 500 club cyclists met in Hyde Park before riding to the cycle tracks on Western Avenue, which they pointedly refused to ride along, choosing to cycle in formation on the main carriageway, three and four abreast.[32] "It is no use grousing that the cycling organisations should do this and that: ask yourself what you are doing!" thundered Snowden. "If you are driven off the roads on to cycle paths, you will only have yourself to blame.. . ."

Touring Club, said the mass ride would "take place on a very busy day" and suggested that club cyclists might station themselves at the entrances to the cycle tracks on weekends handing out literature urging "private cyclists" not to use them. "Following our usual practice when the rights and privileges of cyclists are threatened, we raised objections when the scheme to make these tracks was first mooted," Bevan pointed out. He disputed that the cycle tracks would offer much safety and added that "we believe that if these come about generally, the next move will be a tax on cyclists to pay for something we do not require." **[Figure 3]**

Transport ministers in the 1930s said many times in parliament that they did not wish to remove the rights of cyclists to ride on the highways of Britain, and that there were no plans – "at present" – to make it compulsory for cyclists to use the new cycle tracks (compulsion that was already common on the continent.) CTC officials did not believe these claims.

A search through Hansard reveals what ministers said in public, but it can often be more revealing to read what they said in private because, clearly, this is often at variance to public utterances.

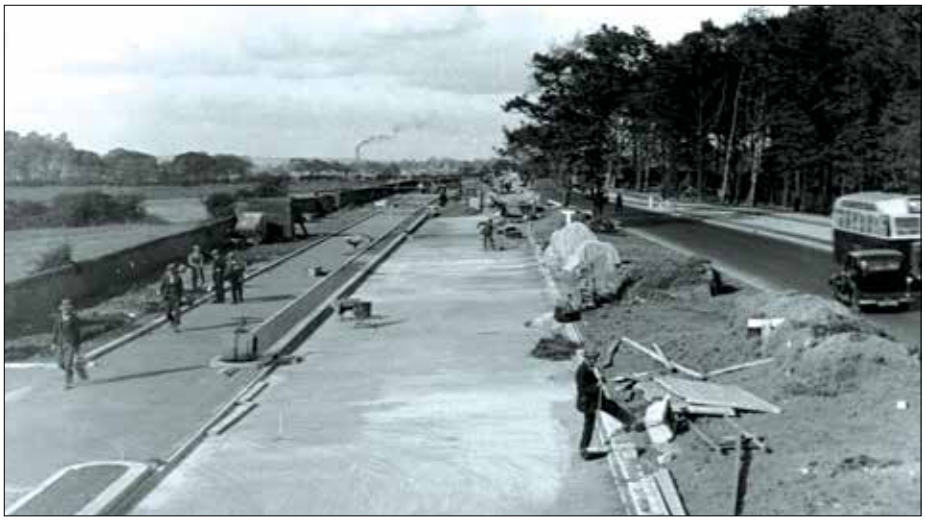

*Figure 2. Building of the cycle track beside the A1 "Great North road" south of Neville's Cross in northeast England. (Durham County Archives)*

The Cyclists' Touring Club organised protest rides against cycle tracks, including one in 1937, which blockaded the York to Malton bypass.

"The proposal is to make a demonstration of a refusal to use the [cycle tracks]," John Bevan told the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. Bevan, who was secretary of the county branch of the Cyclists'

I have scoured Ministry of Transport archives looking at the private correspondence between officials in the Ministry of Transport and MPs and members of the public. They reveal ministers and mandarins fearful of the terrible death toll on Britain's roads in the 1930s – with 845 cyclists killed between 1928 and 1933 – and wanting to reduce this slaughter.

While ministers, planners and road engineers often wheeled out the "safety" argument – even in private – there were often indications that another motive was to "free" the road of slower moving vehicles for motor cars to drive faster. Speed – or lack thereof – was a fixation for many motorists. A Ministry of Transport research project of 1936 found that, despite the building on many new roads, motor-vehicle speeds in London remained low. The average speed was found to be just 12.5mph, and there was a desire to find ways of increasing these speeds.

The claim that the real motive behind the creation of cycle tracks was to increase motor car speeds was made many times by the CTC. According to Clifford Glossop, the Conservative MP for Penistone, cycle tracks were necessary because motorists wanted the roads to themselves – they often bullied cyclists, he said. In 1934, he told parliament the "wretched cyclist is always being frightened by the hoot of an electric horn and is very often forced into the ditch or into the kerbstone. We should consider the placing of special cycling tracks at the side of main roads, as in Continental countries, particularly Holland."

Replying, the then Minister for Transport Oliver Stanley agreed there was a "possibility of introducing special cycling tracks … not with the intention of forcing [cyclists] to use it, but with the possibility that if they become familiar with its use their opinion of its utility may be changed." [33]

Later in 1934, Leslie Hore-Belisha became the Minister of Transport and he, too, was in favour of cycle tracks. But not compulsion, he claimed.

*"The Minister would prefer that cyclists should be persuaded to use these tracks by the convenience and security which they offer rather than by Regulations,"* wrote Hore-Belisha's private secretary to a member of London's Carlton Club.[34]

Cycling organisations and cycle journalists didn't like what they were hearing. Writing under the pen-name Kuklos for his weekly column in the Daily Herald, William Fitzwater Wray complained bitterly about "Mr Hore-Belisha's plan to construct nearly 500 miles of cycle-paths in five years." Writing in 1936, he claimed that the Ministry of Transport's cycle tracks were "cycle pens"

*Figure 3. Today the trunk road south of Neville's is no longer the A1, it has been renumbered as the A167, but the 1930s cycle track still exists.*

and “Belisha Follies”.[35] And in offensive, overblown language that would not have enamoured him to officialdom, he also denounced them as “Leper ways”.[36]

Hore-Belisha didn’t understand why cycling organisations remained opposed to the cycle tracks then slowly being built. At the opening of the Cycle and Motor Cycle Exhibition at London’s Olympia in 1934, Hore-Belisha complained: “It is curious that cyclist organisations stand almost alone in opposing or mistrusting the provision of special facilities for their use and safety.”

He also pointed out: “Pedestrians clamour for footways and for field paths, and I am entirely in sympathy with their desire … Why are cyclist organisations so suspicious? When some benevolent local authority provides seats alongside a road, one does not hear insinuations that this is a sinister plot to prevent wayfarers from sitting on the grass.” [37]

P. J. H. Hannon, the MP for Newcastle and one of the CTC's friendly parliamentarians, wrote to Hore-Belisha worrying that once “cycle paths are introduced the bicycle rider will be expected to use them, and in due course, will be debarred from the highway.” [38]

Otley's Tory MP Sir Charles Grenville Gibson didn’t ever speak in parliament about cyclists and cycle tracks, but he did so privately to Hore-Belisha, promising that cyclists would “become accustomed to [cycle tracks] and they will not raise the slightest objection.” He added, much in hope: “I believe in Holland, cyclists are prosecuted if they travel on the main highways.” [39]

In an internal Ministry of Transport document, Hore-Belisha's private secretary D. E. O’Neill admitted that the minister “received a large volume of correspondence” on the matter of cycle tracks, including protests from cycling organisations fearing “Machiavellian” compulsion, but that it was preventing cyclist deaths that truly motivated him. “[If] ... the Minister had not attempted anything for the protection to cyclists, he might rightly have been criticised.”

He added: “I know that cyclists in general fear that at a later stage they may be forbidden to use the highway where these tracks are provided” but that “there is no present intention to make the use of the tracks compulsory.”

O'Neill wrote to another correspondent that there was “no question of the permanent exclusion of cyclists from the roads as a whole” and that it was Hore-Belisha's “earnest hope that the cycling organisations will not persist in opposition to these cycle tracks.”

Regular correspondents to the minister included G.A. Olley, who back in the 1890s had been a record-breaking time-trial rider. Unlike many of his fellow keen cyclists he welcomed the introduction of the cycle tracks. But he did worry about compulsion, and wrote to Hore-Belisha seeking his views on the matter.

For a 1935 talk he was to give to his fellow record breakers, Olley wanted an assurance from the minister that the “existence of a reserved cycle path would not prevent a cyclist ... making use of the main motor vehicle track if he wished to do so.”

O’Neill replied: “[The minister] asks me to assure you that as at present advised it is not his intention to forbid the use of the main carriageway to cyclists on roads where a separate cycle track is provided. Clearly, however, these tracks would fail of their effect unless cyclists used them wherever they were provided.” [40]

Undeterred, Olley wrote again, asking roughly the same thing and, again, O’Neill said the feared plans were not on the cards.

“Mr. Hore-Belisha’s motive in introducing separate tracks for cyclists,” wrote O'Neill, “is simply and solely to give cyclists a greater degree of safety on the roads.” [41]

Writing privately to his parliamentary friend Oliver Locker-Lampson (an MP who had a fascinating and influential life yet who is largely unknown today) Hore-Belisha said:

“I have great hopes that when the cyclists realise that these tracks are entirely for their own safety and are not a subtle method of depriving them of their legitimate rights, they will change their

present attitude." [42]

In parliament, Hore-Belisha's successor as transport minister was asked by Sir Alfred Beit whether he would "take steps to make compulsory the use by bicyclists of special cycling tracks where provided; but whether, before doing so, he will see that those tracks are in every way safe and suitable for the purpose?"

Leslie Burgin replied, again using the word "present", suggesting that compulsion might one day be enforced: "With regard to the first part of the question, I have no present intention of taking the course suggested. As to the second part, so far as it arises, my Department has recently drawn the attention of all highway authorities to the importance of providing satisfactory cycle tracks."

Sir Alfred countered: "What is the use of providing these cycle tracks if they need not be used by cyclists?"

Burgin answered: "I think the House will appreciate that there must be a considerable length of cycle tracks before any question of this kind can arise. I sincerely hope that cyclists will progressively use the facilities which are provided for them." [43]

MPs remained incredulous that cycle tracks were being built at great expense but that cyclists were not being compelled to use them.

"Does the right hon. Gentleman not think that when these cycle tracks are made some steps should be taken to make the cyclists use them?" asked Colonel Sir Charles MacAndrew.

"We must wait until we have a considerable continuous length of tracks before we talk about the obligation to use the track," replied Burgin.[44]

However, Burgin's boilerplate answer to MPs wasn't always used outside of parliament. For instance, speaking in October 1938 about the future of London's traffic to the Liberal National Forum at the National Liberal Club in London Burgin let slip that cyclists should be "glad enough" to use the cycle tracks provided. "I think," he added, ominously "that if it is left to me to introduce legislation on the subject there may have to be a whiff of grapeshot in it to see that this is carried out." [45].

This off-the-cuff comment reached the ears of organised cycling, and they complained, seeking an audience with the minister.

*The Times* reported that in December 1938 "the Minister of Transport, Mr. Burgin … assured a deputation from the National Committee on Cycling that there is no immediate likelihood of cyclists being compelled to use special cycle tracks."

Burgin said he was a cyclist, and he therefore "had the fullest understanding of the cyclist's point of view … and there would be no form of compulsion until [cycle tracks] were of adequate length and width and had a proper surface." [46]

While Ministers of Transport didn't legislate to compel cyclists to use cycle tracks, others in the Ministry of Transport were very much in favour of the concept.

In 1939, Kenneth Macaulay, chief accountant at the Ministry of Transport, wrote to F. N. Tribe at the Treasury, "Whilst we can do nothing to stop 'hordes' of cyclists using the arterial exits from the large urban centres, I am sure you will agree that everything should be done to keep them off the carriageways, if this can be effected at a reasonable cost." [47]

Tribe agreed: "There is much to be said for the recommendation that where tracks are provided for cyclists their use should be compulsory ... What we dislike is the apparent waste of money on constructing tracks the use of which cannot be guaranteed, especially as it is opposed by certain leaders of the cycling community. We should of course have no objection to reasonable expenditure if we could be assured that it was serving a useful purpose…" [48]

In a follow-up letter, Tribe added that he had been "talking to a friend who has recently returned from a visit to Belgium ... where the appropriate sign is erected cyclists are required to use the track and to keep off the road." [49]

**Expert Views**

Most of the pre-WWII cycle tracks were short (two to four miles usually, although the one built along the Southend Arterial Road was – in fits and starts – 23 miles long), and as they were mostly built alongside out-of-town by-pass roads they didn't link in with wider networks of such tracks. Club cyclists thought them to be a poor substitute for the roads they were used to riding on. Even one of the designers wasn't impressed. Eric Claxton, then a junior engineer in the Ministry of Transport was an everyday, practical cyclist. The cycle tracks he worked on in London were sub-standard. "As a cyclist, they gave me no satisfaction," he complained:

*They were too narrow. They were made of concrete and suffered from either cracking or construction joints. They provided protection where the carriageway was safe but discharged the cyclists into the maelstrom of main traffic where the system was most dangerous. For me worst of all the tracks were uni-directional either side of the dual carriageways; thus, if for any reason one needed to retrace one's way, one was compelled to run the gauntlet of crossing the streams of traffic on both carriageways to return on the far side – woe betide the person who left money, keys, books, tools or even lunch behind.*[50]

A Ministry of Transport report of 1944 stated that the opposition of cyclists "does not arise from a spirit of obstinacy but is largely based on the inadequacy of the cycle tracks so far constructed and the dangers [to] which they give rise." [51]

Despite these faults, transport ministers and planners ignored the complaints from organised cycling, including a dissenting view on a government-sponsored cycling-specific report. The Report on Accidents to Cyclists took the government's Transport Advisory Council two years to compile and when it was published in 1938, it said the UK should be provided with continuous, wide, well-surfaced cycle tracks, and where provided, their use should be made compulsory.

The Transport Advisory Council (TAC) had been founded in 1934 to examine how to reduce road deaths. The "accidents to cyclists" sub-committee of the TAC was made up of thirteen members, including five Sirs, three Justices of the Peace, but only one cyclist. This cyclist – Frank Urry of the Cyclists' Touring Club – lodged the only dissenting voice over the provision of cycle tracks. In the report, he wrote:

"I cannot subscribe to the recommendation of extending the building of cycle tracks, or the compulsory use of them by cyclists if and when laid down. The danger of right-hand crossings discounts any presupposed safety obtained by partial traffic segregation; and it has been admitted that where cycle tracks are in being, motoring speeds on the carriageway will increase, to the consequent danger of the cyclists when the cycle track ceases, as it must do on over 95 percent of our high-

ways. Cycle tracks are a palliative at best, and in my opinion a dangerous one."

Nevertheless, the report was accepted by the then Minister of Transport, Leslie Burgin. "The Transport Advisory Council … have now reported and made a number of recommendations," Burgin told parliament in June 1938:

*"Perhaps the most important of these are the building of cycle tracks of a particular type, and, where such tracks are built and are satisfactory, the making of the use of them compulsory."* [52]

Despite the huge effort in compiling the report by the Transport Advisory Council, its main recommendations were put on hold until the publication of a report on general road safety carried out by a House of Lords committee led by Lord Alness. The March 1939 Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Prevention of Road Accidents, generally known as the Alness Report, was heavily biased towards motorists.

"There is much thoughtless conduct amongst cyclists which is responsible for many accidents," sniffed the report, making 231 recommendations, including that children of ten and under should be banned from public cycling ("children under seven cause 23.9 per cent of the accidents to pedestrians," claimed the report) and that segregation on the roads should be carried out with utmost urgency.[53] Cyclists, said the report, should get high-quality wide cycle tracks and that once built, cyclists should be forced to use them.

In evidence given to the Alness committee, Cyclists' Touring Club officials stressed that the main objection was to the quality of cycle tracks, and not just to the principle of being able to continue riding on the carriageway. The CTC feared that legislation would be brought in that would make it compulsory to use such tracks even before a useable network had been built, and that going by the poor provision of tracks in the previous five years, there was little likelihood that the tracks of the future would be of good quality.[54]

Some older club cyclists might have hankered after the old days – of riding on bucolic country lanes empty of motor traffic – but many of the younger ones preferred to ride on the concrete arterials. The new roads – gleaming white ribbons of modernity – were smooth and built for speed.

The new arterial roads might have been busy with motor traffic on holiday weekends, but they were often quiet at other times. In effect, Britain's cyclists felt they had been provided with speedways, and they baulked at the prospect of giving them up to ride on narrow, bumpy cycle tracks where they might have to ride slowly, in single file. Writing in 1943, CTC secretary George Herbert Stancer noted that: "A young lady who overtook me on my last journey [on Western Avenue], and rode with me for a short distance, told me that she had to cover 15 miles each way on her daily trips between home and work, and that she was obliged to keep on the road in order to maintain the necessary speed. . .. Resorting to the paths would have slowed her down too seriously." [55]

Club cyclists also wanted to do what motorists could do, and that's talk to someone beside them. The right to the road also meant the right to ride two or more abreast, chatting with companions as they rode out fast to some tea-room or other. Such behaviour horrified the peers on the Alness committee.

The following exchange between Stancer and his aristocratic interlocutors clearly shows the antagonism between the parties, although the CTC man remained polite throughout.[56]

*Lord Alness:* "Your Association is, if I may say so, broad-minded enough to regard motor traffic as necessary and proper development?"

*Stancer:* "Yes, my Lord. Of course, we have grown up with the motor movement, and I think that during the whole of that period we have treated it with perhaps more tolerance than we have always received at the hands of the people who have been concerned with motoring."

*Lord Alness:* "Is your Club in favour of the provision of separate cycle tracks for cyclists?"

*Stancer:* "No, my Lord, we are not. Our feeling is that cycle paths at the side of the road do not, in the present circumstances, and never can, provide the same facilities for enjoyable cycling as are provided by our present road system."

*Lord Alness:* "I should have thought personally that it would be more enjoyable to cycle on the cycle track on the Great West Road than to cycle on the highway there?"

*Stancer:* "Those people who are not accustomed to cycling always tell me that, and I think that it must be a general view.. . The fact of it is that the existing experiments in the construction of cycle paths are, I think, most unsatisfactory, and they have created a bad impression amongst cyclists."

*Lord Alness:* "Assume the track was adequate in dimensions, in breadth, as in Germany, 9 feet let us say, and its surface was good, do you not approve of the experiment at least being made?"

*Stancer:* "On most of them even if we had a sufficient width and an excellent surface there is still the disadvantage that the track by the side of the road is constantly being interrupted and broken by the passage of other tracks coming from houses or whatever it may be. Every time there is a private house with a garage or there is a filling station or there is a way into a field, or a way into a shop, [or a way into any place of interest]; everything has to come across the cycle path; so that while on the carriageway you get a perfectly straight, smooth, unbroken, uninterrupted course for whatever vehicle is using it, the cyclist has always got something coming across."

*Lord Alness:* "But he is not submitted to the same dangers as when he is cycling on the highway on the Great West Road?"

*Stancer:* "No, my Lord. My suggestion is that those dangers ought to be removed."

*Lord Alness:* "Is that not a counsel of perfection? The removal of the dangers seems rather idealistic?"

*Stancer:* "The other alternative seems to be a counsel of despair: "The law is powerless to preserve you on the the road, [so] now you must get off the road." That is roughly what it comes to."

"Segregation Must Come" was the title of one of the main sections of the Alness Report of 1939 that referred to cycle tracks, as well as barriers on roads to "protect" pedestrians. Cyclists, said the report, should get high-quality cycle tracks and should be forced to use them. Pedestrians were also to be fined for daring to cross the road at points other than designated crossing points.[57]

The House of Lords committee published its findings in March 1939; war against Germany was declared in September. The Alness Report – derided by one Labour MP as a "tale of deaths and manglings. . . and extraordinary con-

clusions," – was moth-balled.[58] Nevertheless, cycle tracks continued to be built during the war years. The Ministry of Transport's chief engineer wrote in 1941:

*"I do not think this is the time compulsorily to exclude pedal cyclists from carriageways, and to compel them to use cycle tracks, on those lengths of road where cycle tracks have been constructed. At the present time the total length of cycle tracks is approximately 200 miles. When cycle tracks have been provided on a more extended scale we can hope their advantages will be apparent to the general body of pedal cyclists, with the result that the enforcement by the police of compulsory power will not then present [a] measure of difficulty."* [59]

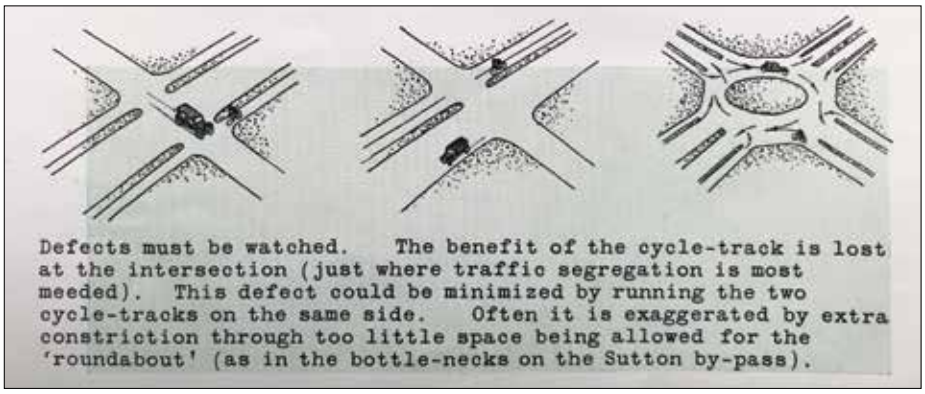


*Figure 4. "The benefit of the cycle track is lost at the intersection …" Architectural Review, 1937*

Government ministers may have said in the 1930s and into the 1940s that they didn't want to compel cyclists to use tracks "at present" or "immediately", but by 1949 the official UK position was for compulsion.

The UK was one of the 17 national signatories to the United Nations Convention on Road Traffic of 1949. This convention had only three rules for cyclists: (i) that they "shall use" cycle tracks, (ii) that they should ride in single file (unless national rules stipulated otherwise), and (iii) that cyclists should not be towed by vehicles. In the road sign part of the document it was agreed that "COMPULSORY CYCLE TRACK ... shall be used to indicate that cyclists shall use the special track reserved for them." [60]

**Conclusion**

One of the defining characteristics of major infrastructure building is the "lock in ... of a certain project concept at an early stage, leaving analysis of alternatives weak or absent," stated economic geographer Bent Flyvbjerg in 2009 in his classic paper *Survival of the Unfittest: Why the Worst Infrastructure Gets Built*. He claimed that there was an innate tendency on the part of policymakers to choose the worst possible projects because of "strategic misrepresentation".[61] In effect, politicians and planners are often guilty of building the wrong infrastructure, and no amount of evidence to the contrary deflects them from their original decision. **[Figure 4]**

That was certainly the case in the creation of Britain's putative, pre-war cycle track programme. Ostensibly built to "save cyclists' lives" the cycle tracks were mostly built on out-of-town by-passes which few everyday cyclists would have wished to use and, consequently, where few lives would have been saved.[62] Protection of cyclists was needed instead at junctions in built-up areas, and the government was frequently advised of this fact. "The benefit of the cycle-track is lost at the intersection (just where traffic segregation is most needed)," wrote a town planner in 1937.[63]

Expensive clover-leaf intersections for motorists could be designed and budgeted for in the late-1930s, but similar intersections for cyclists would be "impossible" or "too costly," town planners told the six peers on the Alness committee.[64] In evidence given to the committee, witness after witness – from surveyors to arch motorists – attested to the often dire nature of Britain's first cycle tracks but, apart from cyclist witnesses, most wanted cyclists to be forced to use the tracks.

Despite public and private claims from ministers, mandarins and planners that they were motivated by a desire to stem the numbers of cyclists killed on Britain's roads, it seems as clear today as it was to cycle organisations of the 1930s that officialdom was, in fact, more motivated by the thought that the new and supposedly "fast" new arterial roads should be freed of slow-moving vehicles. And as cyclists dominated on many of Britain's A-roads at this time, there was a conscious and subconscious desire to sweep them from the carriageway in the belief that motorists – and most ministers, mandarins and planners were motorists in the 1930s – would then be able to drive faster.

Some modern cycle advocates suggest it was the opposition of cycling organisations to the cycle tracks of the 1930s that prevented the widespread roll-out of these tracks.[65] A typical claim is that if only the Cyclists' Touring Club and others had supported the first cycle track – on Western Avenue in London – a Dutch-style cycle network might have later evolved. This does not fit with the evidence. Ministers and mandarins, as well as many powerful and influential organisations, did want such a network of tracks to be built, and more than 90 schemes were completed. It was the coming of war which stopped more being built, not opposition from cycling organisations, which the government routinely ignored. The CTC only had 34,000 members in 1939. Instead, it could be said the government was planning for the nation's 12 million "ordinary" cyclists but, if so, they would have built protective infrastructure in congested urban areas where most cyclist deaths occurred.

When officialdom discussed obligatory use of cycle tracks there was much use of loaded caveats such as "there are no present plans" – but this conveyed the obvious message that once a certain mileage of tracks had been built the government **would** bring in continental-style compulsion.

The CTC's Stancer told the peers on the Alness committee that compulsion was only necessary because cyclists were being provided with an "inferior article." In words that remain pertinent to this day he stressed:

*"If the paths are by any miracle to be made of such width and quality as to be equal to our present road system, it would not be necessary to pass any laws to compel cyclists to use them; the cyclists would use them."* [66] ●

**End notes**

[1] In Ministry of Transport Memorandum, No. 483, *Layout and Construction of Roads, 1937*, there was a recommendation that cycle tracks should be 6-ft-wide but where traffic levels were high then the tracks

should be increased in units of 3-ft. Subsequent recommendations were that cycle tracks should be 9-ft-wide in order for cyclists to ride two abreast. Plans were drawn up for 500 miles of cycle tracks. According to the Minister of Transport in 1941, 200 miles had been built. Parliamentary questions & answers. Daily summary. Received 18 March 1941. Not found on Hansard. In a hand-written letter found in the Ministry of Transport records at the National Archives, 27th November 1935, there are plans for 470 miles of cycle tracks. 100 miles in the London Division, 100 miles in the Eastern Division, 210 miles in the Midlands, 50 miles in Southern and 10 miles in Wales and Scotland. However, a memorandum from Chief Engineer F.C. Cook said "the mileage envisaged within the Five-Year Programme is 235." 28th November, 1935.

[2] The Ministry of Transport wrote to its Dutch equivalent in February 1934, asking for plans and other advice on how to build Dutch-style protected cycleways. Throughout the rest of the decade, MPs asked the Minister of Transport whether he was aware of Dutch cycleways. For example, … "The Minister of Transport might take a lesson from what can be seen on the roads of Holland. In Holland there are more cyclists in proportion to the population than in any other country in Europe, and the great arterial roads of Holland have one section for cyclists, another for fast traffic, another for slow traffic, and another for pedestrians, with islands for safety crossing." J. R. Leslie, House of Commons debate, July 9th, 1937.

[3] Separating cyclists from other traffic with a kerb does not banish them from the highway. The "public highway" is the full width of the highway, including carriageways, footways, verges and the like. This opinion was given to the peers on the Alness Committee in 1938 by D.H. Brown, County Surveyor of Warwickshire (who was in charge of constructing the Coventry By-pass with its cycle tracks on both sides of the road): "Engineers look upon the highway as the whole width between the forecourt fences, i.e. the outside boundary wall or the front wall of the houses. We do not draw a distinction like the cyclists do, that they are driven off the highway if they are driven off the carriageway … We believe that the expense of putting [cycle] tracks down in a proper way – and they are of no use if they are not serviceable – is so great that the use of them when they are made should be compulsory…As engineers we cannot understand the attitude of the cyclist who will not ride on the special track provided…the cycle track is part of the highway." ACCIDENTS: House of Lords (Lord Alness) Select Committee on Road Accidents; Ministry of Transport evidence and memorandum on Report, 1938-1939.

[4] The Local Government Act of 1888 created County Councils.

[5] Today the word "carriage" suggests a four-wheel vehicle pulled by horses, and succeeded by cars, or "motor carriages" and therefore the "carriageway" is dedicated to such usage. However, up until late in the 19th century the word "carriage" meant the act of carrying, and could be applied to, say, a pack animal. *The Imperial Dictionary of 1854* defined "carriage" as "the act of carrying". The carriageway is therefore part of the highway where passage is allowed and where carrying may or may not be involved.

[6] The Cyclists' Touring Club formed a committee to oversee the progress of the Local Government Bill through Parliament. It was feared that if County Councils were given powers to create their own bye-laws such bye-laws would be used to prohibit the riding of cycles. The CTC had political clout: it asked one of its MP members to lodge an amendment to the Bill. Sir John Donnington "won a brilliant victory for the Club," wrote James Lightwood, the author of a 1928 history of the CTC. *The Romance of the Cyclists' Touring Club*, J.T. Lightwood, CTC, 1928.

[7] James Lightwood, author of a 1928 history of the Cyclists' Touring Club, said of the Act: "As a result, there disappeared … every enactment which gave to Courts of Sessions, Municipal Corporations, and similar bodies in England and Wales power to resist and hamper the movements of cyclists as they might think fit. The new order of things established once and for all the status of the cycle." *The Romance of the Cyclists' Touring Club*, J.T. Lightwood, CTC, 1928.

[8] While the 1888 Local Government Act formalised the right to cycle on British roads it was preceded and informed by a court case from 1879, the year after the foundation of the Cyclists' Touring Club. The case of Taylor v. Goodwin was heard by Mr. Justice Mellor and Mr. Justice Lush, sitting in banco in the Queen's Bench Division, and it held that bicyclists were natural users of roads and therefore liable to the pains and penalties imposed by the 1835 Highway Act which defined acts of "furious driving". The case had been brought against a Mr Taylor who had been charged for "riding furiously" down Muswell Hill in London, knocking down a pedestrian in the process. His defence argued that as a bicycle wasn't defined as a carriage in the 1835 Act there was no case to answer. The plea was disregarded and Taylor was fined. The case was appealed and justices Mellor and Lush ruled that bicycles were henceforth to be considered carriages under the law. This was bad for Taylor, good for cyclists in general. It meant bicycles, for the first time, had a legal status. Described as carriages, they had full legal rights to pass and repass along highways. Incidentally, in Taylor v Goodwin the bicycle was defined as "a double wheel" by Justice Lush, but "it carries man"; while Justice Mellor called it "a compound of man and wheels — a kind of centaur." Taylor vs. Goodwin, 1879. 4 QBD 228.

[9] Reid, Carlton (2015). Roads Were Not Built For Cars, 333 pp. (Island Press: Washington, Covelo/London).

[10] "This movement should be resisted by all the power of the cycling community. Cyclists now number a considerable proportion of the total victory strength of the country and if they speak with no uncertain voice on this matter at political meetings they will be listened to." "Cyclists and Special Tracks", *The Daily Herald,* May 10th, 1929.

[11] Opposition to cycle tracks from the Cyclists' Touring Club continued until the 1960s when club officials warmed to the Dutch-style cycle tracks then being built in Stevenage. Opposition started again in the late 1970s and continued until c. 2012.

[12] From 1912 to 1934 the county surveyor for the County Council of Durham conducted traffic surveys on the busy A1 Great North Road at Framwellgate Moor and Teams Crossing. This survey showed that even on a road increasingly dominated by motor vehicles there was a doubling in bike use in the 1930s, and this was one of the reasons for the creation of cycle tracks beside new bypasses, dual carriageways and other "arterial roads." In 1935, the county surveyor wrote: "Generally, the statistics show an increase in lorry traffic and in motor cars, together with ordinary cycles … This year ordinary cycles have more than doubled in number the figures recorded two years ago. In this mind the committee will have in mind the recent circular of the Ministry of Transport regarding the provision of cycle tracks along the main roads . . . There is no doubt whatever . . . that the question of handling the problems created in highway administration is of great importance in the life of the community." Pedestrian traffic was not recorded. *Report of the County Report of the County Surveyor to the Works Committee*, January 21st, 1935, County Council of Durham.

[13] For instance, Chatham dockyards, 1939. See: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/general-view-of-cyclists-arriving-for-work-at-chatham-news-photo/3312800?#circa-1939-a-general-view-of-cyclists-arriving-for-work-at-chatham-picture-id3312800. Accessed October 16, 2018.

[14] *Making the Roads Safe: The Cyclists' Point of View*, Cyclists' Touring Club, 1937.

[15] *Traffic Census of Class One Roads, 1935*. List of the 65 Census points where Average Number of Pedal Cycles per day is greater than Average Number of Vehicles per day, Ministry of Transport archives, National Archives.

[16] See EN14.

[17] See EN14.

[18] Letter from G.A. Olley, March 11th, 1935, champion cyclist, quoting D.E. O'Neill, Hore-Belisha's private secretary. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction*, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

[19] Letter to C.H. Bressey, Ministry of Transport, from W.G.C. Gelinck, Chief-Engineer & Director, Government Public Works, March 15, 1934. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction*, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

[20] Some of this still exists, but it has been much modified.

[21] Brochure of Official Opening of Western Avenue by Leslie Hore-Belisha, December 14, 1934. London Metropolitan Archives, MCC/CL/L/CON/02/05842.

[22] See: http://www.britishpathe.com/video/new-cycle-track-opened. Accessed October 16, 2018.

[23] The original 8ft 6in cycle track was made with inferior materials, admitted the Ministry of Transport. Later, 9ft ones on Western Avenue would be made with better materials, but the MoT could never escape from the mistake of botching the first one. Sir F.C. Cook, Chief Engineer, Roads Department, Ministry of War Transport, wrote in 1941: "[The tracks] were formed in concrete and the edges of the transverse joints of the slabs have broken away, thus impairing their riding qualities … I am afraid that these old tracks, even when the joints have been repaired, will not furnish a running surface as smooth as those which have since been constructed as the result of later experience." 7th January 1941. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction,, 1926-1943,* Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

[24] "Driving to the 'Super' Roadhouse," Michael John Law, *Aspects of Motoring History*, The Society of Automotive Historians in Britain, 2016, 12. See also: M. Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain Between the Wars*, 2008.

[25] "Outer London Clubs and Cabarets - 'the Ace of Spades'" (1933), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84w9HCsZKHo. Accessed October 16, 2018. See also: "The Ace of Spades service station and swimming pool alongside the Great West Road (A4), Heston," (1934), http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/epw045358. Accessed October 16, 2018.

[26] Michael John Law, *Driving to the 'Super' Roadhouse*, Aspects of Motoring History, The Society of Automotive Historians in Britain, 2016, 12. See also: M. Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain Between the Wars*, 2008.

[27] Cycle Census – Great West Road, September 18, 1937, Ministry of Transport. (See: *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction*,, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

[28] *The Motor Industry of Great Britain 1939*, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, 1939.

[29] *Ribbon Development and Sporadic Building*, Greater London Regional Planning Committee Report, 1929. Many of the factories which sprang up along the Western Avenue from the early 1930s were bright, white and futuristic, some of them art deco in style. Today they are celebrated. However, in his 1951 Buildings of England volume on outer London, the famous architectural critic Nikolaus Pevsner said the Hoover factory – erected in 1932 – was "Perhaps the most offensive of the modernistic atrocities along this road of typical bypass factories …"

[30] "More Cycle Tracks? Minister Says Demand is Irresistible," *The Citizen*, March 16th, 1938.

[31] *Anfield Bicycle Club Monthly Circular*, January 1935. The club was formed in 1879. William "Billy" P. Cook, president of the Anfield Bicycle Club and vice-president of the Cyclists' Touring Club, 1924-1936, was the cyclists' representative member of the Advisory Council to the Minister of Transport in the mid-1930s.

[32] "More than 500 cyclists … cycled along the main road in club formation, and ignored the cycle path. . .. Earlier there was a meeting of the cyclists in Hyde Park at which a resolution was passed calling on the Minister for Transport not to proceed further with cycle paths, on the ground that cyclists had an equal right with others to the King's highway." " News in Brief," *The Times*, August 26th, 1935.

[33] House of Commons debate, February 7th, 1934.

[34] Letter to E. Ashley Dodd, Carlton Club, London, by Aubrey Clark, private secretary to Minister of Transport, Leslie Hore-Belisha, 26th September 1934. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed construction*, 1926-1943,

Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

35 "Pedalling in the Far North," Kuklos, *Daily Herald*, October 19th, 1935.

36 "Cyclists, avoid those Special Tracks," Kuklos, *Daily Herald*, February 17th, 1934.

37 Speech given by Minister of Transport Leslie Hore-Belisha at opening of Cycle and Motor Cycle Exhibition, Olympia, London, 1934, 5th November 1934. The Cyclists' Touring Club wrote to Hore-Belisha, complaining about his statement: *"…the Cyclists; Touring Club protests against the remarks of the Minister of Transport on the subject of cycle paths, made at the opening of the Bicycle and Motor Cycle Show, and would remind Mr. Hore-Belisha that cyclists are opposed to the idea of such paths and are not prepared to give up their inalienable right to use the public highway …"* Letter to the Minister of Transport from Cyclists' Touring Club, 3, Craven Hill, London, November 20th 1934. Photo of Hore-Belisha on a Raleigh tandem at the 1935 show. He rode a tandem together with Sir Harold Bowden, the chairman of the Raleigh Bicycle Company. London. https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/british-politician-leslie-hore-belisha-the-minister-of-news-photo/818848700#british-politician-leslie-horebelisha-the-minister-of-transport-on-a-picture-id818848700. Accessed October 16, 2018.

38 Letter to Leslie Hore-Belisha from Mr. P. J. H. Hannon MP, February 8th 1935.

39 Letter to transport secretary Leslie Hore-Belisha, 16th February, 1935, from Sir Charles Granville Gibson, Conservative MP for the Pudsey and Otley division of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

40 Letter from D. E. O'Neill, private secretary to Minister for Transport Leslie Hore-Belisha to G. A. Olley, 127 High Road, Southampton, 20th February 1935. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction*,, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

41 Letter from D. E. O'Neill, private secretary to Minister for Transport Leslie Hore-Belisha to G. A. Olley, 127 High Road, Southampton, 2nd March 1935. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction*,, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

42 Letter from Minister of Transport Leslie Hore-Belisha to Commander O. Locker-Lampson, CMG, DSO, MP, House of Commons, 12th March 1935. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed construction*, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

43 *"Cycle Tracks"*, House of Commons debate, 9th June 1937.

44 Sir C. MacAndrew: "Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that where there are cycle tracks they are very largely not used by cyclists?" Mr. Burgin: "That is so, but there are not yet continuous cycle tracks which will permit of the matter being dealt with comprehensively. I hope that every encouragement will be given to cyclists to use the cycle tracks, and I am anxious that long and continuous cycle tracks should be made available before we go into the matter on a large scale." East Ham and Barking By-Pass (*Cycle Tracks*), House of Commons debate, 16 June 1937.

45 "On London Traffic," *The Times*, October 20th, 1938.

46 "Cycle Tracks," *The Times*, December 6th, 1938.

47 Letter from Kenneth Lancelot Macaulay, Chief Accountant, Ministry of Transport to F. N. Tribe, of Treasury Chambers, 18th May 1939. *CYCLE TRACKS: Proposed Construction*,, 1926-1943, Ministry of Transport, MT 39/127, National Archives, London.

48 Letter from F. N. Tribe of Treasury Chambers, to Kenneth Lancelot Macaulay, chief accountant at the Ministry of Transport, March 1939.

49 Letter from F. N. Tribe of Treasury Chambers, to Kenneth Lancelot Macaulay, chief accountant at the Ministry of Transport, 31st May 1939.

50 *The Hidden Stevenage: The Creation of the Substructure of Britain's First New Town*, Remembered, Eric Charles Claxton, Book Guild, 1992.

51 *Interim Report of the Committee on Road Safety,* Ministry of War Transport, H.M.S.O., 1944.

52 House of Commons debate, June 17th, 1938.

53 Use of the word "segregation" was deliberate. It was a favourite word of policeman/painter/planner Alker Tripp (who had toured America, visiting neighbourhoods segregated on racial lines). The word had racial and class connotations, but was not as yet negative in our modern sense. And Tripp was one of many urban planners of the 1920s and 1930s influenced by racial segregation, and who had earlier been influenced by the segregation needed to stop diseases spreading. "For the new breed of comprehensive city planner … the connection between sanitation and segregation was the stuff not of fear or disgust, but of the grandest hopes of Western empire and civilisation. From this exalted inspiration arose the colonial era's most extravagant monuments to urban segregation," wrote Carl Nightingale in *Segregation: A World History of Divided Cities*, University of Chicago Press, 2012. "Segregation means safety," Philip Noel Baker, parliamentary secretary of the Ministry of War Transport, said on 14th March 1944 in a speech to the Pedal Club. "No adequate segregation can be affected other than by the provision – and the use by pedal cyclists – of tracks reserved for their exclusive use. The marking off – as is done on certain continental countries – of a portion of the common carriageway for the predominant, but not exclusive, use of pedal cyclists is an unsatisfactory expedient."

54 "Mr. Burgin, the Minister of Transport, yesterday gave an assurance to a deputation from the National Committee on Cycling that there is no likelihood of immediate legislation regarding the compulsory use of cycle tracks . . .," reported Hull's Daily Mail in 1938. "The Minister told the deputation that he himself was a cyclist and had the fullest understanding of their views. The ideal highway would be one in which every road would have dual carriageways and cycle tracks, but so far as the latter were concerned there would be no compulsion until they were of adequate length and width and had a proper surface." "Cycle tracks", (Hull) *Daily Mail*, December 6th, 1938.

55 "Are Cyclists' 'Lanes' Practicable?", By "G.H.S." [George Herbert Spencer], *Cycling*, March 31st, 1943

56 In 1926, under the pen-name of "Robin Hood," Stancer wrote in the *CTC Gazette*: "Those of us who oppose the construction of cycle paths alongside English country roads firmly believe that any such paths would be inferior in quality to the roads, and would generally be neglected, on the ground that 'anything will do for push-bikes'; that the presence of such paths would imply . . . that cyclists were banished from the carriage-way; that coroners, judges and jacks-in office everywhere would be inclined to censure a cyclist who was involved in an accident on the road when a path has been provided for him; and that in the end we should forfeit the rights that were won for us by the pioneers of the pastime in days gone by. All these fears may be groundless, but they will not be easily removed. The advocates of cycle paths, with few exceptions, are the most violent enemies of cyclists. . .".

57 Similar to US-style "jaywalker" laws. These laws were introduced in 1920s America after concerted anti-pedestrian campaigns by the all-powerful motor lobby.

58 William Leach, the Labour MP for Bradford Central. http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1939/jul/05/ministry-of-transport#column_1398. Accessed October 16, 2018.

59 Department memorandum, Major F. C. Cook, chief engineer, Ministry of Transport, January 7th, 1941.

60 International road traffic rules are enshrined in a number of conventions, the most important ones being the 1926 Paris Convention, the 1949 Geneva Convention and the 1968 Vienna Convention. Cycling was not mentioned in the 1926 agreement, but appeared in the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic that was signed by 17 States in Geneva on 19th September 1949. It is currently in force in over 120 countries. The Convention was prepared and opened for signature by the United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport held at Geneva from 23rd August to 19 September 1949. Article 16, 2. (a) states that: "Cyclists shall use cycle tracks where there is an obligation to do so indicated by an appropriate sign, or where such obligation is imposed by domestic regulations." Article 36 2. (b) states that: "The sign COMPULSORY CYCLE TRACK (II, B.2) which shall be used to indicate that cyclists shall use the special track reserved for them." See: https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1952/03/19520326%2003-36%20PM/Ch_XI_B_1_2_3.pdf. Accessed October 16, 2018.

61 *Survival of the Unfittest: Why the Worst Infrastructure Gets Built - And What We Can Do About It*, Bent Flyvbjerg, Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 2009. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46511516_Survival_of_the_Unfittest_Why_the_Worst_Infrastructure_Gets_Built_-_And_What_We_Can_Do_About_It. Accessed October 16, 2018.

62 There are exceptions to this – including in Nottingham, Sunderland and Oxford, where the cycle tracks were built next to dual carriageways in built-up urban areas.

63 *The Architectural Review,* April 1937.

64 The Automobile Association submitted plans to the committee showing underpasses and other cycle path features that were similar to those built in Utrecht in 1941 but which only started to become commonplace in the Netherlands from the 1970s. Edward Fryer, deputy secretary of the Automobile Association (an organization with 680,000 members at this time), gave evidence to the Alness committee, admitting that "the only time I was ever fined for committing a road offence was for cycling on a pavement [sidewalk] many years ago." Note the following exchange: Fryer: "The cycle tracks on the Great West Road are not only too narrow but they were too rough, they were too full of manholes, there were too many crossings where the cyclist had to go up and down. . .. Our submission has been for many years that if special tracks are made, they should be of the right type, so as to attract the cyclist. The width of the cycle track should be 12 feet . . . excepting where cycle tracks are provided for big works, 12 feet would be insufficient . . . under the existing law, the cyclist and the pedestrian cannot be excluded from the King's Highway." Lord Alness: "If the cycle track is there, and is of suitable dimensions, and the cyclist deliberately neglects to use it, and uses the carriage-way instead, would you favour the imposition of a penalty?" Fryer: "I think it must come." Fryer also went on to show a diagram of a road of the future which included Dutch-style cycle underpasses. "The [cyclist] would pass under the carriage-way, come up on to the bank and join the other cycle track which goes continuously along the arterial road." AA recommended the taking of 300 feet for designing such roads, giving plenty of space for anticipated rise in motor traffic as well as protected tracks for cyclists and pedestrians. Fryer: "You can get complete segregation of these three kinds of traffic . . .[but] it requires more land . . . more land than is the present policy of the Minister of Transport." "[Where] cycle tracks and footways are sometimes going over and sometimes going under, if you are going to continue to have those at a reasonable gradient, looking to the future, instead of being really steep, it does require this extra width for getting into the swing." Lord Alness: "A considerable time must elapse before all the road junctions in the country can be redesigned and reconstructed?" Fryer: "We appreciate that." Lord Alness: "But if you are going to make it compulsory, you get the possible weekend time when between large towns you have droves of cyclists…"Fryer: "[By] that time I hope that the extra provision of land by the side of the roads, and in certain cases even footpaths, may be used as cycle tracks … [so] the carriageway is left free for vehicular motor traffic." ACCIDENTS: House of Lords (Lord Alness) Select Committee on Road Accidents; Ministry of Transport evidence and memorandum on Report, 1938-1939.

65 "1934: The moment it all went wrong for cycling in the UK," David Arditti, July 30th, 2011. http://www.voleospeed.co.uk/2011/07/1934-moment-it-all-went-wrong-for.html. Accessed October 16, 2018.

66 ACCIDENTS: House of Lords (Lord Alness) Select Committee on Road Accidents; Ministry of Transport evidence and memorandum on Report, 1938-1939.