



Learning from Hilden's Successes

***A visit by Rod King of Warrington Cycle
Campaign to Hilden, Northrhine-Westphalia
July 2004***

***Presented to Warrington Borough Council
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INTRODUCTION

During preparations for the 2004 National Bike Week and Warrington's own "Get Cycling" Week, it was suggested that some sort of link with Warrington's twin town (Hilden in Germany) would be appropriate. Rod King usually goes on a solo cycle tour each year and offered to make a return trip to Hilden by cycle. In particular it would allow comparison with what was expected to be a more cycle friendly environment in Hilden with about three times as many %age cyclists as Warrington.

Therefore on 30th June after being wished success by the new Lord Mayor of Warrington (Councillor Ted Lafferty), Rod set out on his trip via Sheffield, Hull, Rotterdam, Dordrecht, S-Hertogenbosch, Venlo, Munchen Gladbach, Dusseldorf to Hilden.

The trip was also timed to co-incide with the arrival of a group of Hilden and Czech cyclists riding from Hilden's other twin town, Nove Mesto, nr Prague, to Hilden for their Festival des Sports.

In all the trip took some 57 Hrs cycling and allowed comparison with many variations of cycle facilities, especially when passing through Hull (subject to a UK Government initiative in promoting cycling within the town) the Netherlands and Germany. Total mileage was 732 miles over 9 days cycling.

Many thanks go to the following individuals who assisted and supported the ride :-

Warrington Borough Council	
Councillor Ted Lafferty	Mayor
Leslie McAllister	Cycling Officer
City of Hilden	
Lutz Groll	Planning Officer
Peter Stuhlträger	Head of Planning
Manfred Fieker	Organisor – Festival des Sportz
Hilden Cycle Club	
Paul Persighetti	
Warrington Cycle Campaign	

Also many thanks must go to my wife, Margaret, for her support whilst I pedalled half way across the continent in search of interesting cycle facilities!!!.



OVERVIEW

In 1992 the City of Hilden embarked upon a major exercise to reduce congestion by making a shift in city transport from vehicles to cycles and public transport.

The cornerstone of their strategy was a reduction in maximum vehicle speeds to just 18.5 mph throughout the built up areas of the town.

This reduction has had a major effect in increasing cycling as a viable, safe, cost effective and enjoyable method of moving around the city.

Hilden has therefore become a City in which its children and adults do not have a fear of cycling on their roads. As a result the quality of their life is enhanced and children in particular are given an independence and freedom that is not currently available in Warrington.

Currently 24% of within Hilden trips are done by cycle. This has been achieved with minimal public expenditure on cycle specific facilities yet has made the streets safer and more pleasant for all road users.

This report provides a layman's view of the key achievements of Hilden in catering for cycling. Most importantly the approach taken by Hilden represents cycling as an activity that is capable and desirous of being performed by all sections of the community as long as safe provision for cycling can be maintained.

Whilst the report does not propose that Warrington adopts any of the specific facilities developed by Hilden, it does endorse an approach that seeks to promote "cycling for all" and sees cycling as an important part of a holistic transport plan.

It identifies that developing a speed reduction environment and culture is the key to achieving any modal shift and recommends that Warrington should establish a strategic plan that actually changes the transport culture to one that is based on safety and sharing rather than vehicular speed and throughput.

Many of the measures introduced by Hilden have been inexpensive and some, such as cycle signposting are neither controversial or difficult to implement.

Most importantly it encourages politicians and professional to also experience at first hand the successes achieved by our neighbours and colleagues in Hilden and I am able to pass on a warm welcome by the City of Hilden to make such a visit.



CYCLING IN HILDEN

Hilden Facts

The city of Hilden is 13km from the centre of Dusseldorf and is part of a continuous strip of developed land along the East bank of the Rhine.

It has a population of some 57,000 people and covers an area 5.8km North to South and 6.1km East to West. The city area is approximately 26 km².

Hilden is surrounded by motorways, and has train connections to Dusseldorf.

The density of Hilden is 2,200 people per square km.

Cycle Promotion

The foundation for a modern kind of cycle promotion was set in 1991/93 with a very comprehensive approach to traffic speed reduction. Consequently all residential areas in Hilden are speed restricted to 30 kph (18.6mph). This means that no special facilities for cyclists are needed in these areas.

In addition many residential streets are further traffic-calmed, speed is limited to walking pace and pedestrians have priority.

Even some of the main roads have sections with a 30kph speed limit.

All one way streets in Hilden are deemed to be two way for cyclists. Normally no special provision is made for cyclists travelling against the flow of traffic.

Whilst Hilden can measure its success in providing a safe environment for cyclists, the real measure is that for trips within Hilden 24% are made by bicycle. This not only represents a major modal shift when combined with public transport, but also the volume of cyclists on the road has a further calming effect on traffic.

One further fact to be considered is that in German Law in any collision with a cyclist a motorist is considered to have been able to take correcting action and therefore always accepts a degree of culpability. This therefore makes German motorists cautious of coming into contact with cyclists. Of course, because of the wide usage of cycles by all sectors of the community, cyclists are not seen as a particular subgroup, but normal members of the community exercising their freedom to travel on the roads.

In fact a similar responsibility now exists in British law and currently any motorist involved in an accident with a pedestrian or cyclist is insured to cover their hospital or medical expenses. However this is not widely known or understood.



Cycle Facilities in Hilden

Herr Lutz Groll of City of Hilden Planning took me on a tour of Hilden in order to point out the various cycle specific facilities. These are shown in the order in which we rode around the town :-

Picture	Location	Note
	<p>Short Term Cycle Parking – Town Hall</p>	<p>Whilst council employees have their own secure cycle parking in the basement of the Town Hall, visitors are provided with cycle stands directly outside the entrance. Note that cycles mix with architecture and art and are not considered an “eyesore”</p>
	<p>Hilden Stands used for longer term cycle parking</p>	<p>Hilden has developed its own stand which works for both adult and children cycles. It is compact and provides a high density of cycle parking. The design of the stands is shown in the Appendix.</p>
	<p>On road cycle protection. Stockshausstraße.</p>	<p>Cycle lanes of moderate width (1.8m) are provided on many roads. Note that there is no central white line which encourages driver caution yet at the same clearly redistributes road space to cyclists.</p>
	<p>Special roundabout. Gerresheimer Straße</p>	<p>Here, a narrow laned roundabout has been added with an extra inner lane with a vertical offset to allow large trucks to negotiate the roundabout yet still keep a small radius for cars.</p>








Picture	Location	Note
	<p>Traffic Calming, cycle parking, contra flow cycling in one way street. Fabriciusstraße.</p>	<p>This wide town street has been converted into one way and calmed with vertical speed platforms. However, it is still two way for cyclists. Note the cycle parking on the pavement.</p>
	<p>Secure covered cycle storage at the Bahnhoff (Central Station)</p>	<p>Covered cycle storage is provided at train and bus stations.</p>
	<p>Cycle Lockers at the Bahnhoff (Central Station)</p>	<p>These cycle lockers are available for short or long term free use by Hilden residents. Whilst more are required the area is being considered for development into a manned cycle storage facility.</p>
	<p>Contra-flow cycle lock at Neustraße</p>	<p>With two lanes of one way traffic, this route has still been kept open for cyclists in the opposite direction by a "cycle lock"</p>
	<p>Schulstraße, Pedestrianised street with access for cyclists.</p>	<p>This street in the town centre is completely free for cyclists in both directions. Note that cars are in fact loading.</p>



Picture	Location	Note
	<p>Bicycle Priority Road, Hagelkreuzstraße</p>	<p>This road is heavily used by cyclists who are given absolute priority over cars. Note the cycle specific direction signs on the opposite side of the road just in front of the white car.</p>
	<p>Bus Station Cycle Parking</p>	<p>At the central bus station, cycle parking is provided. Also buses will accept cycles and most can carry 2 or 3 cycles for a small extra charge.</p>
	<p>Raised platform where cycle path crosses road, Nordstraße.</p>	<p>Where this cycle path crosses a road a raised platform has been incorporated to clearly specify cycle priority. Note the cycle specific direction signs.</p>
	<p>Cycle route through centre. Nr Warrington-Platz.</p>	<p>This cycle route is provided to allow parallel access to the main shopping precinct when its use is restricted to pedestrians only during weekdays.</p>
	<p>Warrington-Platz with its "British" phone and post box.</p>	<p>Of no real significance other than having more passing cyclists than most British telephone boxes.</p>
<p>Other pictures from Hilden</p>		



Picture	Location	Note
	<p>Continuity of cycle lane over crossing.</p>	
	<p>Traffic calming – Hilden style. 30 kph sign and a planter to restrict width of road.</p>	<p>This is one of the simpler traffic calming devices in Hilden. Mostly, one or two trees are planted in the ground.</p>
	<p>Inexpensive mini roundabout formed from concrete planters.</p>	
	<p>Out of town cycle path alongside main road.</p>	<p>(Not within Hilden but typical of German main road facilities)</p>
	<p>Overflow parking – Hilden style</p>	<p>At a major public event in the Sports Stadium, no additional car parking was required as most people walked or came by bicycle.</p>



Other Hilden Statistics

Sign-posted On-Road cycle routes	41.4 km
Shared use Pedestrian/Cycle Lanes	22.8km
Bicycle Protection lanes (alongside main roads)	10.9km
Bicycle priority roads	0.4km
Total length	75.5km
Bicycle stands in city centre Pedestrian Zone	400

Other comments by Herr Groll

"The key to affordable cycle facilities is the maximum speed of 30 kph (18.5 mph). Without such a speed limit and its enforcement then we would not have achieved the same safety or success of cycling. It is so important to reduce the speed differential between motorists and cyclists. Reducing the maximum vehicle speed usually reduces average speeds, and therefore gives everyone more time to react to cars, cyclists and pedestrians."

"Our off road facilities are useful, but our major objective is to get cyclists onto the roads. Here they are safer and have a calming effect on vehicle speeds. Most cycle accidents occur on off-road routes and result from car owners reversing into cyclists when coming out of their drives."

"Traffic-calmed home zones are paid for by residents. In order for it to be implemented they have to be convinced of its effectiveness. Other means of traffic calming are paid for by the City of Hilden only"

"One way streets with two way access for cyclists are safe due to the low vehicle speeds and direct visibility of an oncoming cyclist."

"Developing cycling is not just for a special interest group it is a key part of a holistic approach to city transport."

Observations

What struck me was the relative simplicity of the cycle facilities. In fact with appropriate speed control most cyclists appear to mix fairly easily with cars. Cycle provision was however very much in abundance with cycle parking and direction signs.

Where there were cycle paths on the pavements these were clearly marked and relatively uncluttered with obstacles. There was very little evidence of conflict with pedestrians.

Hilden clearly saw cycling as just one element within their transport agenda. However, it was seen as a key factor in reducing traffic, reducing vehicle speeds, providing better access to public transport and giving citizens the freedom of the streets.

It appears that once we get beyond trying to preserve the rights of the motorist to travel at the maximum speed possible then we start to win back the streets for all citizens, both old and young alike. Once this is done then motoring also becomes less stressful with a calmer environment with less congestion and braking/acceleration. Traffic calming is of course a mechanism that also increases motorists' safety.

Having experienced the environment for travel and commuting within Hilden I am convinced that whilst cycle facilities can help, the most important difference is the cultural acceptance of cycling after adopting the speed reduction exercise in the early 90s. Without action to reduce vehicle speeds then one cannot overcome the fear that most members of the public express when considering their own or their children cycling on the roads.



Hilden has spent less than 120,000 Euros in whole of the last 10 years on cycle specific facilities. It has created an integrated transport system for all parts of the community that shares its road space safely and economically.

It appears that Warrington has a choice of two directions in its cycle and transport strategy. One is to continue with its approach of maintaining the speed of cars in line with short-sighted public demands with increasing frustration at the limited achievements against continued and worsening congestion. Alternatively it can accept that congestion will not be reduced unless a significant modal shift can be established away from vehicles and onto cycle and public transport. For this to happen then we must address the issue of vehicle speeds to ensure that cycling does not continue to be the preserve of the "brave and the fit" but can encompass an ever widening group of citizens who can feel comfortable on our roads.

It is imperative to address the fears of the public that cycling on Warrington roads is simply not safe. Regardless how inaccurate this may be when put in perspective, such fear of cars and their relative speed is the key to encouraging the public to cycle.

For this to happen the public must both be engaged and given sensible direction from councillors and officers as to how we can move to a more tolerant and sensible use of our roads and transport infrastructure.

My visit to Hilden has given me a terrific insight into what is possible with an abundance of commitment, sensible consideration and limited funds.

I therefore recommend that those councillors and officers tasked with developing and creating a safe, efficient and pleasant transport environment for Warrington should take up the invitation to visit the City of Hilden to learn from their successes.



APPENDICES

The journey through England, Holland and Germany

England

After leaving the Mayor at the Town Hall, I negotiated my way through Warrington Town Centre and the Bridgefoot Roundabout before taking the road through Latchford and out to Lymm. This route had no cycle facilities at all and whilst it would have been possible to divert onto the Trans Pennine Trail, the unsealed, loose surface would have been slower than the road. From Lymm I met road re-surfacing work on Rushgreen Road, Lymm but noticed that the opportunity was not being taken to re-distribute any of the road to cyclists via cycle lanes.

I then went through the back roads of Dunham Massey before meeting my first cycle specific facility alongside at the roundabout under the M56 approaching Manchester Airport. I have never been in favour of "Cyclist Dismount" commands and such cycle paths which constantly lead one to cross the exit road of a fast roundabout at right angles do not seem to be the safest way of negotiating a roundabout. Therefore it was mingling with the traffic through the lights. Once this was done, there was a shared use path on the other side of the road, but overhanging branches kept me on the road. Cycling through Stockport I came across many on road cycle lanes of varying quality and width. However they were fairly continuous and therefore welcome.

Out through High Lane and Disley I encountered central islands where the council had put in a cycle lane the length of the island. Such works are clearly the result of "text book following" where guidance indicates that where an island restriction is put into place to stop overtaking, a reserve lane for cyclists should be provided. Inevitably the lanes were narrow and did not really provide much protection.

My route took me to Castleton via Rushup Edge and whilst I was aware of the fine Chapel-en-le-Frith by pass, I knew that the complete lack of any cycle lane on a long fast uphill road would not be very pleasant. Therefore I took the back roads through Chinley. Once down Winnats Pass and through Castleton I encountered a wide cycle lane on the road to Hathersage.

As I entered Sheffield I had expected some cycle facilities but none were encountered. On dual carriageways I resorted to taking up the whole of the left hand lane in order to protect my position. At Gleadless I joined a route used by trams and found very bad tram rail positioning including a gradually tapering gap between kerb and tram line. As a result I frequently had to reposition myself crossing the rails at oblique angles and riding in an unnatural road position.

After a short stretch on the A57 filled with fast commuter traffic I managed to divert through Rother Valley Park picking up the Trans Pennine Trail, but here found that "trail" was certainly the operative word and marks the whole of this route as leisure rather than utility cycling. Coming out of the park I did find myself crossing over to use a shared use pavement up a steep hill, but wondered why the cycle path was on the downhill side forcing me to cross over and cycle against passing traffic when it would have been more logical for it to have been on the uphill side of the road.

The route through to Humber Bridge was fairly safe for cyclists and a separate shared pedestrian/cycle path on the bridge was fine. However, only one side of the bridge was open and it was lucky that it was open on the leeward side.

In Hull I expected good cycle provision, but whilst there were some signposts, these were not sufficient to get me onto the correct road for the ferry. On a few occasions I took wrong roads. On one road the cycle lane was good with a protection strip to the main carriageway. However poor enforcement of parking restrictions made a mockery of the cycle provision. Once through Hull I was on a fast dual carriageway to the ferry terminal. Here a cycle path at the side of the road was good except for discontinuity for factory entrances and side roads.

At the ferry terminal I checked in with other vehicles and then waited with the motorcycles for entry onto the ferry. Once on the ferry, my bike was easily parked within the hold.



Holland and Germany

One is immediately struck by the provision of tarmaced off road parallel cycle paths and cycle specific signs. These directed you to negotiate crossroads correctly and of course traffic lights had buttons for cyclists to use in order to establish their ability to cross roads.

Whenever crossing bridges, cyclists had been adequately catered for. Cycle paths would wind around and under roads in order to get to the correct side of the roads and a separate path was provided across the bridge for cycles.

Tunnels were also provided for cycles alongside the vehicle tunnels. Where there was a ramp coming out of the tunnel then lifts were provided to bring cyclists up to the surface without having to cycle up the ramp.

When off road parallel cycle paths are provided then cycle specific signs are very helpful at junctions, especially where the two-way cycle path moves to the other side of the road.

It was clear from the actions of drivers in both Holland and Germany that cyclists were respected and always were given priority at junctions. I believe this is mainly due to the fact that cyclists are not marginalised into a particular sector of "lycra clad" sports fanatics, but are seen as normal folk going about the business of getting to work, shops or school.

Almost everywhere priority was given to redistributing road space to cyclists and pedestrians. This was often done by providing far narrower vehicular roads than in Britain and maintaining a separate cycle path alongside. Where there was not room for this then the road was given 2 cycle lanes with a restricted width single lane for cars. Typical examples of cycle provisions and other photos are as follows :-

Photo	Location	Note
	Cycle lane in Hull. Hessel Road	This two lane dual carriageway has been changed to a single lane with ample cycle lane provision.
	Cycle provision approaching Dutch village	Note single two way cycle path of ample width.



Photo	Location	Note
	<p>Cycle lane in Dutch village.</p>	<p>Note that the markings redistribute as much width to the two cycle lanes as the central lane for cars. This would be possible on most roads in the UK.</p>
	<p>Similar road layout approaching village.</p>	<p>Note that speed limit in village is 30 kph or 18.6 mph</p>
	<p>Cyclists arriving at the Festival des Sports</p>	<p>The Burgermeister of Hilden being interviewed after joining cyclists for the last 2 km. Rod King within group of riders</p>
	<p>Somewhat muddy but happy to have arrived at Hilden.</p>	<p>350 miles in 3½ days travelling</p>
	<p>Cycling through the Peak District</p>	<p>Climbing up the scenic Winnats Pass on the final day of the trip</p>



There were however some problems experienced in Holland and Germany. Cycle paths were sometimes compulsory and the surface was not always up to the normal high standard. This could be accepted in towns where a reduction in speed was appropriate on shared use paths because of pedestrians. However it was sometime annoying to be directed onto a cycle path with an uneven surface.

Also many small villages had bypasses which took the main road around a pedestrian centre. Whilst cycles were always welcome through such areas sometimes there was no signage to indicate the correct direction from the main square in the centre of a town. However, the locals could always be relied upon to assist wherever possible with directions.

These are however minor criticisms. Most important was the courtesy shown by all drivers to cyclists.

Trip Details

Details of the complete journey from Warrington to Hilden and return were as follows :-





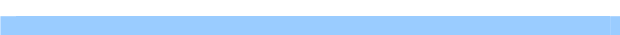

Date	30 th June	1 st July	2 nd July	3 rd July	4 th July	5 th July	6 th July	7 th July	8 th July	10 th July
	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri
Distance km	124	150	210	105	10	105	121	118	131	96.8
Ave speed kph	18.7	23	21.2	19.2		17.2	20.1	22.1	20.4	18.9
Max speed kph	59.2	60	49.5	36.4		34.5	40	47.2	61.5	61.7
Cycling hrs	6:38	06:31	10:12	05:27		05:59	06:00	05:18	06:23	05:06
daily climb m	1082	400	0	0	0	88	40	86	682	790
Staying at	Sheffield	Ferry	Miejel, Hotel-Restaurant de Zwaan	Hilden, Amber Hotel	Hilden Amber Hotel	Arcen, Hotel-Restaurant De Maasparel	Rossum, Der Gouden Molen	Ferry	Sheffield	Lymm



Hilden Cycle Plan



Key

	Bicycle Protection Lane
	Shared use pedestrian/cycle lanes
	Bicycle priority Road
	Other cycle lanes
	On road cycle route (signposted)
	Greenway cycle routes

Other designated and signposted cycle routes are

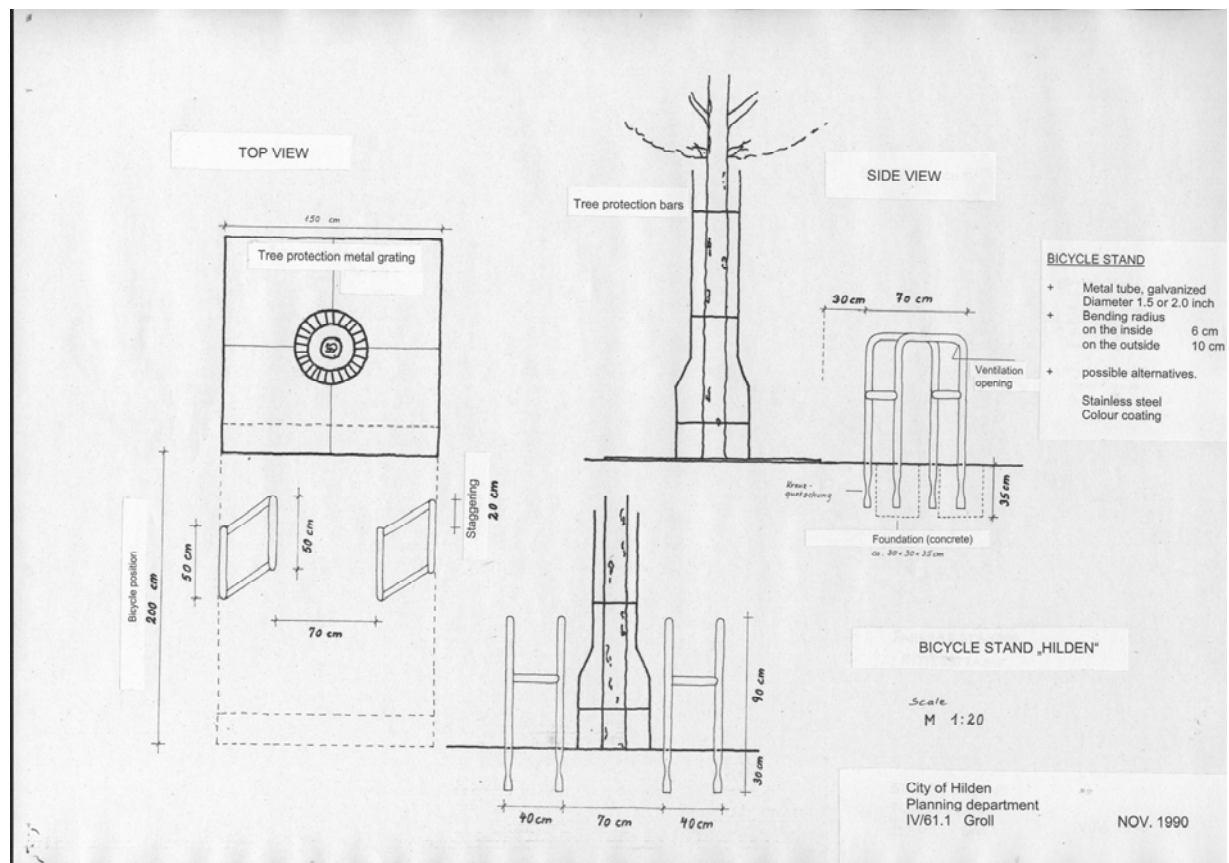
Blue dotted line	Euroga Route
Purple sawtooth line	Kaiser route from Achen to Paderborn
Dashed brown line	State Cycle Rote Northrhine to Westphalia

The complete map is available for download from :-
<http://www.hilden.de/showobject.phtml?La=1&object=tx|388.521.1>

It can be viewed locally using Autodesk Express Viewer which is freely downloadable from :-
<http://www.autodesk.co.uk/adsk/servlet/index?siteID=452932&id=3594044>



Design for Hilden Cycle Stands



Warrington Cycle Campaign

Warrington Cycle Campaign aims to promote better, safer cycling in Warrington and to encourage more people to travel by bicycle in the town.

Warrington Cycle Campaign has over 200 members and holds regular monthly meetings.

Many of its reports and activities can be found on the web site at :-

www.warringtoncyclecampaign.co.uk



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