Space for oldies? Ageing society, older people and the UK ‘cycle boom’

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A study to understand cycling amongst the older population in the UK and how this affects independence, health and wellbeing.
cycle BOOM premise...

- Little understanding of cycling among older people - older people perceived as lacking ability to cycle
- Lack of policy discourse on older cycling - focus on commuting
- Infrastructure projects focus on instrumental facets - direct, time saving - and typically ignore experiential component - affect.

Proportion of overall journeys by bicycle by over 65s
Older cycling trend in Britain

Indicator: Bicycle trips per person per year (source: NTS)

Bicycle trips decline with age | trend unclear

Period: 2008-10
Source: NTS

Distance falls more steeply than stages as age increases
Objectives

"For too long the focus has been on advising individuals to take an active approach to life. There has been far too little consideration of the social and physical environments that enable such activity to be taken."


Policy relevance

Populations ageing across the EU | Increasing focus on ‘healthy ageing’

Maintaining independence/preventing disability - important for wellbeing in later life

Access to activities outside the home

Social engagement

Sense of control
Impact

Developing more inclusive neighbourhoods, towns and cities

Designing products suited to the growing market of older people

Engagement beyond the academy

University bike study puts older people in the saddle

Blog
Newsletter/Academia
Seminars/Conferences/Presentations/School
Documentary Film
Toolkit
Population

WHO?

240

People aged 50-59 and 60+

CARDIFF
OXFORD
BRISTOL
READING
Testing novel research methods

- Geo-locating & representing affect
Representing affect | developing a UD vocabulary
cB responding to call by Ann Forsyth and Kevin Krizek:

“...to take the experience of cycling seriously in urban design. This involves moving beyond a concern with safe and convenient facilities and complete networks to a more substantial interest in the experience of the environment from a cyclist's point of view.”


Some preliminary findings
Life history interviews | Cycling Observation & Interview
1. Cycling pathways

Heterogeneous
discovered | rediscovered | (dis)continued

Constrained
body | gender | geography

Resilient
enduring | adapting | imparting

2. Observations of older cycling

Performance
Dutiful | law-abiding | avoid conflict

Practice
unhurried | challenged - ‘keeping up with the flow’
| manoeuvres ‘amplified’

Experience
Adopt coping strategies to enhance and prolong
cycling – space | time | technology - seek pleasure
3a. Experience of Brian and Ramona

Brian

Ridden most of his life
Accomplished-competent
Cross city cycling

Ramona

Ridden on-and-off over past 10 years
Lacks confidence in road environment
Cycling in local neighbourhood

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3b. Practice

Brian

Cycling unproblematic if you know what to do
conscious of not impeding the flow of traffic
potential to annoy/frustrate drivers

Ramona

avoid interaction with motor traffic
“I get quite nervous on the roads, I am not a good road cyclist”
cycling mainly resigned to paths and pavements in local neighbourhood

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3c. Video Clips

Tackling inclines
Right turns
Road position

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3d. Technology

Adapted hybrid
Comfort: saddle | guards | seat-post | mirror
Carrying: rack
Security: camera | ‘lugging’ locks

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Summary

cycle BOOM seeks to:

Elevate status of older cycling
Improve habitat for older cycling

Develop novel methods of representing affect
Place more emphasis on the experiential aspect of cycling

Understand links between cycling and older people’s wellbeing

Follow our progress at www.cycleboom.org