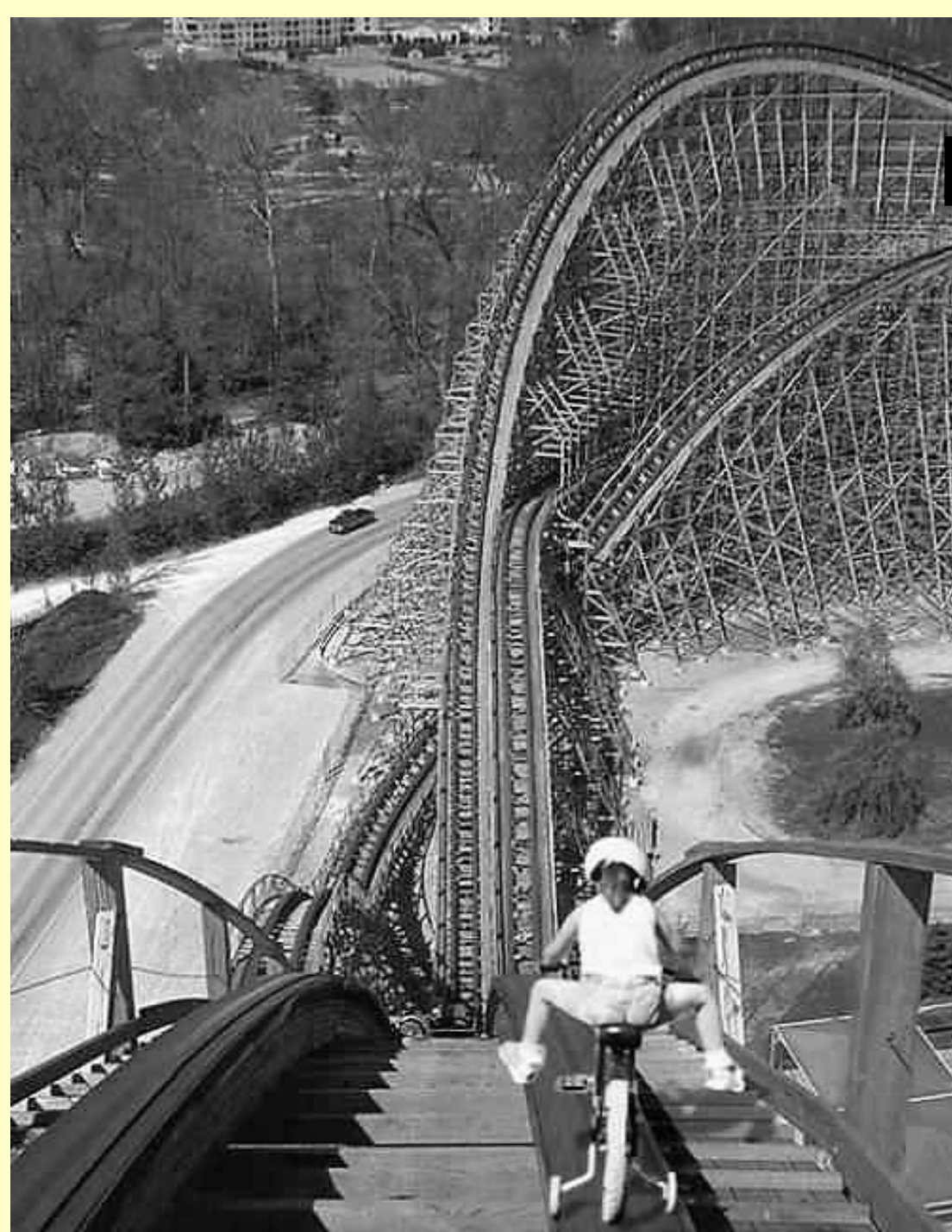


Fear of Cycling

Why people think cycling is dangerous, and what we can do about it

Dr Dave Horton

Sociologist and writer
Lancaster, UK



Why might people fear cycling?



- Looking silly
- Exercising in public
- Looking inept/falling off
- Mechanical breakdown
- Hard work
- Proximity to strangers
- Responsibilities towards others
- Anxieties of others
- Becoming different (changing identity)
- Motorised traffic

Understanding Walking and Cycling



Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

EPSRC
Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

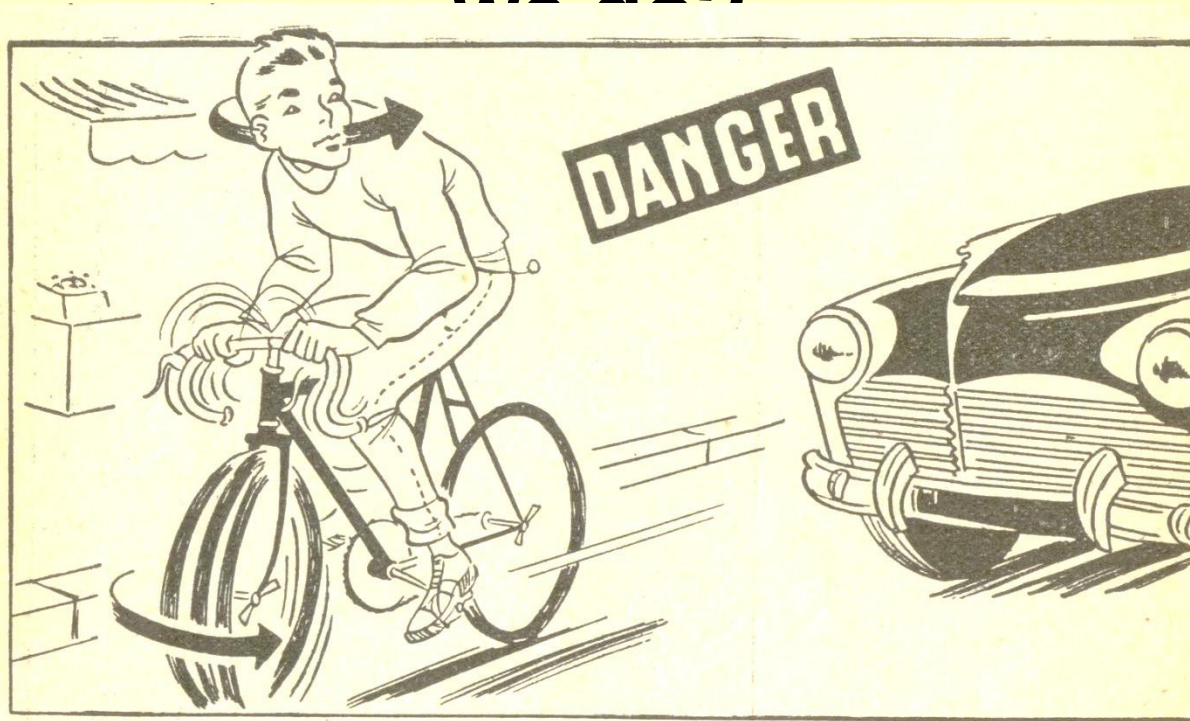
**OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY**

**LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY**

Fear of cycling is not wrong

- Most roads are increasingly dominated by cars
- Those roads become less pleasant, more difficult places to cycle
- Cycling declines, and becomes more dangerous

If people are afraid to cycle, what should



Change perceptions – try to persuade people that cycling is, really, safe?

Change realities - work to make cycling more appealing, including safer?

Change processes - examine how fear of cycling is being produced?

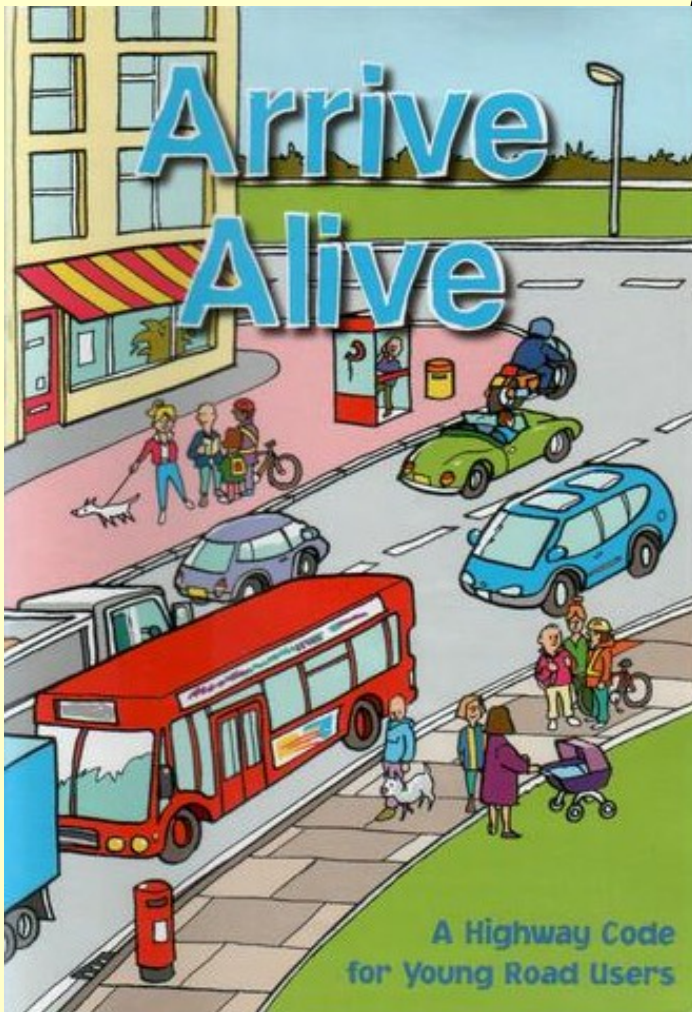
**Fear of cycling
is neither
'natural' nor
inevitable; it is
produced - by
constructing
cycling as
'dangerous'**



- 3 case studies
- Road safety education
 - Helmet promotion campaigns
 - New cycling spaces

Constructing fear of cycling

Case study 1: road safety education



Constructing fear of cycling

Case study 2: helmet promotion campaigns



“It’s no laughing matter ... Get yourself a helmet.”

Constructing fear of cycling

Case study 3: new cycling spaces



- Roads monopolised by cars;
- leads to calls for cycling to have its own, 'safer', space;
- fear of cycling on the road grows, and those who ride there become increasingly strange.

Fear of (becoming) the cyclist



- In many places cycling has become strange, and 'the cyclist' a stranger;
- to be 'a cyclist' has developed widespread negative connotations;
- but people are now being increasingly encouraged to take up cycling;
- so part of people's fear of cycling is fear of becoming a cyclist.

Fear of cycling: what can we do about it?

When facing people ...
work in ways which don't
inculcate a fear of cycling
- change from the bottom-up

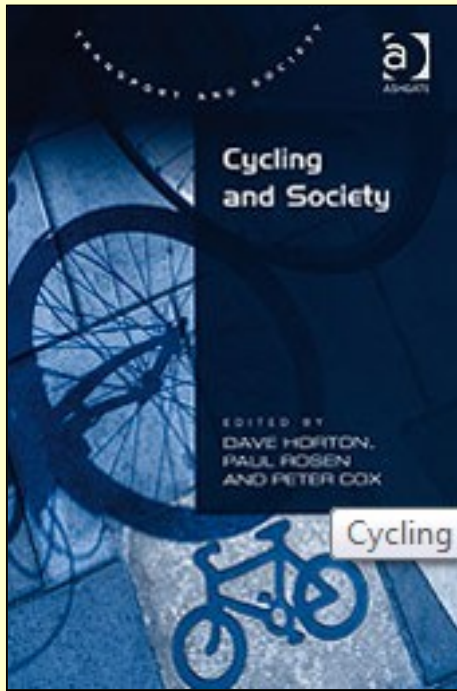


“Don't be afraid of cycling; get empowered instead; it's great fun, & good for you!”

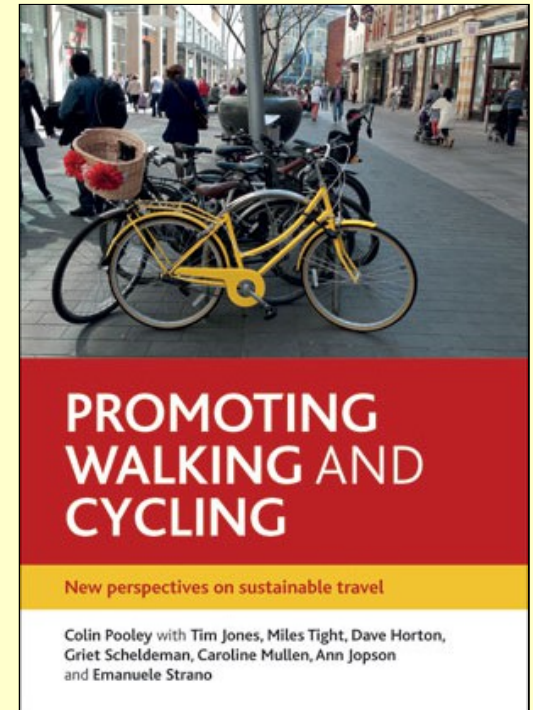
When facing power ...
explain why people are
afraid to cycle
- change from the top-down



“People are right to be afraid of cycling; it's discriminated against, difficult & dangerous. It needs huge investment.”



Thank you



Thinking About Cycling

Re-making the world, one revolution at a time

www.thinkingaboutcycling.wordpress.com