



MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN NOTES – September 2017



Independence of Children

There was recent controversy on Joe Duffy's Liveline with people complaining about Ryanair's policy of splitting up groups unless they pay for reserved seating. Michael O'Leary rang RTE and vigorously defended the airline against public criticism. One of the points raised by a member of the public was that a thirteen year was in tears because he/she was forced to sit separately from his/her parents. Michael O'Leary vehemently denied that any such incident had occurred.

I do not know whether this is true or not but what is clear is that many people thought that the idea of a thirteen year old being upset in these circumstances was credible. The independence/self reliance of children in Ireland is in stark contrast with that in the Netherlands where it is normal for young children to travel independently and doing thing for themselves . I recently read about a Dutch girl who at five years went to the shops on her own on her bike to get bread for her mother. Twenty years later and living in New York, she still spoke with great pride and pleasure of her achievement . I doubt whether many five year old Maynooth children would be allowed to do the same.

Royal Canal Greenway

As most people are aware the towpath of the Royal Canal is being developed by as part of the Dublin -Galway Greenway , the first Irish cross country greenway. The section either side of Kilcock has been open for some time. We visited it recently but were not impressed - it compares poorly with the recently opened Waterford Greenway. The section close to bridge is particularly poor because the width is narrowed by the choice of public lights and their positioning across the footpath rather than parallel to the road.



This is intended for pedestrians and two way cycling

Gross National Happiness

At the recent Velo-City Conference in the Netherlands which attracted over 1500 people from 80 countries across the world, there was a discussion on cycling, happiness and Butan. Butan, is a small country perched in the Himalayas between India and China that many people will never have heard of. Realising that money does not make people happy, it has rejected GDP as the way to measure progress and instead has championed a new approach to development which measures prosperity through formal principles of gross national happiness (GNH). What has this got to do with cycling? Well cyclists are generally happy when they get on a bike (provided it is not raining and there is a headwind blowing). Most children like to cycle and even many people who no longer cycle fondly remember the freedom and happiness of cycling as a child. So more people cycling make more people happier!

Maynooth Cycling Campaign is a non-party political cycling advocacy group. Further information on meetings and activities is available on our website. We are affiliated to Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network and through it to the European Cycling Federation.

Maynooth Cycling Campaign is a non-party political cycling advocacy group. Membership is FREE. If you want to support our work, just email your contact details to maynoothcycling@gmail.com.