

*“Be the inferior to no one,  
nor of any one be the superior.”* William Saroyan

OK, in case you're wondering how come you'd never heard of Bicycology before, we'll come clean. We made it up. Well, we made the word up - the ideas behind Bicycology have existed for a long long time. Sometimes, the reverse of this happens. Sometimes a word exists, and people make up their own meaning for it. Like George Bush has done with the word 'freedom'. The same has happened with the word anarchy – and the problem here is that so many people have misused the word that its original meaning has largely been forgotten. Ask most people in Britain today what they think of when they think of anarchy, and they'll probably picture either the Sex Pistols or a man dressed in black throwing bricks at the police. So what is anarchism, and what does it have to do with Bicycology?



*Anarchism is about getting rid of leaders, doing away with the idea that some people can tell others what to do. This doesn't mean (and this is where lots of the confusion comes from) that anarchists think they can do whatever they want. Just because anarchists don't blindly follow orders doesn't mean that anarchy is about disorder and chaos. Far from it. Anarchy means negotiating to find an order that is acceptable to all. It is about debate and consensus, not orders issued from above and carried out 'or else'...*

In fact, anarchists have strong ethical beliefs about care and respect, cooperation and freedom. But they believe that people are more likely to be caring, respectful, cooperative and free if they are able to make important decisions themselves. And it works in practice. Bicycology works along anarchist principles. There is no Bicycology Boss – all decisions are made collectively, and if someone is unhappy about something, the group discusses it until a satisfactory solution – satisfactory to everyone – is found. All our activities are organised along these principles. This piece of text was edited with these principles. And anarchists - and Bicycologists – believe the whole world could and should be run on these principles.

Sound naive? You might ask, “If anarchism existed, how would the trains run on time?” We tend to find problems we might face with proposed solutions, and to forget about the problems we already face today, with this system that is supposed to offer us so much. Our trains don't run on time now!

This isn't an isolated example. Our elderly aren't properly cared for. Our communities are sacrificed so friends of important people can build more supermarkets and roads. The world we live in is run by a tiny minority of people, and, of course, they run it the way they want it, so they profit off the backs of everyone else. They impose their will on the rest of us and we have no say in what happens to the world that we all inhabit: how is that so great? Anarchy offers everyone the chance to get involved in the decisions that affect them. It offers us the chance to build a free and equal society. In short, anarchy is democracy taken seriously: rule by the people. This is why it is sometimes called Direct Democracy.

“Wouldn't we all just kill each other, without rulers and the authority they impose?” is another question people often ask. Well, it's hard to imagine that there would be more death and destruction in an anarchist society than there is now. For a start, there couldn't be war in the way we have it today because there would be no armies, generals or politicians giving the orders to kill. In the trenches of World War I there were times when the fighting stopped and both sides decided to communicate (famously to play a game of football in no-man's land on Christmas day but this was far from a one-off). What kept the mass slaughter going were the orders from the generals, miles behind the battlelines, to keep killing (and behind them the orders of their political masters).

Our 'civilisation' has supported slavery and genocide, environmental destruction and extremes of inequality. Why are we so keen to defend it? We are told 'There Is No Alternative'. But there is, and across the world millions of people are not just thinking this... they're doing it. Anarchy isn't about waiting for some far-off revolution, but about taking action now to build a better world. Thousands of small communities, social centres, projects, groups and individuals live daily according to the principle that everyone has the right to be their own representative. Anarchy is not about everyone for themselves, it is about everyone together.

Of course, the fact that anarchism threatens those in power – those who give out orders backed up by violence – by taking away their power and daring to question their authority, perhaps goes some of the way to explaining why politicians and those in the media are so keen to dismiss the term without discussion.



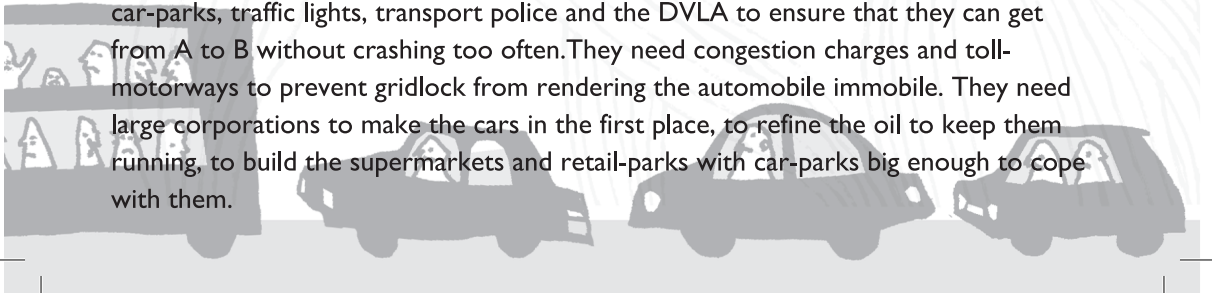


# Auto-mobility a manifesto for bicycology

Bicycology is a living alternative to automobility. Many people in the UK today assume that there is no alternative to the automobile. People assume that the car is the only way to get around, even for short trips to the shops or a friend's house. Cars – along with the roads, car-parks, driveways and garages they bring with them – dictate the structure of our cities and countryside. Car-culture shapes our physical environment by demanding ever more multiple lane motorways and bypasses, out-of-town supermarkets and retail-parks and in-town car-parks. These changes have also changed our psychological environment. From a place of community and play the street has become a place of danger and violence. Compare the small residential road of today with that of 30 years ago. Just one generation ago kids still played in the street. Today the roads are given over to cars and parents fear to let their children out of the back garden (if they are fortunate enough to have one).

What used to be a short walk to the local shops, where you might bump into a neighbour and catch up on local gossip, is often no longer possible. Many local shops have been forced to close because of competition from large supermarkets like Tesco. Most of these are hard, if not impossible, to reach without a car and they encourage you to buy more on each trip so that a car is necessary to take all of the BOGOF's ('buy-one-get-one-free's) home. With the loss of the local shop and the street, people are increasingly imprisoned in their houses and cars. Many people today live their lives in small, self-contained boxes as they move from home to work to Tesco to home, each journey made in a car that gives its passengers an illusion of separation from the outside world.

But the separation is an illusion. The automobile was supposed to make people more independent, more autonomous, more free. The reality is that cars make us ever more dependent on big-government and big-business. Cars need roads. They need car-parks, traffic lights, transport police and the DVLA to ensure that they can get from A to B without crashing too often. They need congestion charges and toll-motorways to prevent gridlock from rendering the automobile immobile. They need large corporations to make the cars in the first place, to refine the oil to keep them running, to build the supermarkets and retail-parks with car-parks big enough to cope with them.





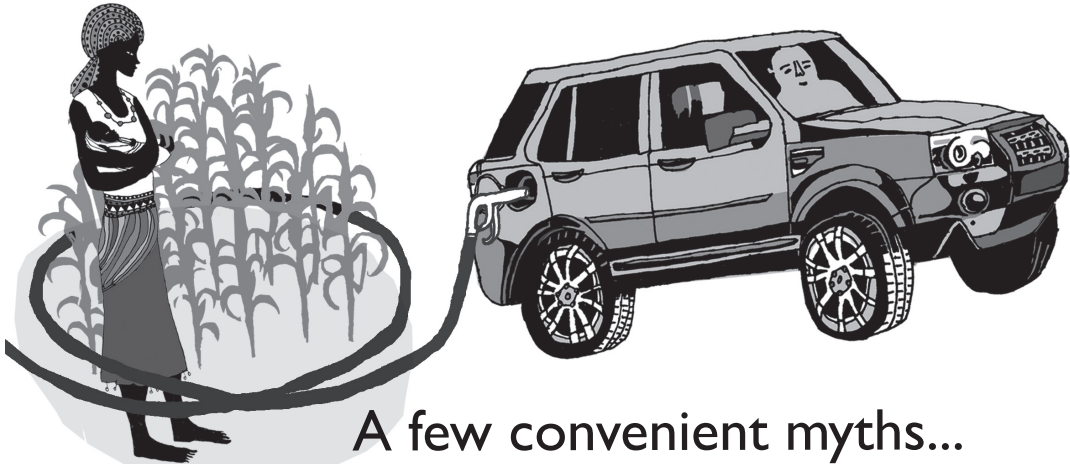
They need wars to secure access to diminishing oil-reserves and to politically 'stabilise' areas where the pipelines will pass through. Given free reign the automobile has taken less than 100 years to completely transform our lives and our environment, from the daily experience of feeding ourselves and getting to work to the global sphere of politics and economics, and the eco-system.

Compare this state of helpless dependency with the images you see in automobile adverts. TV screens show fast cars on beautiful empty mountain roads but as soon as we leave the showroom we find ourselves on a congested ring-road, closing the windows against the pollution and wondering how long it will take us to get home.

To a world ruled by 'automobility' we offer the alternative of 'bicycology'. Automobility offers the illusion of autonomy and independence but ties us closer to big business and central government which come to dominate our lives and take away our freedom and autonomy. Bicycology offers a different kind of freedom. The semi-amputated existence of the car dweller (a twitch of the foot; a light pressure applied to the power-assisted steering wheel; a flicker of the eyes to the mirror), separated from the world 'outside' by a glass and steel cage is replaced with a full-bodied experience: our physical strength, the sensation of speed, the smells of the wheat-fields as we ride past (or the stink of the BMW trapped in a traffic-jam as we pass by), the feeling of the sun, wind and rain on our faces.

Bicycology reconnects us to the environment we live in, and help to shape by our transport decisions. Automobility communicates with red brake lights and amber indicators whilst actual people remain hidden behind a screen. Bicycology communicates with a wave, an arm, a smile (or frown). Bicycology stops at the side of the road for a chat with a passing friend because it doesn't have to worry about slowing down 'the traffic'. With bicycology the illusion of autonomy can't be maintained: we have to recognise others on the road. If we have an accident we might be hurt as well. Whilst the driver of an SUV can speed through residential areas at 40mph and assume that kids will get out of their way ('or else...') the bicycologist stays below 20 mph with their ears and eyes open to the lives going on around them. Bicycology has no screen with which to insulate itself from the outside. Bicycology lives in, and takes responsibility for, the world it inhabits and moves through.





## A few convenient myths...

Climate change cannot be denied any more, and governments, politicians and business have been forced to acknowledge the problem and offer various 'solutions'. But their solutions follow the very same rationale that brought about climate change in the first place, and support the biggest myth of our times: that 'business as usual' can continue and that technological fixes and minor changes to the way we live and organise our society will be enough to solve the problem. This irresponsible way of dealing with the great threat of climate change has made many people believe a few very dangerous but convenient myths. Here are just a few we want to expose, but we urge you to think seriously next time some one proposes any quick fix solution. Remember, if it sounds too easy to be true... it's probably a convenient myth!

### 'Green' cars

Cars are problematic not only due to the energy they use but also because of the destructive consequences of a car-dependent culture. A so called 'efficient' car, like the Prius or a car that uses biofuels (see side two), like the Focus Flexi-fuel, might use less energy or a different kind of energy than the standard car, but: how much energy goes into producing these cars in the first place, and how much energy or emissions do they really save? Taking into account that in order to tackle climate change we need to reduce our emissions drastically, does the difference between using one kind of car and the other really make a difference? Moreover, would 'green' cars help to stop road building and congestion? The only viable solution to the destruction that our car-dependent culture has brought and is still bringing about is not to 'fix' the cars but to get rid of them: produce fewer and fewer cars and stop building roads. Why do we keep alive the myth of the 'green' car instead of embracing the pleasure of a world without cars, in which bicycles, pedestrians and public transport become the priority and in which congestion, pollution and road-building are drastically reduced?

## Biofuels

Biofuels are increasingly mentioned as a great new weapon in the fight against climate change. But do they live up to their promise? Actually, the truth is that biofuels aren't just not that great, they're really pretty terrible. Here's why: Biofuels are made from plants. These plants need to be grown, harvested, transported, turned into fuel, and finally delivered to a filling station. So intensive is this process that according to a recent BBC article it uses "30% more energy than the finished fuel produces". In other words, we're using fuel (and much of this is currently fossil fuel) to make... less fuel! And that's not all. The article continues: "The grain required to fill the petrol tank of a Range Rover with ethanol is sufficient to feed one person per year". Where, we may ask, is all this fuel going to come from? Well, Africa and South America, of course. And if you're thinking, surely that means more starving Africans, more rainforest destruction... then you're starting to agree with us that Biofuels get a big thumbs down (for more information see [www.biofuelwatch.org.uk](http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk)).

## Carbon off-setting

Carbon off-setting enables you to reduce your guilt... but does it really reduce your contribution to destroying the planet? Climate change is real, and the threat it poses to life on this planet is really unimaginable. So unimaginable in fact, that it seems we just can't take it seriously. Which is why we're playing around with it like it was a diet; save a few calories here, then treat yourself to a little biscuit. Change a light bulb or two: wonderful, now I can fly to Greece for the weekend! Sadly, it doesn't work like that. The atmosphere already has 36% too much CO<sub>2</sub>, so things like tree planting are needed to try and repair – over a long period of time – some of the damage that's already been done. Carbon off-setting can not be used to justify doing more damage.

We're sorry to appear to be the bearers of bad news... but the way we look at it, it isn't bad news at all. We now have the opportunity to rebuild our world in a way that treats individuals, species and the environment with care and respect. And that means a much more pleasant world generally. It's a bit like giving up smoking; at first it seems like you'll miss it for ever, then you realise you can walk without panting. Can you imagine how good a world without cars, pollution and destruction would be?



## Business as usual: Can we really buy our way to a greener future?

Unless you've had your head buried in sand for the last couple of years, you won't have escaped hearing countless politicians and business leaders talking about the threat of climate change, and what they plan to do about it. Perhaps most famously, Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, has helped spread the message around the globe.

But what other message has it helped spread? And what are politicians and business leaders really saying, when they express concern?

To answer that, let's think a moment about why climate change is happening. OK, most of us know it's a lot to do with CO<sub>2</sub>. But why is there so much of it around these days? Because we're burning so much fuel.

But *why*?!

At least part of the answer has to be because our economic system is based on growth. Basically, capitalism says we have to keep on consuming more and more...

People have known for a long time that this wasn't a good idea. A famous green economist, E.F. Schumacher, wrote a book more than 30 years ago, arguing that our economic model was leading us to environmental destruction. The book was called *Small is Beautiful*, and it represents just one of many alternative economic models that are not based on endlessly producing, buying and throwing away more and more stuff.

So why didn't we scrap capitalism, and listen to people like Schumacher? Well, that brings us back to politicians, and business leaders. They, it seems, were more than happy to carry on as normal. Take a look at their wage packets, and you don't need to have a degree in economics to work out why.

So, what should we think now that these people are finally starting to talk about climate change. Sadly, we think a little caution is needed. Because the message that's coming from people like Al Gore is not only that climate change is happening. It's also that the same economics, the same politics, and even the same corporations that caused climate change through their greed and disrespect are... *wait for it...* the ones who are going to save us from it!

We only need to look at what's being proposed by such people, to see where their priorities really lie. Instead of demanding a massive reduction in car use and a shift of economic models, we hear about pumping up our tyres, buying more 'green' products, giving politicians more power, and so on.

And at the same time, governments are continuing to promote more road building, more airport expansion, more supermarket developments...more, more more. Because that's what lies at the heart of our economic system, and politicians who support it are of course caught up promoting what's good for the economy.

But it's time we asked ourselves if our needs and those of the economy are compatible. There are some people who think they can be. Green capitalists argue that the market can be tamed, and made sustainable. But can we rely on ideologies and individuals that have up until now made such a mess of everything? Can we rely on an economy that promotes growth, and that demands that we cut costs whenever possible, to treat people and the planet as though they are more than commodities? We don't think so. And there are millions who agree. All over the world, people are thinking about – and in some cases putting into practice – alternative ways of organising work and exchange.

And if politicians aren't interested, maybe it's about time we started taking care of things ourselves. It's up to us; corruption, capitalism and climate change...or a genuinely new way of organising our lives, based on people, not profit.

**We don't trust the fox to fix the chicken fence...do you?**





**“Climate change is the *most severe* problem that we are facing today, more serious even than the threat of terrorism”**

Sir David King,

Government chief scientific adviser

Global warming is now rarely out of the news and scientists are in agreement about the basic facts: Climate change is happening and it is related to greenhouse gas emissions (particularly carbon dioxide). The 1990s was the warmest decade on record, and freak weather events like floods and hurricanes have been increasing. After years of denying its existence and importance, even world leaders and businessmen now acknowledge the threat of climate change as the biggest that the world and humanity face. They are doing little to fix the problem, however. In fact, they are making the problem worse.

Low taxes on aviation fuel, subsidised road-building programmes, cuts in funding to public transport and the lack of investment in walking and cycling infrastructure have made transport the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases: emissions have increased by over 13% between 1990 and 2002, despite emissions from public transport falling. Transport now accounts for over a quarter of all emissions in the UK (26%): cars, road-freight and air-travel are the main culprits.

People often assume that global warming won't be so bad because everyone likes warmer weather. The problem is that though the earth's atmosphere is warming on average globally, what we are really faced with is climate chaos – increased instability in the climate system meaning more extreme weather events (droughts, floods, heat-waves, storms, hurricanes and blizzards). Already, according to the World Health Organisation, 150,000 people are dying every year as a result of climate change. The effects fall hardest on those least able to prepare and respond to abrupt or dramatic changes in climate or natural disasters – the poorest people, and wildlife.

The cost of climate chaos is not only environmental and social however, it has financial implications too. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that direct financial losses could reach £213 billion a year by 2050. Money spent now will ultimately be money saved.

**What is being done?** Under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol most industrialised countries have pledged to an average cut in greenhouse gas emissions of 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2012. In reality, loopholes, and the refusal of America to take part, mean the cut will be only 2%. Meanwhile, the UN's group of scientific experts the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommend 60-90% cuts... So what can we do? Well, we cannot rely on governments and corporations to solve climate chaos out of goodwill, when their interests are in power and profit. We must take action ourselves to pressure governments and companies, and to change our own lifestyles.

On average, Britons travelled 5354 miles by car per year during 1999-2001, with around a quarter of all car trips being under 2 miles in length – an easy distance for walking or cycling – and traffic is increasing (Department for Transport/National Statistics 2005/ National Travel Survey 2001). The response of the government is to build more roads – despite its rhetoric on tackling climate change, and the fact that it has been repeatedly shown that more roads merely lead to more traffic. The road-building budget was nearly doubled to £1046 million in 2006-7. The simplest way to reduce traffic and road-building is to reduce your car use: walk, cycle, or take a train. You will not only help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but will arrive feeling more relaxed: you can enjoy looking at the world around you, and on a train you can read a book, write a letter to an old friend or have a nap! Better than a traffic jam, eh?

Greenhouse gas emissions from UK air travel doubled between 1990 and 2003 (Office of National Statistics 2005). Again, the government is making the problem worse, by promoting expansion of airports around the country. The plans threaten to damage or destroy 44 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 7 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 8 registered parks and gardens (Campaign to Protect Rural England). Furthermore, the Government offers tax-breaks equating to over £9 billion of subsidy, while bus services in the UK receive fewer subsidies than in any other EU country. A simple solution is to try to travel less often and less far. Why not holiday in the UK? Much of it is beautiful and not covered in concrete (yet!). If you really need to travel long distance, consider trains and boats.

Changing transportation and opposing locally damaging developments are crucial, but there are lots of actions we can take. Taking action can be fun rather than a chore, and though individually we might not be able to change much, acting together can make messages hard to ignore. Talking about the problem and possible solutions can help build a movement that really can make a difference.