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You are here: [Home](#) | [News](#) | The bare-faced cheek

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Around 90 riders stripped off to ride through the city centre to protest against climate change  
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#### The bare-faced cheek

Laura Thistlethwaite  
19/ 6/2008

CYCLISTS showed some bare-faced cheek as they rode through the city centre starkers.

Protesters from south Manchester were among around 90 bold riders who hopped on their bikes for a nude jaunt to demonstrate against climate change and highlight dangers posed to cyclists.

Sporting just hats, shoes and body-paint slogans such as 'Notice Me When I'm Not Naked', 'Fuel Cost = Zero' and 'Freedom', the riders stunned onlookers as made their chilly journey around the city centre.

The Manchester protest was one of 50 held internationally for World Naked Bike Ride to command respect on the roads and raise awareness of dependency on oil.

Organiser Meg Fenwick, 31, said: "It went really well, everyone was really happy! Although it was slightly cold so we had to pedal fast to keep warm.

"Being naked is a metaphor for the vulnerability of cyclists in Manchester; the roads are so dangerous so this is the only way we can raise awareness, campaign for more cycle lanes and make people notice us.

"It links in with so many things happening at the minute, like the fuel crises and congestion charging, in an age when we are being taxed more and more the Naked Bike Ride is designed to promote cycling as a green and free mode of transport."

The campaign - now in its third year - attracted cyclists from across the city to create a body positive message.

The group were assembled through website advertising the event and members met on Lever Street, near Piccadilly Gardens.

The demonstrators were greeted with applause as they rode along Canal Street, through Albert Square and down Oxford Road, grabbing the attention of surprised passers-by heading for a night out on Friday, June 13.

Stuart James, of Longford Road, Chorlton, took part in the ride. He said: "It was really empowering to see all these people taking to road in such a way. Although I have to say it did get a bit chilly!"

Stuart, 37, who works in IT added: "I heard about the event on the internet but it took me a while to pluck up the courage to join in."

Artist Meg, from Hulme, also joined the riders. She said: "Lots of people are quite nervous at first but as soon as they see one person whip their clothes off they always want to join in! It's a bit like a nudist beach - you feel left out if you're the only one fully clothed.

"It's amazing how quickly you get used to it and how much fun it is!

"I don't think we offended anyone, most people were amused - if a bit surprised - to see nearly a hundred naked men and women cycling past on a Friday night!"

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