

A red and black Shimano bicycle with a rear rack, fenders, and a front basket. The frame is red with 'SHIMANO' written on the down tube. It has black handlebars, a black saddle, and black tires. The bike is shown from a side profile against a white background with faint blue gear icons.

A Bike for Life

How our choices can transform life

Dave Warnock

This book is for sale at <http://leanpub.com/abikeforlife>

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*To Steve Shand and Russ Stout, the creators of my Bike for Life,
with thanks!*

***All the income from this book is going to the Youth Cafe
project at Syston Methodist Church. Aiming to provide a
safe, welcoming place for all young people in Syston.***

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Preface

I am passionate about transformation, about the possibilities of change for good for individuals and communities. It gets me excited and fills me with life and hope, it is what gets me up in the morning. Transformation for good is why I am a Methodist Minister, celebrating the power of the Gospel to transform lives including my own.

This book is about my passionate belief that bikes also have an amazing capacity for transforming lives. I want to share the story of my Bike for Life. It is about how the choices we make can bring life, it is a celebration of our ability to support change for good.

It is almost a political manifesto, a celebration of doing things a different way, one that is not focused on lowest cost nor on exotic flights of fantasy but on pragmatic, down to earth, reliable change. As choices made during a time of recession it stands as an alternative to austerity, a set of choices that lift us as communities rather than drag us down.

When our economy is wrecked by reckless bankers and corrupt politicians with everyone else paying the price in cuts to services, security and wages creating A Bike for Life can not only point to a different way but be part of the solution.

Remember H.G. Wells: "Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race." and add to it that "Every time I ride my Bike for Life, my day gets better" D. Warnock :-)

1. What is a Bike for Life?

There are few more powerful instruments for change in our society than the “humble” bicycle. Bikes have the potential to transform the well being of our individual lives but even more than that to transform our societies. We are starting to see this recognised in some cities around the world (leading examples include many in the Netherlands as well as Copenhagen, Bogota, Seville and Portland).

Bikes (if supported by quality infrastructure) have proven potential for positive impacts on many of the biggest challenges we face in the UK including climate change, peak oil, air pollution, obesity, spiralling health costs, congestion, child death rates, lack of social cohesion, education, employment and the economy.

Sadly “cyclists” (those who are already enthusiastic about riding bikes) frequently fail the rest of society. We have allowed, even encouraged, our cycling organisations to focus on the right of their members to use the road, on sport or on leisure routes that are no use for transport. As the last 40 years have shown these do not bring about the transformation we need. Instead as we see all over the world transformation comes from safe, convenient and pervasive infrastructure for all people aged 8 to 88.

By our choices we support an industry focused on sport and leisure bikes rather than practical transport. We see this in the magazines which are full of new exotic bikes in different categories all being suggested as our next additional bike. That is powerfully demonstrated by reviews of totally impractical

bikes suggested for commuting (racing tyres, no lighting, no mudguards, not suitable for ordinary clothes, no means to carry stuff, high maintenance etc). Generally the focus is on bikes that are super fast or super light. Rarely do we even see reviews of *practical* bikes and when we do they are criticised for being slower than racing bikes with handling that is less exciting.

My search for “A Bike for Life” ended up as a challenge to so much of this, even if that wasn’t always the intention or central focus. In fact it is only with hindsight that I have come to realise how significantly this Bike upsets the applecart.

My search for an incredibly practical bike came from my experiences of riding Lands End to John o’Groats in 2012, it was given inspiration by Rob Penn’s book and TV series “[It’s All About the Bike: The Pursuit of Happiness on Two Wheels](http://www.robpenn.net/?page_id=16)¹”. It then gained momentum as I discovered how the creation of this Bike could enhance life not just for me but far beyond.

As will be obvious, I have very specific views about life and what enhances it. As your views will almost certainly differ the choices I made in creating my Bike for Life won’t be perfect for you. Yet I hope you will find exploring my thinking and process will help you realise the potential of a Bike for Life for yourself.

¹http://www.robpenn.net/?page_id=16