Cycle theft in Great Britain

Prepared for Driver Information and Traffic Management Division, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

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Executive Summary

Introduction
In 1996, the National Cycling Strategy was launched in the UK. The objective of this Strategy is to encourage the wider use of the bicycle by making cycling easier, safer and more convenient. One of the main aims of the Strategy is to reduce the incidence of pedal cycle theft, both by establishing a standard for cycling security devices, and by improving means of recovery of stolen bicycles.

This report is in three parts: the first part reviews the published international literature on cycle theft, the second examines the cycle theft statistics for Great Britain and the last part reports a large scale survey of cycle theft victims conducted during winter 1996/7.

Literature Review
Evidence has been found in several countries that theft and the threat of theft of a bicycle deter people from cycling. The Netherlands, like Britain, has implemented a plan to tackle cycle theft. Both schemes aim to investigate specifications for cycle security devices and to introduce, and effectively promote, a cycle registration scheme.

It was found in the Netherlands that many people who have had their own bicycle stolen may be tempted to steal a bicycle or buy one which they suspect to be stolen in order to replace their stolen bike. If this is the case, then increasing the recovery of stolen bicycles should automatically reduce the theft rate (or at least reduce the demand for stolen bicycles). Several authors have reported the introduction of cycle registration schemes, the main points being:
- every bicycle should have a unique identity marking. Schemes using postcode marking, whilst being easy to establish, become worthless if the owner moves house or sells the bike
- identity-marking of a bicycle should be compulsory and automatic, e.g. marking all new bicycles before sale
- the introduction of a computerised, Police-accessed system allows ‘spot-checking’ of cyclists and collation of statistics on when and where thefts are occurring which, in turn, aids Police in targeting prevention campaigns
- the question remains open as to whether all bicycles, or only those reported stolen, should be recorded on the register, although it would seem to be potentially less time intensive and prone to error if only stolen cycles were recorded.

Statistics review
The number of recorded incidences of bike theft in England and Wales has increased by 50% since 1986, a disproportionately large increase compared to theft generally. However, the number of people cautioned or found guilty of cycle theft has not increased to such an extent. Over the same period, cycling to work has decreased. The proportion of stolen bicycles recovered is very small. Overall, including bikes stolen in burglaries, it is estimated that 717,000 bicycles are stolen in Great Britain each year. This equates to a bicycle being stolen roughly every 45 seconds.

The survey
The survey found that 17.3% of bicycle owners had experienced bike theft in the previous three years. Twenty per cent of theft victims no longer own a bicycle. Overall, the bicycle ownership level amongst those contacted was found to be 32%.

The responses given in the postal questionnaires indicated that new mountain bikes of high value were particularly at risk of theft. Over half of all the thefts occurred on the owner’s property and almost three quarters occurred during the day. Three in ten bicycles stolen were outside and unlocked at the time of the theft. Almost one in five bikes had been left unattended for less than five minutes. Of the bikes which were locked at the time of the theft, over a third were secured with a ‘D/U’ lock. The most common reason for victims not locking a bike (unless it was in a locked building) was that it was only left for a few minutes.

Over three quarters of thefts were reported to the Police. Thieves of more valuable bikes were more likely to be reported than those involving less valuable ones. Only one in every 17 bikes was subsequently recovered and only one in every 30 theft victims knew for certain that the thief had been caught.

Almost 40% of theft victims reported that they had been aware of registration schemes before the theft of their bike, but only 8% of bikes stolen were registered. Six out of every 10 bikes stolen were insured.

Bearing in mind that over 20% of theft victims no longer cycle at all, those who do still own and use a bike seem to have changed their cycling habits little. It appears that, although the theft sample takes more precautions against theft (such as insurance, locking and safe parking) than the control sample, they don’t realise (or admit) that they do this because they are worried about cycle theft.

The survey found that 21% of bicycle theft victims had not replaced their stolen bike, did not intend to do so and did not have access to anyone else’s bike. In addition to this, 3% of victims own or have access to a bike but do not ride it since the theft. In effect, this 24% have given up cycling as a result of the theft of their bike. Using British and Scottish Crime Survey estimates, it is found that about 172,000 cyclists are ‘lost’ each year because of bicycle theft.

It is estimated that over £100 million is spent each year in replacing stolen bicycles. Home Office figures suggest that the cost to the nation (including loss of property and other financial and non-financial losses) is in the region of £250 million per year. The additional, but unquantifiable, effects of the threat of theft on cycling activities still further emphasise this blight on cyclists’ lives today.
1 Introduction

Cycling is a mode of transport which is environmentally friendly, healthy and economical, yet only a small proportion of people cycle. Between 1975/6 and 1993/5, the number of households in Great Britain with at least one cycle increased from 24% to 38%, yet the average number of miles cycled per year per head of population on the public highway has fallen from 51 to 37 over the same period (Department of Transport, 1996a).

The fear of cycle theft is known to discourage some people from cycling (Davies et al, 1997). Cycles are relatively easy to steal, being lightweight and portable. Their value makes them worth stealing, but often not worth spending large sums of money on security systems or insurance.

In July 1996, the National Cycling Strategy was launched in the UK. The objective of this Strategy is to encourage the wider use of the bicycle by making cycling easier, safer and more convenient. One of the main aims of the Strategy is to reduce the incidence of pedal cycle theft, both by establishing a standard for cycling security devices, and by improving means of recovery of stolen bicycles.

The research described in this report was commissioned by the Driver Information and Traffic Management Division of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), in order to inform the development and implementation of effective strategies to tackle cycle theft. It was a two-part study: the first part consisted of a literature and statistics review, updating and building on the information gathered in 1986 for a previous TRL study, the results of which were not published. The second part was a large-scale survey of cyclists which aimed to find out about experience of cycle theft and how it has affected (or would affect) cycling habits. Cycle parking was outside the scope of this study, as this was to be covered under a separate research project, also commissioned by the DETR.

This report is divided into three main sections:

- Section 2 - Literature review. The reported international research into cycle theft is summarised, compared and discussed.
- Section 3 - Statistics review. Cycle theft statistics are presented, concentrating on Great Britain, including Criminal Statistics (Police figures), British and Scottish Crime Surveys and clear up rates.
- Section 4 - Survey of cyclists. This section contains the results of the survey of cyclists. Details on insurance, registration schemes and how theft and the threat of theft affect cycling habits are discussed. Results are compared with the British Crime Survey findings.

A summary of the main findings can be found at the end of each section. They are all drawn together and discussed in section 5.

2 Literature review

The TRL library database was used as the key source for identifying relevant literature. The library offers a database search facility using the International Road Research Documentation (IRRD) database. This is a worldwide database containing information, including conference papers, journal articles and published reports, from all the leading road research centres.

2.1 Theft as a deterrent to cycling

There is evidence to suggest that pedal cycle theft is likely to prevent the greater use of the bicycle as a mode of transport to both existing cyclists and those who are considering cycling. Both the fear of theft, as well as any actual theft, may have a negative influence on cycling.

This has led the UK to highlight bicycle theft in its National Cycling Strategy, and the Netherlands to address bicycle theft prevention in its Bicycle Masterplan.

Beck and Immer (1994) carried out a telephone survey in and around Amsterdam to find out what deters people from cycling, and to determine what measures may promote the wider use of the bicycle. Respondents were given nine reasons for not owning a bicycle, and asked to indicate which were their two main reasons. The reason most frequently given was not needing a bicycle. However, a large number of respondents said they were deterred by the threat of theft, either in the area where they lived (40% of respondents) or in general (30%). People were also asked why they did not ride the bicycle they owned. One of the main reasons given was that they felt there was a risk that the bicycle may be stolen from the destination.

Replogle (1984) commented that ‘significant use of bicycles for transit access is found only where bicycle theft rates are relatively low or where secure bicycle parking has been provided’. He gave statistics to support this statement, noting the high numbers of bicycles left at railway stations in Japan, and an extremely low crime rate.

He went on to state that ‘the availability of secure bicycle parking conditions does not guarantee any particular level of bike-and-ride demand. However, secure parking conditions are necessary if latent bike-and-ride demand is to be realised’. He quoted a survey in Maryland, USA in which 20% of cyclists stated that they had given up...
cycling because they had been victims of bicycle theft. In a survey in Melbourne, 29% of victims said that they would give up, or had given up, cycling following the theft of their bicycle (Challinger and Parker, 1986).

In a recent qualitative study in the UK, several discussion group members cited pedal cycle theft as a reason for not cycling and some felt it was not safe to leave bicycles for long periods of time. A few people said they had resorted to carrying bicycle parts around with them (Davies et al, 1997).

2.2 Prevention of theft

Several authors have identified measures for preventing cycle theft. Cycling Today (1996), for example, provides advice on reducing cycle theft which includes careful selection of a parking site, and the use of proper locks secured to an immovable object.

Challinger and Parker (1986) also placed part of the responsibility onto the cyclist when recommending that cycle retailers should give information to purchasers on bicycle security and safety. A study of cyclists in St Albans, Hertfordshire (undated) stated that cyclists should use adequate locks and secure their bicycle to immovable objects. Adam (1992) reported on a Police education programme in schools and youth groups, warning of the dangers of leaving bicycles at the front of homes and unsecured in playgrounds and shopping centres. Adults are also made aware of the threat of cycle theft through Neighbourhood Watch programmes.

The 1994 British Crime Survey (Mayhew and Unadkat, 1995) found that most bicycle owners possess locks, the highest figure being for mountain bikes and adult BMXs (74%). Seventy-three per cent of children’s bikes were found not to have any kind of lock. Of those theft victims who owned a lock, 58% reported that the lock was in use when the theft occurred: a further 5% reported that the cycle was inside locked premises. Even ‘D/U’ locks did not appear to be a big deterrent: 8% of incidents happened when such a lock was in place. A third of bikes stolen were postcoded at the time, indicating that the thief did not inspect for a postcode or was not deterred by one. The 1994 British Crime Survey (BCS) found that there were 8.7 incidents of bike theft per 100 postcoded bicycles, as against 5.2 per 100 non-postcoded bikes in 1993. This probably indicates that owners of more expensive bikes go to more trouble in having them marked (1996 BCS figures are not available). Further findings from the BCS are discussed in sections 3.1, 3.4.1 and 4.2.6.

Weijers (1995) claimed that some owners do not use bicycle locks correctly, or do not have personal details stamped into the bicycle’s frame. He reports on a national campaign in the Netherlands aimed at warning people about the offence of buying a stolen bicycle. This work formed part of the Bicycle Master Plan which was initiated in 1990, and has a theft reduction target of around 20% by the year 2000. Weijers commented that increasing the use of the bicycle will increase cycle thefts, and so preventive efforts must be increased accordingly.

The Bicycle Master Plan aims to reduce cycle thefts by:
- Increasing and improving parking facilities
- Encouraging the use of approved bicycle locks and determining whether the current specification is adequate
- Increasing cyclists’ willingness to take preventive measures
- Optimising a system of bicycle identification.

Rijnsburger and Daggers (1995), also based in the Netherlands, identified four strategies for preventing bicycle theft. These included:
- **Technological prevention by the cyclist.** ie. buying a suitable lock and using it properly
- **Technological prevention by public authorities.** ie. providing parking facilities which allow the cycle to be secured to, or in, the locker or rack
- **The provision of guarded bicycle parking facilities;** and
- **Bicycle registration** which, the authors state, should include an overt display of the ownership on the bicycle.

They also recommended that more bicycle thieves should be prosecuted and that owners should insure their bicycles against theft.

The National Cycling Strategy, launched in the UK in July 1996 (Department of Transport, 1996b), has a target of doubling the number of trips made by bicycle by the end of the year 2002 (on 1996 figures) and quadrupling them by the end of 2012. One of the Strategy’s primary objectives is to tackle cycle theft, in the following ways:
- Improve cycle security by developing graded standards for cycle security devices;
- Improve recovery of stolen bicycles by introducing an effective cycle registration scheme linked to the Police National Computer and by promoting cycle registration schemes at the point of sale.

Challinger and Parker (1986) attempted to draw conclusions as to whether the visible marking of bicycles with registration details affected their theft in Melbourne. Ten Police districts with the highest theft rates and ten with the lowest were surveyed to find out the levels of marking. The areas with the highest levels of theft corresponded with the highest incidence of marking. They suggested that this may mean that where the incidence of theft (and hence the fear of theft) is high, more people are likely to mark their bicycle.

The role of public education was stressed by the authors. This included items such as bicycles being produced with built-in locks and the stamping of a serial number on new bicycles.

Van Kesteren and Homburg (1995) recommended the use of bicycle sheds/lockers (see section 2.3), and stated that bicycles should be secured to fixed objects leaving no room for a crowbar or other tools to be used to break the lock. They recommend that more than one lock be used where possible and that the lock testing procedures be made more stringent. It was claimed that thieves in the
Netherlands spend considerable amounts of time practising techniques for breaking locks, copying each other and taking the bicycle home to use more heavy duty lock-breaking equipment.

2.3 Motives for theft

Weijers (1995) claimed that, in the Netherlands, many victims of pedal cycle theft become cycle thieves themselves, or buy a bicycle which they know to be stolen. In the Netherlands, he claims there are three known motives for theft:

- Financial gain - professional thieves or those who need the money to fund drug addiction
- Personal use - those who need a bicycle because they are in a hurry or who have been a victim of cycle theft themselves
- Joyriding - those who steal a bicycle and ride it for fun.

In another Dutch study (Van Kesteren and Homburg, 1995), interviews were conducted with 44 bike thieves. The author suggested there are four types of thieves:

- Incidental thieves
- Occasional thieves
- Professional thieves
- Drug addicts.

Incidental and occasional thieves were found to steal mainly for their own use. Incidental thieves were found to steal one or two bicycles, whereas occasional thieves steal up to several hundred bicycles.

Drug addicts and professional thieves were found to steal in order to resell the bicycles. Van Kesteren and Homburg claimed that ‘bicycle theft is frequently the main source of income for drug addicted bike thieves’ whereas, whilst the professional thief may steal hundreds of bikes in a lifetime, he or she will also steal other items as well. It is therefore claimed that drug addicts steal the most bicycles in the Netherlands.

It was also claimed that the effectiveness of the lock will depend on the type of thief. Van Kesteren and Homburg suggested that the occasional thief will steal again when the bicycle has developed defects or is itself stolen again. This type of thief is claimed to only steal bicycles with locks that can be broken open without too much effort. It was suggested that ‘quality locks frequently keep them from stealing a bicycle’. Professional thieves were claimed to mostly steal ‘good looking, expensive and trendy bicycles’, using heavy duty wire cutters and other effective means of breaking security devices. The bicycle may be taken home to use other equipment to break the lock. The type of lock, it was suggested, will not affect their decision to steal the bicycle as much as the value of the bike. Drug addicts used simpler tools but could be quicker at operating the lock than the owner with a key. They were found to be skilled at operating certain types of lock, so would attempt to steal bicycles secured with these locks in preference to those they were less skilled at operating. It was stated that drug addicts make less money than professional thieves because they steal cheaper bicycles and are in dire need of the money.

Only incidental thieves, and some occasional ones, will be deterred by social means of control such as the presence of onlookers. It was claimed that the use of cycle lockers or guarded sheds is the most effective form of theft prevention.

Challinger and Parker (1986) attempted to interview adult thieves in the Victoria Police district, Australia, but this proved unsuccessful, partly because the Police were not willing to release personal details. They were given permission, however, to interview juveniles who had been charged with bicycle theft. Six interviews were completed, all with boys. One of these was classified as an organised thief who sold the bicycles whole or as parts. Several (exact figure not given) said they stole the bicycle to ride it themselves, and one wanted the bicycle parts for his own bicycle. The report includes a study by Challinger who analysed 475 contacts between juveniles and the Victoria Police involving thefts of bicycles or parts in 1982. When compared with vehicle and property theft, the analysis showed similarities in terms of age and sex of offender and previous contacts with the Police, but there were marked differences in these respects when compared with shop theft. The average age of the bicycle thieves was 14 years of age, 96% were boys and 67% had had a previous contact with the Police. Just under half of the bicycles were stripped and almost a third were stolen for personal use. Ten per cent of the bicycles were repainted to make their identification difficult. Surprisingly, 8% of the bicycles (out of 356) were simply ‘dumped’ and 4% ‘given away’. Only 3% of the bicycles stolen by the juveniles were sold.

Challinger attempted to derive motives for the crimes from Police comments in the reports. This was possible in 39 cases. In 14 of these, the thief was tired of walking and wanted quicker transport. Another 14 wanted (or needed) a bicycle but could not afford to get one. Three stole ‘for fun’ and eight stole a bicycle to replace a bicycle which had been stolen from them.

Although these studies provide an insight into the motives for cycle theft in the Netherlands and Australia, the motives for stealing a bicycle may well be cultural. It is therefore not possible to determine whether motives identified from the above literature can be transferred to the situation in Great Britain.

2.4 Recovery of stolen bicycles

Attempts to improve the recovery rate of bicycles include the instigation of bicycle registration schemes, some of which are voluntary and some mandatory. Improving identification and registration of stolen bicycles means, reported Weijers (1995), that victims stand a better chance of having their bicycles returned to them, and thus they will be less likely to steal a bicycle themselves or buy a bicycle that they suspect may be stolen.

Balslev (1992) reported the Danish experience of a computerised register of stolen bicycles which came on line in 1990. In Denmark, the frame of each bicycle must by law be marked with a unique number. The Police use this number to run a central register of stolen bicycles.
Bicycles that are not stolen are not on the register. The Danish register was originally a card system, but this proved time consuming to use. The computerised version, financed by the Danish Insurance Association, allows Police to conduct “spot-checks” on cyclists. It also allows for the collation of statistics on where bicycles are stolen from, and when, which in turn can aid the Police in theft prevention campaigns and targeted investigations.

A nationwide computer file of stolen bicycles has also been introduced in the Netherlands to enable stolen bicycles to be returned more effectively (Weijers, 1995). This scheme, unlike that in Denmark, is voluntary. The system’s weak points are recognised, remarks the author: the onus is on the owner to have the bicycle engraved with his or her postcode and house number and becomes worthless if the owner moves house or sells the bike. In 1992, only half of all bicycles were postcode marked.

In Australia, Challinger and Parker (1986) recommended a registration scheme which would require all retailers to number the bicycle before it was sold and to give the purchaser the bicycle details on a record card. The cards would then be routinely sent to a national centre. Adam (1992) reported on the existence of such a scheme. Challinger and Parker (1986) also recommended that it should be illegal to own a bicycle which did not have a legible number. Simcock (1987) reported on a Bicycle Identification Programme put in place in New South Wales, Australia. This included the marking of bicycles with a sticker, together with a card file of the bicycle and ownership details. This resulted in an increase from four to 41 stolen bicycles being recovered between 1985 and 1986.

2.5 Summary
Evidence has been found in several countries that theft and the threat of theft of a bicycle deter people from cycling. The Netherlands, like Britain, has implemented a plan to tackle cycle theft. Both schemes aim to investigate specifications for cycle security devices and to introduce and effectively promote a cycle registration scheme. In addition, the Netherlands’ plan aims to increase cyclists’ willingness to take preventive measures against theft and to improve parking facilities.

In Australia and the Netherlands, research has attempted to identify the motives for stealing a bicycle. It was concluded that those thieves who steal for financial gain (often professional thieves or drug addicts who sell the bike to feed their addiction) are responsible for the most bicycle thefts and are often undeterred by quality locks or the presence of onlookers. Those who steal for their own use or for fun (‘joyriders’) were found to be far less frequent thieves, less adept at breaking locks and more deterred by onlookers. Without further research, it is impossible to say whether bicycle thieves in Great Britain are motivated to steal in the same ways.

It was found in the Netherlands that many people who have had their own bicycle stolen may be tempted to steal a bicycle or buy one which they suspect to be stolen in order to replace their stolen bike. If this is also the case in Britain, then increasing the recovery of stolen bicycles should automatically reduce the theft rate (or at least reduce the demand for stolen bicycles).

Several authors have reported the introduction of cycle registration schemes, the main points of which are summarised below:

- Every bicycle should have a unique identity marking. Schemes using postcode marking, whilst being easy to establish, become worthless if the owner moves house or sells the bike.
- Identity-marking of a bicycle should be compulsory and automatic eg. marking all new bicycles before sale.
- The introduction of a computerised, Police-accessed system allows ‘spot-checking’ of cyclists and collation of statistics on when and where thefts are occurring which, in turn, aids Police in targeting prevention campaigns.
- The question remains open as to whether all bicycles, or only those reported stolen, should be recorded on the register, although it would seem to be potentially less time intensive and prone to error if only stolen cycles were recorded.

3 Statistics review

3.1 Overview
Weijers (1995) claimed that 93 bicycles are stolen every hour in the Netherlands. The places most risky include railway stations, bus stops, schools, shopping centres, sports centres, bars and cinemas. People aged between 15 and 25 years and those living in city centres appeared to be particularly prone to cycle theft.

A general survey of 368 cyclists in St Albans, Great Britain, was carried out in 1980. Thirteen per cent of the sample reported having at some time had a bicycle stolen in St Albans, and 50% of these said that the bicycle had been secured when it was stolen. The respondents were asked to state where the bicycle had been taken from. Between 20 and 23% were stolen each from the street, home and cycle parks. Eighty-eight per cent of the victims had reported the theft to the Police, and ten of the 48 bicycles were recovered. The report comments on the lack (at the time of the study) of adequate and well positioned cycle parking facilities. In addition to the reported incidence of cycle theft, 28% of the total sample reported having had a part of their bicycle stolen, and 14% had had something stolen which they were carrying on their bicycle.

Challinger and Parker (1986) carried out a small scale survey in Melbourne, Australia of 125 victims who had reported the theft of their cycle. Most of the bicycles were stolen from outside a shop (24%), the front porch (20%) or the backyard (14%). Most of the bicycles (78%) were not locked. In 14% of cases, the victim estimated the cycle had been left for less than five minutes before being stolen.

Weijers (1995) reported that, in the Netherlands only 3% of stolen bicycles are returned to their owner, which, he claimed, partly explains why only 57% of victims report the theft to the Police. In a survey by Challinger and Parker (1986), a fifth of all victims interviewed stated that
the Police did not appear interested or responsive to the theft of their bicycle. It has also been claimed that crimes in general may go unreported because the victim feels the Police will not be able to take effective action, or that they may not treat it seriously (Mayhew et al, 1994).

The 1994 British Crime Survey found that most bicycles are stolen from inside or near the home: 45% of daytime thefts, 78% of night-time thefts. Thefts on the street accounted for 25% of all bicycles stolen. It was estimated that in 1993 there were more than six bicycle thefts per 100 bicycle owners. About a quarter of bicycles were generally left unlocked and about half of all bicycle owners admitted leaving bicycles unlocked for short periods (Mayhew and Unadkat, 1995). However, 37% of bicycles stolen in 1993 were locked and a further 5% were in locked premises. About a third of bicycles stolen had been postcoded. Seventeen per cent of owners who had their bicycle postcoded had it returned to them, compared with 13% of owners who did not have the bicycle postcoded. (1996 BCS figures are not available. See section 4.2.6 for further discussion of BCS findings.)

3.2 Police figures for Great Britain
The simplified definition of theft in Great Britain is “the dishonest appropriation of another’s property with the intention of permanently depriving the owner of it”. If there is no intention to permanently deprive the owner then the appropriation is not a ‘theft’ but an unauthorised taking. In Great Britain, the unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle is considered to be a minor offence for which there is no power of arrest. Because it is not a serious offence, it is not reported to the Home Office and does not appear in the criminal statistics. The recorded criminal statistics and clear-up rates quoted in this section were provided by the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate (Home Office, 1987a, b, c, 1995) and the Scottish Office Home Department, through personal communication with TRL.

Table 1 shows, for cycle theft in Great Britain, the recorded criminal statistics (1986, 1995) and clear up rates (1995), together with the percentage of work trips by cycle (1986, 1995). It can be deduced that, during 1995 in England and Wales, 169,476 bicycles were reported stolen to the Police and subsequently recorded as such. This represents a rise of 50% since 1986. The recorded incidence of this crime rose in all constabularies in England and Wales over this period. Over the same timescale, the total incidence of ‘theft or handling of stolen goods’ rose from 2,003,873 to 2,452,109, representing a rise of only 22.4%. Thus, pedal cycle theft has increased disproportionately compared with theft generally. In 1995, 3.3% of work journeys were made by bicycle, compared with 3.9% in 1986 (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1994). This suggests that the increased incidence of cycle theft may not be attributable to an increase in cycling.

In Scotland, 11,341 bicycles were recorded as stolen during 1995. This represents an increase of 35.9% since 1986. The percentage of journeys to work made by bicycle has decreased very slightly from 1.5% to 1.4% over the same period. The recovery rates for Scotland are not available. (‘Theft and handling of stolen goods’ is classified differently in Scotland from in England and Wales and so is not available as a comparison.)

Figure 1 shows, for 1995, cycle thefts per 100,000 population against the percentage of journeys to work by bicycle. ‘Journeys to work’ is used as an indicator of the level of cycling within each area. A least squares regression line fitted to the data is superimposed. If the percentage differences between the observed and expected values are calculated, it is found that Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Greater Manchester and Cleveland have the highest levels of cycle theft in relation to bicycle use and Dyfed-Powys, Fife, Surrey and Suffolk have the lowest. It is worth noting that the intercept of the regression line with the y-axis is at about 100, reflecting the fact that zero journeys to work would not imply that there would be no bicycles stolen. For comparison purposes, the 1986 data are shown in Figure 2.

3.3 No-criming
As explained at the beginning of section 3.2, the ‘unauthorised taking’ of a pedal cycle is considered to be a ‘minor’ offence and so does not appear in the criminal statistics collected by the Home Office or the Scottish Office. Until either the bicycle has been recovered or a suspect caught, it is not possible to know whether a crime has been committed. The Police record the incident as ‘theft’ and alter the record later if appropriate. This alteration is called no-criming.

To the owner of the bicycle, however, the perception may well be that their bicycle was stolen, especially if the person who took the bicycle was unknown to them (ie. it wasn’t simply borrowed by a relative or friend). This ‘no-criming’ means that official Police statistics present an underestimate of the actual number of bicycles ‘stolen’. Estimates of this amount of no-criming have been made in the past by surveying a sample of forces. Previous, unpublished TRL research estimated that the official Police records should be increased by 15% to include instances when the bicycle was recovered, whereas Mayhew et al (1994) estimated the increase to be about 6%.

3.4 Under-reporting
Although Table 1 shows that the numbers of pedal cycle thefts reported has risen sharply over nine years, it cannot be established from the Police data examined whether this is because more people are now reporting the theft of their bicycle or because more thefts are actually occurring.

3.4.1 The British Crime Survey (BCS)
The British Crime Survey (BCS) is a large household survey which aims to assess the extent of unreported crime, by asking people directly about their experiences. The discrepancy between this source and Police data (section 3.2) has been referred to as the ‘dark figure’ of crime.

The BCS does not claim to chart the ‘true’ level of crime, but it provides a more complete picture of the extent of crime for the offences it covers than shown in the Police
Table 1 Cycle theft in Great Britain tabulated by Police force area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police force area</th>
<th>Population ('000s)</th>
<th>Cycles recorded stolen per 100,000 population</th>
<th>Change 1986/95 (%)</th>
<th>1995 Bicycle thefts cleared up (%)</th>
<th>Work trips by cycle (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon and Somerset</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>257.8</td>
<td>333.9</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>235.1</td>
<td>358.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>552.4</td>
<td>1135.9</td>
<td>108.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>204.1</td>
<td>331.2</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>365.3</td>
<td>392.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
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<td>315.2</td>
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<td>278.4</td>
<td>141.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devon and Cornwall</td>
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<td>187.6</td>
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<td>Essex</td>
<td>1529</td>
<td>195.6</td>
<td>251.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gloucestershire</td>
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<td>487.0</td>
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<td>12.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hampshire</td>
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<tr>
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<td>213.4</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humberside</td>
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<td>3476.6</td>
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</tr>
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<td>53.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<td>Northumbria</td>
<td>1400</td>
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<td>479.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nottinghamshire</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>272.5</td>
<td>527.1</td>
<td>91.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Yorkshire</td>
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<td>201.6</td>
<td>344.4</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thames Valley</td>
<td>1914</td>
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<td>443.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<td>75.0</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
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<td>348.4</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwent</td>
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<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Wales</td>
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<td>181.8</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>209.9</td>
<td>253.4</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALES</td>
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<td>144.6</td>
<td>194.6</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND AND WALES</td>
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<td>226.94</td>
<td>339.7</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
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<td>150.8</td>
<td>213.8</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>117.2</td>
<td>197.6</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>146.6</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>-33.9</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampian</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>231.3</td>
<td>316.7</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>215.4</td>
<td>208.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothian and Borders</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>170.8</td>
<td>289.9</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>2249</td>
<td>135.3</td>
<td>203.2</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayside</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>162.6</td>
<td>260.0</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOTLAND</td>
<td>4999</td>
<td>163.0</td>
<td>226.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREAT BRITAIN</td>
<td>54889</td>
<td>221.0</td>
<td>329.4</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These data are not available for Scotland.
Figure 1 Cycle theft in Great Britain by Police Force area (1995)

Figure 2 Cycle theft in Great Britain by Police Force area (1986)
figures because it covers reported and unreported crimes. It is claimed that crimes go unreported mainly because victims feel that the crime is not serious enough or that the Police will be unable to take any effective action.

The BCS has been carried out in England and Wales six times (1982, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996) with each sweep measuring crime in the previous year. The results reported here are from the 1996 BCS, for which nearly 16,500 adults were interviewed.

Figure 3 shows a comparison between Police figures and BCS estimates for bicycle theft. The BCS estimated that there were 660,000 cycle thefts during 1995. The figures are also given as percentages of the estimated total number of thefts. The discrepancy between the BCS “recorded crime” figures and the Criminal Statistics figures is due to adjustments made to allow for crimes against under 16 year olds and against corporate victims. The BCS also makes adjustments to allow for crimes committed under British Transport Police jurisdiction, which are excluded from the Criminal Statistics.

The large difference between reported and recorded crimes is due in part to ‘no-criming’ (see section 3.3). The BCS count of bicycle theft is also higher than that of the Police because some incidents which are reported may not be recorded by the Police. This is partly because the Police may not always accept victims’ accounts, or may question their interpretation of events. Some incidents may be considered too trivial by the Police to warrant a crime report (Mayhew et al., 1994).

Figure 3 also shows the 1986 data (Hough and Mayhew, 1985 and Home Office 1987a) for comparison purposes. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the proportion of crime reported to the Police rose and peaked at 72% in 1993. This may have been because the increase in telephone ownership made it easier to report crime. More victims had their possessions insured, which may have affected reporting too. In 1983, 45% of theft or damage incidents were covered by insurance compared with 50% in 1991.

It should be noted that these figures do not include cases of burglary when a bicycle was stolen. The 1996 BCS

![Figure 3](image-url)
reported that a bicycle was stolen in approximately 4% of the estimated 779,000 burglaries with loss during 1995. It is therefore deduced that the total number of bicycles stolen in 1995 in England and Wales was approximately 691,000. This equates to a bicycle being stolen every 45 seconds.

3.4.2 The Scottish Crime Survey (SCS)

More than 5,000 people aged 16 or over were interviewed at home in 1993 in Scotland. The survey covered all of mainland Scotland and several of the larger islands. Prior to this survey, Scotland was covered in the British Crime Survey. The SCS estimated that there were 26,000 incidences of cycle theft in Scotland during 1993, representing an increase of 53% on the 1986 figures (Anderson & Leitch, 1994). Of these, an estimated 17,940 were reported to the Police. The number of bicycles stolen during burglaries in Scotland was not available.

It should be noted that the Criminal Statistics include all recorded incidences of theft of a pedal cycle whereas only people aged 16 or over are interviewed in the BCS and SCS. The actual true incidence of pedal cycle theft may therefore be higher than even these two surveys suggest.

3.5 Clear up rates

A bicycle theft is deemed to have been ‘cleared up’ when the crime is solved, ie. usually when the offender is caught. A ‘clear up’ therefore does not necessarily imply that the bicycle was recovered. (This is different from ‘non-crime’, as explained in section 3.3.)

The clear-up rates in 1995 varied between the Police forces in England and Wales, from 4% to 31%, with an overall rate of 9% (see Table 1). Lincolnshire achieved the highest percentage clear-up rate in 1995 (31%) despite having an above average amount of cycle thefts per population. In Dyfed-Powys and Gwent, the clear-up rates were more than 20%, but both had low incidences of cycle theft. Cambridgeshire and Humberside Police achieved a low clear-up rate of 5% and 4% respectively, but both had extremely high incidences of pedal cycle theft.

When compared with ‘theft and handling of stolen goods’ overall (see Appendix A), it can be seen that pedal cycles achieved a relatively poor clear-up rate. Whereas 9% of offences were cleared up for pedal cycle theft, 23% of incidences of ‘theft and handling of stolen goods’ were solved. Interestingly, when compared by Police force the clear-up rates for the two offences were similar, in that the three forces with the highest clear-up rate for pedal cycle theft also achieved a good clear-up rate for the overall theft offence (varying between 31% and 48%). Similarly, the five forces with the lowest clear-up rate for cycle theft also achieved a clear-up rate at or below the national average for the overall offence (varying between 13% and 23%).

The 1994 British Crime Survey reported that 15% of all victims of bicycle theft got their bike back again. This large discrepancy between BCS and Police figures is probably because victims who get their bicycle back quickly may never report the theft to the Police.

3.6 Age and sex of offenders

In 1986, 3,321 people in England and Wales were either cautioned for, or found guilty of, theft of a pedal cycle at magistrates or Crown Courts. Despite large apparent increases in the incidence of cycle theft, the 1994 figure decreased slightly to 3,161.

Table 2 shows the distribution by age and sex of those cautioned, prosecuted or convicted of cycle theft in England and Wales during 1994. Of all those cautioned for, or found guilty of, theft of a pedal cycle, 45% were aged between 14 and 17 (see Table 2). Ninety-seven per cent were male.

Table 2 Cautions, prosecutions and convictions for cycle theft in England and Wales by age and sex (1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age/sex</th>
<th>Cautioned</th>
<th>Prosecuted</th>
<th>Convicted or convicted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>Males 392</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females 12</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 404</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>Males 840</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females 45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 885</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>Males 166</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females 6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 172</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and over</td>
<td>Males 204</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females 13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 217</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>Males 1602</td>
<td>2219</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females 76</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 1678</td>
<td>2270</td>
<td>1483</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data were not available for Scotland

3.7 Summary

The cycle theft statistics for England and Wales can be summarised as follows:

- Police figures show 169,476 recorded incidents of cycle theft during 1995, an increase of 50% on 1986 figures
- Cycle theft has increased disproportionately compared to theft generally
- The 1995 Police clear up figure for cycle theft was 8.8%
- Between 1986 and 1995, journeys to work by bicycle decreased slightly from 3.9% to 3.3%
- The British Crime Survey for 1995 estimated the true number of cycle thefts (including those not reported to the Police) to be 660,000, excluding those stolen in burglaries
- Despite the apparently large increase in the number of bicycle thefts between 1986 and 1995, the number of people either cautioned for, or found guilty of, cycle theft decreased over the period.

Similarly, the figures for Scotland are given below:

- During 1995, 11,341 bicycles were recorded as stolen representing an increase of 36% on 1986 figures
The percentage of journeys to work by bicycle fell slightly, from 1.5% in 1986 to 1.4% in 1995.

The Scottish Crime Survey estimated the total number of cycle thefts to be 26,000 in 1993.

Overall, including bikes stolen in burglaries, it is estimated that upwards of 717,000 bicycles are stolen in Great Britain each year. This equates to a bicycle being stolen roughly every 45 seconds.

## 4 Survey of cyclists in Great Britain

This section of the report covers the second phase of the study, a questionnaire survey of victims of bicycle theft conducted during December 1996 and January 1997. The aim of the survey was to investigate cyclists’ experiences of, and attitudes towards, bicycle theft.

### 4.1 Methodology

#### 4.1.1 Experimental design

It was recognised at the outset that victims of bicycle theft may give different responses when asked about bicycle theft from bicycle owners who had never had a bicycle stolen. A ‘control’ sample of non-theft victims was therefore also obtained for comparison purposes. As detailed information concerning theft, insurance and registration schemes was required, people under 16 were excluded from the study. Also for this reason, only thefts which had occurred since January 1994 were included.

A sample of 300 theft victims and 300 controls was chosen. Based on DETR figures (Department of Transport, 1996a and 1996c), the quotas shown in Table 3 for each of the two samples were chosen. These numbers represent the differences in cycling frequency between male and female cyclists and between cyclists of different ages. The large sample sizes meant that each sub-group of people would be large enough to analyse in isolation.

Once TRL had designed the experiment and survey method, a contract was let to the Babtie Group who then conducted the pilot and main surveys on TRL’s behalf.

### Table 3 Quotas for the theft victim and control samples by age group and sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29 years</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59 years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.1.2 Sampling Method

A telephone survey was used to detect participants for the survey. It was realised that people who do not have a telephone would be missed by this method. However, it is understood that 94% of the population own telephones and this was considered to be a reasonable sampling error. Those who are not listed in the telephone directory were also excluded due to the nature of the sampling method.

Initially it was intended to use random digit dialling, in order to assure that metropolitan, urban and rural areas of England, Wales and Scotland were proportionately represented. This was however deemed infeasible due to the number of commercial telephone numbers and fax machines. Instead a complete set of telephone directories covering the whole of Great Britain was purchased and randomly distributed to a team of telephone operators. The first three numbers on the top right hand column on every other page in the book were dialled. In order to maximise the response, calls were made between 6pm and 9pm during weekday evenings and, during weekends, between 11am and 7pm.

In order to maintain a truly random sample, only the person who answered the phone was interviewed. (As only people aged 16 or over were to be included in the survey, the interviewer asked to speak to an adult if a child answered the telephone.) It was however recognised that this method may make it difficult to maintain the quota samples shown in Table 3.

The respondents were asked the following:

- Whether they currently owned a bicycle for their own use
- Whether they had had a bicycle stolen since January 1994
- Their age
- Whether they would be willing to complete a further questionnaire and, if willing, their name and address was requested.

The sex of the respondent was also recorded. These data were recorded for each call answered, regardless of whether the respondent was willing to participate further, in order that overall bicycle ownership and theft rates could be determined (see section 4.2.1).

#### 4.1.3 Postal Survey

In view of the large sample, distributed all over Great Britain, a self-completed postal questionnaire was selected as the most appropriate survey method. In consultation with the DETR Customer, Home Office, Association of British Insurers and London Cycling Campaign two questionnaires were designed: the ‘Cycle Theft Survey’ and the ‘Cycling Survey’ (for the theft victims and the control, non-theft victims respectively). The questionnaires are reproduced in Appendices B1 and B2. All of those who indicated in the telephone survey that they were willing to participate were sent the questionnaire relevant to them.

The survey aimed to ascertain experiences of cycle theft, including:

- Frequency of theft
- Where the cycle was stolen from
- How it was secured at the time
- Whether the theft was reported to the Police
- Whether the bicycle was recovered
- Whether the bicycle was insured and/or registered and whether this affected the decision to report the theft to the Police
• Whether their attitudes and/or cycling behaviour have changed since the theft
• To what extent concerns over cycle theft affect their cycling patterns and behaviour
• How great is the perceived threat of theft.

Other topics covered in the survey included:
• Type of lock used
• Use of, and attitudes towards, cycle registration schemes
• Experiences and attitudes towards bicycle insurance.

4.1.4 Piloting

The above survey procedures were fully piloted during October and November 1996, with 153 people completing questionnaires. The questionnaires used for the pilot contained many ‘open’ questions, which were then coded into ‘tick-box’ responses for the main survey. Some redundant questions were removed following the pilot, particularly from the sections on cycle registration schemes, as it was apparent that these questions would be relevant to only a very small number of respondents.

4.2 Results

Throughout this section of the report there are tables showing differences between the responses of groups of cyclists (theft sample versus control). Significant differences between groups are indicated by asterisks, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>5% level</th>
<th>1% level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>at least 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>at least 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>at least 0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the main body of text, significance levels are quoted as a p value. i.e. a p value of 0.05 or less means that the result is significant at at least the 5% level.

It should be noted that some of the percentages given in the tables do not total 100%, due to missing or incomplete data. Where appropriate, sample sizes are given in the tables.

4.2.1 Response Rates

In total, 833 interviewer-hours of calls were made to 33,837 telephone numbers. Of these calls, 19,550 (58%) were unanswered, engaged or had an answering machine switched on. The remaining 14,287 ‘positive’ calls fell into the following categories:

• 9,543 (67%) did not own a bicycle and had not had one stolen since January 1994;
• 3,925 (27%) currently owned a bicycle and had not experienced bicycle theft since January 1994;
• 819 (6%) had experienced bicycle theft since January 1994.

This implies that 17.3% of bicycle owners had experienced bike theft in the last three years. Because of the large sample size, one can be 99% confident that this figure lies between 15.9% and 18.7%.

Of the 819 theft victims detected, 160 (20%) no longer owned a bicycle. The overall bicycle ownership figure was found to be 32%. This figure should however be treated with caution: due to the sampling method used, young people were under-represented in the sample, which is likely to have reduced the observed bicycle ownership rate. The 1996 British Crime Survey found the overall ownership rate to be 43% (personal communication from Home Office).

In total, 709 Cycle Theft questionnaires were sent out, 296 (42%) of which were completed and returned. Of the 1,118 Control questionnaires mailed, 578 (52%) were returned. It is thought that the length of the Cycle Theft questionnaire deterred many theft victims from responding and hence lowered the response rate.

The distributions of the samples of respondents by sex, age group and regional location are shown in Table 4. It can be seen that there is a significant difference between the distributions of the theft and control samples in all three respects. Further analysis of the response rates revealed that the age/sex distribution of both the theft and control samples differed significantly from what was expected based on DETR cycling statistics (see Table 3), as anticipated at the outset (see section 4.1.2). The telephone sampling method meant that females, and people in the age group 30-59, were over-represented in the control sample, whilst young people were under-represented. In the theft sample, it was found that males aged between 16 and 20 were over-represented (compared with the control sample). This indicates that this group is more at risk of bike theft than would be expected, probably due to the high levels of cycling amongst young males.

### Table 4 Characteristics of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Theft sample n=296</th>
<th>Control sample n=578</th>
<th>Significance of difference between distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex male</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-20 years</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29 years</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59 years</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean age</td>
<td>32.9 years</td>
<td>42.6 years</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region South East</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave telephone number to participate in future surveys</td>
<td>138 (46.6%)</td>
<td>282 (48.8%)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, 709 Cycle Theft questionnaires were sent out, 296 (42%) of which were completed and returned. Of the 1,118 Control questionnaires mailed, 578 (52%) were returned. It is thought that the length of the Cycle Theft questionnaire deterred many theft victims from responding and hence lowered the response rate.

The distributions of the samples of respondents by sex, age group and regional location are shown in Table 4. It can be seen that there is a significant difference between the distributions of the theft and control samples in all three respects. Further analysis of the response rates revealed that the age/sex distribution of both the theft and control samples differed significantly from what was expected based on DETR cycling statistics (see Table 3), as anticipated at the outset (see section 4.1.2). The telephone sampling method meant that females, and people in the age group 30-59, were over-represented in the control sample, whilst young people were under-represented. In the theft sample, it was found that males aged between 16 and 20 were over-represented (compared with the control sample). This indicates that this group is more at risk of bike theft than would be expected, probably due to the high levels of cycling amongst young males.
This age/sex variation between the two samples means that any differences found between the samples (for example in their attitudes) may be due in part to this age/sex variation and not necessarily to the fact that one group has had a bicycle stolen and one has not. Caution must be exercised in assuming causality. For example, if the theft group reports being more worried about theft than the control group, it could be because young males worry more about theft and may not necessarily be due to them having had a bicycle stolen. The reader should be aware of the sampling errors and sample differences and their implications when considering the results that follow.

The use of correctional methods, such as weighting, was considered. However the two groups of people are different in many ways and so this would be far from straightforward. Further discussion about the response rates may be found in Appendix C.

When respondents were asked to participate in any further studies, 138 from the theft sample gave phone numbers and 282 from the control group did so.

### 4.2.2 The stolen bicycles

Of the 296 bicycle theft victims who returned valid, completed questionnaires, 17% had had more than one bicycle stolen since January 1994. The questionnaire concentrated only on the most recent theft and all the results that follow relate to the theft of this one bike.

The mean length of time the bicycles had been owned by the victim before they were stolen was two years and seven months. Forty per cent were valued at more than £200 and over 70% were mountain bikes. If the bicycles currently owned by the control sample are assumed to be representative of the bicycle population as a whole, it is found more new, high value mountain bikes are stolen than would be expected by chance (see Table 5). It seems likely then that thieves are targeting these bikes in particular. It is worth noting that whilst mountain bikes make up only 44% of the bicycle stolen since January 1994, the questionnaire concentrated only on the most recent theft and all the results that follow relate to the theft of this one bike.

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### 4.2.3 The thefts

Of the 296 stolen bicycles, 10% were stolen in the morning (0600 to 1200 hours), 33% in the afternoon (1200 to 1800 hours), 21% in the evening (1800 hours to midnight) and 27% at night (midnight to 0600 hours). Nine per cent of theft victims did not know at what time their bicycle had been stolen. Eighteen per cent of bicycles stolen had been left unattended for less than five minutes when the theft occurred and a further 11% for between six and 30 minutes. Thirty-eight per cent of bikes stolen had been unattended for more than six hours. This varied according to the time of day when the theft occurred ($p<0.001$): of the bicycles stolen during the morning or afternoon, 31% had been left for under five minutes, compared with 18% of the evening thefts and only 3% of the night-time thefts. Conversely, 69% of night-time thefts occurred when bicycles had been left for over six hours, compared with only 10% of the morning/afternoon thefts and 25% of the evening thefts. Of those who did not know when the theft had occurred, 84% had left their bike unattended for more than six hours.

As shown below, garages and gardens were the most vulnerable places for bicycles to be stolen from. In total, over half the thefts occurred on the owner’s property:

- 18.2% Garage
- 17.2% Garden
- 14.9% Shopping area
- 12.5% Garden shed
- 8.8% Place of work
- 4.7% Inside home
- 22.6% Other place

Just over half (51%) of the bikes stolen from in and around the owner’s home were stolen during the night, with a further 27% stolen during the evening and 15% in the afternoon. Conversely, almost 3 out of 5 (58%) of bikes stolen from places other than in and around the home were stolen in the afternoon, with a further 15% in the morning and 19% in the evening ($p<0.001$).

Again, the length of time bikes were left unattended varied according to from where they were stolen: bicycles stolen from garages or sheds were likely to have been left for longer (median > 6 hours) than those stolen from gardens or places of work (median < 6 hours). Almost two thirds of bicycles stolen from shopping areas were left for less than five minutes.

#### 4.2.3.1 Locking at the time of the theft

Thirty per cent of bicycles stolen were outside, unlocked at the time of the theft. The rest were either locked or inside premises, as shown in Table 6.

Of the bicycles which were locked and outside, 35% were secured to a fence or railings, 27% to a bicycle rack, 12% to a lamppost, 14% were immobilised and 4% were secured to another bike. (Some bicycles were secured to more than one object.) Of the bikes which were locked at the time of the theft, 36% were with D/U locks, 36% with chain and lock, 20% with cable and lock and 15% with one piece cable and lock. (Some bicycles were secured with...
Table 6 Location and locking status of stolen bicycles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of bicycles stolen (% of total)</th>
<th>inside locked premises</th>
<th>inside unlocked premises</th>
<th>outside</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bicycle locked</td>
<td>25 (8.8%)</td>
<td>15 (5.3%)</td>
<td>85 (30.%)</td>
<td>125 (44.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicycle unlocked</td>
<td>50 (17.7%)</td>
<td>24 (8.5%)</td>
<td>84 (29.7%)</td>
<td>158 (55.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75 (26.5%)</td>
<td>39 (13.8%)</td>
<td>169 (59.7%)</td>
<td>283 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 - Reason for choosing lock by type of lock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for choosing lock</th>
<th>Type of lock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D/U cable and lock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure/good quality</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheap/not too expensive</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>came with the bike</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>given to me</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

more than one type of lock

Respondents were asked why they had chosen the type of lock which had been in use at the time of the theft. The answers given varied according to the type of lock used, as shown in Table 7. Those people whose bikes were not locked at the time of the theft (158 respondents) were asked why they had decided not to lock their bike on this occasion. Of those whose bikes which were unlocked but inside a locked building (50 respondents), 94% gave this as the reason for not locking their bikes. Of the remaining 108 respondents, the reasons were distributed as follows. (Respondents were able to give more than one response.)

- 32.4% Only left it for a few minutes
- 23.1% It was out of sight
- 23.1% It was parked where I could see it
- 12.0% Didn’t have lock with me
- 10.2% I was in a hurry
- 8.3% I forgot
- 5.6% Didn’t own a lock at the time

The locking status also depended on the length of time for which the bicycle was left unattended. Of those left for 6 hours or more, 57% were inside locked premises. Conversely, almost 70% of those left for less than 5 minutes when stolen were left outside and unlocked.

It is not possible to deduce from these findings a ‘locking effect’ (ie. how much more or less likely a bicycle is to be stolen if it is locked), since information on general locking behaviour is not available for comparison.

4.2.3.2 Reporting to the Police and recovery of the cycle

Overall, 76% of bike thefts were reported to the Police. This did not vary significantly according to the type or age of the bike stolen, or where it was stolen from. It did however vary by the value of the bicycle (p<0.001): all the thefts of bikes over £300 were reported, compared with 83% of those valued at between £201 and £300, 80% of those between £101 and £200 and only 50% of those worth £100 or less.

Of the 226 respondents who reported the theft, 54% found the Police sympathetic and 38% did not, with the remainder undecided. Thirty-five per cent of those who reported the theft felt that the Police appeared to regard the crime less seriously than they would have expected.

The respondents who had reported the theft of their bike were asked what details they had been able to give to the Police to help them to identify the bicycle. The percentages of people who gave each detail are given below:

- 97.8% Colour
- 93.4% Make (brand)
- 79.6% Model
- 60.6% Details of accessories
- 56.6% Frame size
- 48.2% Wheel size
- 34.1% Serial number
- 13.7% Registration code

The 61 respondents who did not report the theft of their bike to the Police were asked why they had not. The percentages of people who gave each reason are given below:

- 60.7% Unlikely the Police would recover the bike
- 31.1% I felt partly to blame for the theft (eg. left it unlocked/unattended)
- 26.2% Didn’t think the Police would take it seriously
- 16.4% Because the bike wasn’t insured
- 9.8% The bike was worth very little/very old.

In only 10 (3%) incidences did the victim know for sure that the thief had been caught. All were thefts which had been reported to the Police, although due to the small sample size, this finding was not statistically significant (p=0.141) and may therefore have occurred by chance. The recovery rate was 6% and this did not vary significantly according to whether the theft had been reported (p=0.974). The minimum length of time it took to recover the bicycle was one day, the maximum 20 weeks. The median value was 10½ days. This did not vary significantly according to whether the theft had been reported (p=0.225).
Of the 17 bikes recovered, 11 (65%) had been damaged, 3 (18%) irreparably. Eleven were dumped somewhere, of which four were subsequently identified at a Police station. 3 identified in the street and one was identified by its postcode marking. There was no significant difference in the recovery rate by whether the bike was postcode marked \((p=0.897)\).

Of all the 296 stolen bicycles, 34% were marked to help with their identification. Of these, 70% had a stamped mark, 18% etched, 10% had an adhesive label and 1% an electronic tag. Sixty-three per cent were marked with the owner’s postcode, 39% with a serial number and 8% with a registration code.

4.2.3.3 Registration schemes
The respondents were first asked whether they were aware of registration schemes before their bicycle was stolen. One hundred and sixteen (39%) replied that they were. Of these, 24 (21%) reported that their bike had been registered at the time of the theft, 18 (75%) of which were with Police schemes and 2 (8%) with private company schemes (the remainder did not know). Twelve people had registered their bike free of charge. Of the three people who gave details of payments made for registration, one paid £2, one £5 and the other £7.

Of all the 296 stolen bicycles, 34% were marked with a registration code.

12.0% Thought there was no need - never had a bicycle stolen in the past
26.1% Didn’t get around to it
17.0% Thought there was no need - bicycle was always secured
17.0% Cost of premiums too high
15.9% Bicycle was not worth enough to worry about
6.8% Thought there was no need - bicycle was never left unattended.

4.2.4 Bicycles currently owned
4.2.4.1 Levels of bike ownership
Sixty-three per cent (186) of the theft sample currently own a bicycle and a further 10% intend to buy one. Of those who do not intend to buy a new bicycle, 52% reported that this is because they no longer want or need a bike. Of those who no longer own a bicycle, 30% have access to someone else’s bike. The final breakdown of the current status of theft victims (total 296) is:

- 186 (62.8%) Currently own at least one bike
- 29 (9.8%) Do not own a bike, but have access to one
- 19 (6.4%) Do not currently own or have access to a bike, but intend to buy a new one
- 62 (20.9%) Do not currently own or have access to a bike and do not intend to buy a new one.

All 578 people in the control sample currently own bikes.

4.2.4.2 Current cycling habits
This section deals with the 793 respondents in the theft and control samples who currently own or have access to a cycle. As already discussed in section 4.2.1, in this and subsequent sections, when habits of the theft and control samples are found to differ, this could be due to the different age/sex distributions (and bikes owned) for the two samples. It is not necessarily due solely to the experience of theft.

The theft victims appear to cycle more often than those in the control sample, who have never had a bicycle stolen \((p<0.001)\). Twenty-six per cent of the theft victims reported to have cycled more than 20 times in the last four weeks, compared with 9% of the control sample. Conversely, a third of theft victims reported not to have cycled at all within the last four weeks, compared with
over half in the control sample.

Similarly, the theft sample reported higher annual mileages than the control sample ($p=0.011$). Twelve per cent reported over 1,000 miles, compared with 6% of the control sample. Twenty-two per cent of the theft sample reported that the mode of transport by which they make the most number of journeys each week was a bicycle, compared with 12% of the control sample ($p<0.001$). The distribution of the respondents’ main purpose of journeys by bike was different in the two groups ($p<0.001$). For example, a quarter of the theft sample reported that the main purpose of their journeys by bike is to travel to and from work, compared with 14% of the control sample.

The theft victims were asked whether they cycle more or less often than they did before their bicycle was stolen. This varied according to whether they currently own a bike or use someone else’s, as shown in Table 8 ($p<0.001$).

This shows that nearly 2% of bicycle owners have stopped cycling since the theft of their bike. Clearly, those who do not own a bike, but borrow someone else’s, cycle much less frequently than they did previously. Similar results were found when cycling frequency and annual mileage were analysed in this way.

Table 8 Change in cycling frequency by bicycle ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since your bicycle was stolen, do you now cycle...?</th>
<th>Owners (n=186)</th>
<th>Access only (n=29)</th>
<th>Total (n=215)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more often</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about the same</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less often</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4.3 Characteristics of bicycles currently owned

This section deals only with the 186 theft victims and 578 control respondents who currently own a bicycle. Table 9 shows the characteristics of bikes currently owned in each sample. Greater proportions of theft victims own expensive bikes. As would be expected from the statistics on new bike sales, which indicate that two thirds are expensive bikes. As would be expected from the statistics on new bike sales, which indicate that two thirds are expensive bikes.

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4.2.4.4 Registration schemes

The questions about registration schemes in relation to the bike currently owned were asked of all of the control sample (578) and of the 186 theft victims who currently own a bike. The percentages given in this section therefore relate to these groups of people.

Overall, 53% (405) of respondents reported that they were aware of registration schemes before reading the questionnaire. This proportion did not vary significantly between the theft and control groups ($p=0.091$).

Of the theft victims who currently own a bike, 44% had been aware of registration schemes before the theft. Forty-seven per cent reported that they were aware of the schemes before reading the questionnaire. This increase is however not significant ($p=0.525$).

However, more of the theft sample (16%) reported that their present bike is registered than those in the control group (8%). This is significant at the 5% level ($p=0.032$). Over 70% of the 30 registered bikes were registered with Police schemes, 8% with private company schemes, with the remainder unsure. This did not vary significantly between the theft and control groups ($p=0.429$). None of the theft sample were registered with private company schemes. Three from the control sample gave private company names: Daily Mail Bike Security Register, Data Tag and Marin Manufacturing.

The mean amount, £9.15, paid to register a bike did not vary significantly between the two samples ($p=0.594$). Of the 24 respondents who gave details of registration costs, three quarters paid nothing. The remaining six paid between £2.50 and £150. There was no significant difference ($p=0.999$) in the mean cost depending on whether the scheme was of the private company or Police type.

The 346 respondents who were aware of registration schemes but had not registered their bicycle were asked why. The percentages of cycle owners giving each response are given below:

Table 9 Characteristics of cycles currently owned in each sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic (significance of difference between distributions)</th>
<th>Theft sample n=186</th>
<th>Control sample n=578</th>
<th>Total n=764</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of bike (***)</td>
<td>mountain</td>
<td>racer</td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of bike (***)</td>
<td>£100 or less</td>
<td>£101 to £200</td>
<td>£201 to £300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of bicycle (***).</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>1.8 years</td>
<td>6.4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>5.4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike marked with postcode (***)</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4.5 Bicycle insurance

Overall, 74% (131) of bicycle owners in the theft sample presently have some type of bicycle insurance. This compares with 67% of this sample who had insurance at the time of the theft \( (p>0.5) \). This could indicate that the decision to insure the current bicycle was not affected by the experience of theft. Of those theft victims who had their bicycle insured before the theft, 84% have their present bikes insured. Of those whose bike was not insured at the time of the theft, 37% have their present bike insured.

Significantly fewer of the control sample (60%) have their present bicycle insured than the theft sample (74%) \( (p<0.001) \). It is likely that the reason for this is that people in the theft sample have, on average, more expensive bikes than those in the control sample (see section 4.2.4.3). The distribution of type of insurance policies also varied between the two groups: 6% of the theft sample has a separate bicycle insurance policy, compared with only 2% of the control sample. The 472 respondents who have insurance of any kind were asked which insurance company they are insured with. The five most frequently-mentioned companies were:

- 3.7% Prudential
- 3.3% Direct Line
- 3.0% Royal Insurance
- 2.7% Sun Alliance
- 2.6% CIS

Those who did not have any insurance were asked why this was. Some of the responses varied significantly between the theft and control groups as shown in Table 10.

### Table 10 Reasons for not insuring bike

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why bike not insured</th>
<th>% giving reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike not worth enough to worry about</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need - bicycle is always secured</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven’t got around to it</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of premiums</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need - bicycle never left unattended</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need - never had a bike stolen in the past</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.5 Thinking about bicycle theft

All respondents who currently own a bicycle were given a list of statements about how the threat of theft affects their cycling habits. They were asked to rate each statement as ‘not at all’, ‘slightly’, ‘moderately’ or ‘a great deal’. The results are shown in Table 11.

### Table 11 How cyclists are affected by the threat of theft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% affected moderately or a great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How often you cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Where you cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Whether you secure your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. How you secure your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Whether you insure your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Where you park your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. How much you will spend on purchasing a bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Theft sample</th>
<th>Control sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How often you cycle</td>
<td>NS 68.3% 67.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Where you cycle</td>
<td>NS 72.4% 71.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Whether you secure your bicycle</td>
<td>** 14.7% 23.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. How you secure your bicycle</td>
<td>* 15.5% 23.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Whether you insure your bicycle</td>
<td>** 37.2% 51.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Where you park your bicycle</td>
<td>** 18.9% 31.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. How much you will spend on purchasing a bicycle</td>
<td>NS 42.3% 47.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over two thirds of respondents reported that the threat of theft affects ‘moderately’ or ‘a great deal’ how often they cycle and 72% reported that it affected where they cycle. The people in the control sample appear to be more affected by the threat of theft than those in the theft sample, although there was no significant difference between the two groups for effects on how often and where they ride their bikes. Nor did the amount people were willing to spend on a bicycle appear to be affected by the theft of a previous bike. Again it should be remembered that these responses may be influenced by the age/sex distribution of the samples.

These surprising results suggest that the threat of theft affects the insuring and purchasing of bikes more than the everyday activities such as parking and securing of bikes.

Respondents were given a list of statements about the fear of theft and securing bicycles. They were asked to indicate whether they always, often, sometimes or never do the activity. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12 indicates that the theft victims reportedly worry more about having their bicycle stolen and, as a consequence, take more care about parking and securing their bike properly. They also more frequently report not riding short trips because of the time taken to secure their bike and often not riding at all due to the worry of theft.

Table 11 suggests that the theft victims are less affected by the threat of theft than the control sample, whereas Table 12 suggests the opposite. This seems to imply that the theft victims actually take more precautions against theft, but don’t realise or admit that this is because of the threat of theft.

All the theft sample (whether they currently own a bike or not) were asked whether they did certain activities following the theft of their bike. As a comparison, the control sample was asked whether they would do these activities if their bicycle was stolen. The results are shown in Table 13.

Clearly, fewer of the control sample claim that, if their bicycle was stolen, they would give up cycling altogether.
They also appear to be more inclined to buy another bike and to take other precautionary measures, such as buying a better lock and insuring and registering their bike, than those in the theft sample were following the theft of their bicycle. The theft sample was asked if the theft of their bicycle had affected them in other ways not covered in the questionnaire: 82 people (28%) said it had. Of these, 17 reported that they had become more security conscious, 14 that they were upset or annoyed and 10 that they felt vulnerable, insecure or suspicious of people. Six people reported that they had changed where they leave their bike and two that they felt let down by the Police.

The respondents were asked to estimate how many bicycle owners out of 100 have their bicycle stolen each year. The answers to this were extremely high: 34 was the overall mean. The actual number is about 6 (Mayhew & Unadkat, 1995). However, the “expectation of theft” was higher amongst the theft sample, who estimated 39 thefts per 100 bike owners, compared with 32 per 100 in the control sample (p<0.001).

Similarly, more of the theft sample regarded cycle theft as more serious in relation to other crimes than the control sample, as shown in Table 14.

4.2.6 The British Crime Survey

This section will attempt to compare the findings of the 1996 British Crime Survey (BCS) (Mirrlees-Black et al, 1996) with the findings of the present survey.
● Stop repeats to others (12%)
● Needed assistance (0%)
● Someone else did (< 1%)
● Police on the spot (1%)

4.2.6.2 The 1994 BCS

The 1994 sweep of the BCS included additional variables relating to bicycle theft which had not been previously collected and were not collected again for the 1996 survey. As a result of these additional data, the Home Office wrote a short unpublished paper on bicycle theft which is discussed below (Mayhew and Unadkat, 1995).

Table 15 shows the results of the 1994 BCS and compares them (where possible) with the results of the TRL survey. The BCS found that 33% of bikes stolen were postcode at the time, indicating that the thief did not bother inspecting for a postcode or was not deterred by one. Indeed, there were 8.7 thefts per year per 100 postcode bikes compared with 5.2 for non-postcode bikes, suggesting that postcode bikes are more likely to be stolen. But, the authors remark, this reflects the fact that owners of more expensive bikes more often go to the trouble of having them marked.

The TRL survey found a markedly lower recovery rate than reported in the BCS. It is possible that during the initial telephone sift, some victims of bicycle theft who had subsequently recovered their bike did not think that they were ‘victims’ and hence that the survey would be irrelevant to them. It is also likely that those who have had their bicycle returned would be less motivated to complete the questionnaire.

The BCS was able to assess the relative risks of bicycle theft (compared to the overall average risk) by a number of social variables which were not available for the TRL survey. The owners found to be most at risk were in inner cities, in areas of council housing, in high-crime and disorderly neighbourhoods, living in flats, on lower incomes and in younger households with more children. See Table 16.

Table 15 Comparison between 1994 BCS and TRL survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>TRL survey</th>
<th>1994 BCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of bicycle thefts per year per 100 owners</td>
<td>5.8*</td>
<td>6.4**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>type of bike stolen - risk per year per 100 bikes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMX</td>
<td>20.3***</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mountain/racing</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time of day stolen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morning</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afternoon</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evening</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>night</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where stolen from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inside home, garage or shed††</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside home (eg. garden)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locking at time of theft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All bikes with locks in use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/U lock</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wire/other</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike in locked premises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike not locked / don’t know</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locked to an immovable object</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stolen bikes which were postcode marked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thefts per year per 100 postcode bikes</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thefts per year per 100 non-postcode bikes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stolen bikes which were insured</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stolen bikes successfully claimed for under insurance policy</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reported to the Police</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% postcoded bikes recovered</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%●●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% non-postcoded bikes recovered</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*An approximation based on 17.3% between January 1994 and December 1996.
**The 1996 BCS figure is 6.9 per 100 owners.
***Only two BMXs stolen, representing less than 1% of the total sample of stolen bikes.
Cases of burglary in which bikes are stolen are omitted from the BCS figures, but are included in the TRL figures.
●1996 BCS figures.
●●This figure was 63% in the 1996 BCS.
4.2.7 The cost of bicycle theft

The TRL survey found that 60% of stolen bikes were insured and that 43% of theft victims surveyed claimed successfully under an insurance policy for the theft, the average pay out being £264. Using the BCS and SCS estimates of the number of bicycles stolen each year, it is found that bicycle theft alone costs the insurance industry £81.4 million per annum. However, the 1996 BCS found that only 38% of stolen bikes were insured and that only 25% of victims made a successful claim, so this figure may be high. (This could indicate a bias in the TRL sample, towards more affluent bike owners.)

It was also found that victims of cycle theft were usually paid less than they claimed for their bicycle, presumably due to policy excesses. These excesses represent an additional annual loss to cyclists of £10.2 million.

In addition, 10% of theft victims who were uninsured have bought, or intend to buy, a new bike. The mean value of uninsured stolen bikes was approximately £161. This means that, in addition to bicycles replaced under insurance policies, approximately another £11.5 million is spent by the public each year in replacing stolen bicycles, assuming the replacement bicycle is of approximately the same value as the stolen one.

These three figures together indicate that replacing bicycles stolen alone costs the nation more than £100 million each year. This figure excludes other costs, both financial and non-financial, associated with the theft of a bike.

Using 1996 British Crime Survey figures, the Home Office has also attempted to estimate the cost of cycle theft in England and Wales for 1995, summarised below:

- When this figure is ‘grossed up’ to account for unrecorded incidents, a total net property loss of almost £140 million is found
- On average, each cycle theft victim incurred financial costs of about £14 (loss of earnings, for example) as a direct result of the theft
- Non-financial costs (ie. the value that victims placed on upset and inconvenience) were an average of about £130 per theft
- The costs to the Criminal Justice System associated with cycle theft were estimated to be about £2 million.

On this basis, the total cost to society of cycle theft in England and Wales is found to be over £230 million per annum (over £250 million for the UK as a whole).

There are fundamental differences between these two estimates: the Home Office property loss figure of £138 million is an estimate of the value of the stolen bikes, whereas the TRL figure is an estimate of the amount spent on replacing stolen bikes. As the TRL survey, and others, have shown, it is likely that a substantial proportion of victims will choose not to replace their stolen bicycle. Neither of these sources has been able to assess the effect of the threat of theft on cycling activities and the costs associated with this.

4.3 Summary

A telephone survey was used to identify two samples: one of cycle theft victims and one of ‘control’ cyclists. If willing to cooperate, they were mailed a self-completion questionnaire. The telephone survey found that, of the people aged 16 or over who answered the telephone:

---

Table 16 Relative risks of bike theft (compared to overall risk of 100)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
<th>Family structure:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner city</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>Single adult</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-council</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Adults/no children</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2 adults/children</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incivilities:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council/other</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of household income:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under £10,000</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000 to £19,999</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000 and over</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of household age:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 and under</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 59</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of children:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of bikes:</th>
<th>Overall risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Includes noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, rubbish, drunks and vandals.
• 67% did not own a bicycle and had not had one stolen since January 1994 (these people were not asked to participate further)
• 27% currently owned a bicycle and had not had one stolen since January 1994 (the ‘control sample’)
• 6% had experienced bicycle theft since January 1994 (the ‘theft victims’).

These findings imply that 17.3% of bicycle owners had experienced bike theft in the previous three years. Twenty per cent of theft victims no longer own a bicycle. Overall, the bicycle ownership level amongst those contacted was found to be 32%.

The responses given in the postal questionnaires indicated that new mountain bikes of high value were particularly at risk of theft. Over half of the thefts occurred from within the owner’s property and almost three quarters occurred during the day. Three in ten bicycles stolen were outside and unlocked at the time of the theft. Almost one in five bikes had been left unattended for less than five minutes when the theft occurred. Of the bikes which were locked at the time of the theft, over a third were secured with a ‘D/U’ lock. The most common reason for victims not locking a bike (unless it was in a locked building) was that it was only left for a few minutes.

Over three quarters of thefts were reported to the Police. Thefts involving the more valuable bikes were more likely to be reported than those involving less valuable bikes. One in every 17 bikes was subsequently recovered and only one in every 30 theft victims knew for certain that the thief had been caught.

Almost 40% of theft victims reported that they had been aware of registration schemes before the theft of their bike, but only 8% of bikes stolen were registered. Six out of every 10 bikes stolen were insured.

Bearing in mind that over 20% of theft victims no longer cycle at all, those who do still own and use a bike seem to have changed their cycling habits little. Two thirds of this sample claim that they still cycle about the same amount as they did before the theft of their bicycle. The theft sample was found to cycle more frequently and cover a higher mileage than the control sample. To some extent, the theft victims appear to worry more about having their bicycle stolen and, as a consequence, take more care about parking and securing their bike properly. They also more frequently report not riding short trips because of the time taken to secure their bike and often not riding at all due to the worry of theft. However, it was found that, even though the theft sample is more likely than the control sample to take such precautions as insurance and registration to protect their bike, they didn’t realise (or admit) that their motivation for doing this was the threat of the theft of their bike.

Expectation of theft was very high: those in the theft sample estimated that 39 thefts occurred each year per 100 bike owners, compared with 32 per 100 in the control sample. Similarly, when asked how serious they thought bike theft was in relation to other crimes, more theft victims thought bike theft was more serious than the theft of a colour television or vandalism of a public building.

However, this could be due to the higher cycling frequency found amongst the theft sample, rather than a direct result of the theft of their bike.

Data from the TRL survey indicated an overall theft rate of 5.8 thefts per 100 bicycles per annum, based on a three-year recall period. This is slightly lower than the value of 6.9 recorded by the 1996 British Crime Survey (BCS), possibly due to people forgetting the thefts of little-used bicycles some two or three years previous. However, considering the very different sampling methods used by the two surveys, the two figures are perhaps surprisingly similar. (See sections 4.2.1, 4.2.6)

Analysis of the characteristics of respondents revealed that the age/sex distribution of both the theft and control samples differed significantly from what was expected based on DETR statistics. As anticipated at the outset of the project, the method of sampling by ‘phone meant that females, and people aged between 30 and 59, were over-represented in the control sample, whilst young people were under-represented. In the theft sample, young males were found to be over-represented, indicating that this group is more at risk than others. However, DETR figures suggest that this is the group which cycles most frequently, which presumably explains the additional risk of theft. The age/sex variation between the two samples means that any differences found between the samples (for example in their attitudes) may be due in part to this variation and not necessarily to the fact that one group has had a bicycle stolen and one has not. (4.2.1)

If the bicycles currently owned by the control sample are assumed to be representative of the bicycle population as a whole, it is found that mountain bikes are over-represented in the theft sample: seven in ten bikes stolen were mountain bikes, although this type of bike represents less than half of the bicycle population. The bicycles stolen also tended to be more valuable and newer than the overall bicycle population. This may be no surprise, as mountain bikes represent two thirds of new bicycle sales. It would seem therefore that thieves are targeting these types of bikes, possibly because they are the easiest to resell, due to their current popularity. However, of those theft victims who currently own a bicycle, almost three quarters own one of the same type as the one that was stolen and almost two-thirds own one of greater value, implying that victims do not see the need to purchase a less valuable bicycle, or one of a different type, which may be less attractive to thieves. (4.2.2, 4.2.4.3)

Knowledge of, and use of, registration schemes was low: 39% of those who had experienced bike theft reported that...
they were aware of such schemes before the theft of their bike, but only 8% of stolen bikes were registered. Over half of all the respondents (including the control sample) reported that they had been aware of registration schemes before reading the questionnaire. (This proportion did not vary significantly between the theft and control samples.) The proportion of theft victims who were familiar with registration schemes did not appear to increase after the theft of their bikes. This implies that information about such schemes had not been given to the victims by agencies such as the Police or insurance companies. However, more of the theft sample has their current bicycle registered than occurred in the control sample (16% compared to 8%). Similarly, a quarter of the theft sample has their present bicycle postcode marked, compared with only one in seven of the control sample. These differences could be due to differences in the age/sex distributions of the theft and control samples (and differences in the bikes owned), rather than the experience of the theft itself. (4.2.3.3, 4.2.4.4)

The survey found that 21% of bicycle theft victims had not replaced their stolen bike, did not intend to do so and did not have access to anyone else’s bike. In addition to this, 3% of victims own or have access to a bike but do not ride it since the theft. In effect, this 24% may have given up cycling as a result of the theft of their bike. (This figure is consistent with the proportion of theft victims which reported giving up cycling.) Using 1996 British Crime Survey and 1993 Scottish Crime Survey (SCS) estimates - the latest available - it is reckoned that approximately 717,000 bicycles are stolen each year in Great Britain. From this, it is found that up to 172,000 cyclists may be ‘lost’ each year because of bicycle theft. It also leads to the staggering finding that a bicycle is stolen roughly every 45 seconds! (3.4.1, 3.4.2, 4.2.4.1, 4.2.5)

Of course, it is possible that many of these people might take up cycling again in the future, whether as a result of a change in financial, or other personal, situation, or following government (or other) initiatives to promote cycling. However, this observed figure of 24% who may have given up cycling as a result of the theft of their bike is broadly comparable with similar surveys conducted in other countries. Replogle (1984) quotes a survey in Maryland, USA in which 20% were found to have given up cycling. Challinger and Parker (1986) found the figure to be 29% in Melbourne, Australia. (2.1)

In comparison, only 14% of the control sample reported that they would give up cycling if their bicycle were stolen. If they were to have their bike stolen, they report being more inclined than the theft group to buy another bike and to take other precautionary measures, such as buying a better lock and insuring and registering their bike. It is impossible to know how the control sample would react in the event of their cycle being stolen. Judging by their current cycling patterns and frequency, in comparison with the theft sample, it is difficult to imagine that any less of them would actually give up cycling than occurred in the theft sample. (4.2.5)

Data from the TRL surveys indicate that bicycle theft alone costs the insurance industry £81.4 million per annum. However, the TRL survey found that 43% of victims successfully claimed for the theft of their bike, which is considerably higher than the 25% found in the 1996 BCS. This may again point to certain biases in the survey sample already mentioned, possibly towards more affluent cyclists. If insurance policy excesses and the cost of replacing uninsured bikes are included, the figures indicate that replacing bicycles stolen in Great Britain costs more than £100 million each year. (4.2.7)

The Home Office has attempted to estimate the losses - both financial and non-financial - associated with bicycle theft (regardless of whether the victim chooses to replace the bike). In total, including costs to the Criminal Justice System, it is estimated that bicycle theft costs the UK around £250 million per year (1995 figures). (4.2.3.4, 4.2.7)

At the outset of the project, it was understood from existing research that theft and the threat of theft of a bicycle deter people from cycling. Great Britain, like the Netherlands, has implemented a plan to tackle cycle theft. Both schemes aim to investigate specifications for cycle security devices and to introduce, and effectively promote, a national cycle registration scheme. (2.1, 2.2)

Dutch research has found that many people who have had their own bicycle stolen may be tempted to steal a bicycle, or buy one which they suspect to be stolen, in order to replace their stolen bike. If bicycle theft self-perpetuates in this way in Great Britain, then increasing the recovery of stolen bicycles should automatically reduce the theft rate, by reducing the demand for stolen bicycles. (2.3)

To this end, several authors have reported the introduction of cycle registration schemes. Whilst each scheme varies slightly, it is clear that every bicycle should have a unique identity marking. Whilst being easy to establish, schemes using postcode marking become worthless if the owner moves house or sells the bike. Identity-marking of bicycles should be compulsory and automatic and not be left to the discretion of the owner, if it is to be effective and comprehensive. It would appear that automatically marking all new bicycles before sale would be one solution, although this would mean initially that older bicycles were not marked. It would therefore seem that an additional, voluntary scheme for existing owners would be needed at the outset, but could be phased out after a number of years.

One obvious solution would seem to be to use bicycle manufacturers’ serial numbers. However, this system is at present flawed: it is understood that there is no cooperation or consistency among manufacturers, which means that serial numbers are not necessarily unique. Furthermore, some serial numbers may actually represent a whole batch of bicycles. Therefore any proposed numbering system would need to be fully investigated, in consultation with bike manufacturers. It is also clear that the purchaser must be made aware of this serial number (and its implications if the bike is stolen). This could be done by issuing a card at the time of purchase.

The question remains open as to whether all bicycles, or only those reported stolen, should be recorded on the register, although it would seem to be potentially less time-intensive, require less updating and be less prone to error if only stolen cycles were recorded. The introduction of a
computerised, Police-accessed register would allow the stopping and checking of cyclists and enable the Police to know almost instantly (via access to the Police National Computer) whether the bicycle had been reported as stolen. Such a system could also help Police to target prevention campaigns, by collecting information on when and where cycle thefts occur. (2.3, 2.4)

There is however no indication as to whether these theories can be applied to the situation in Great Britain. If a sample of cycle thieves (ie. those cautioned or convicted of cycle theft) were interviewed, the extent to which an effective cycle registration scheme might discourage thieves could be gauged. For example, would a Police ‘spot check’ facility deter them from stealing bikes? In addition, interviewing cycle thieves before the introduction of any proposed scheme might help to anticipate potential deficiencies (ie. ways to defraud or “get around” the system). If this were the case, it may be possible to avoid (or at least minimise) this risk.

An insight into the motives and methods of cycle thieves could also provide additional information about the extent to which security measures, such as locks, alarms and secure parking facilities, act as deterrents to thieves.

The cycle theft statistics for Great Britain show that recorded incidents of cycle theft have increased by 50% since 1986. Despite these apparently large increases in cycle theft, the number of people cautioned for or found guilty of cycle theft decreased slightly over the same period. It is possible that this increased likelihood of “getting away with it” could, in itself, increase the theft rates. This again points to increasing the recovery and conviction rates for cycle theft as an effective way to reduce cycle crime. As discussed, a well-considered nationwide register of stolen bicycles would seem to address both these issues. (3.2)

6 References


St. Albans Cycle Survey (undated). Cycling in St Albans. St Albans, Hertfordshire.


7 Acknowledgements

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### Table A1 Offences recorded and clear-up rates for England and Wales tabulated by police force (1995)

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ENGLAND & WALES 169476 9 2452109 2
TRANSPORT RESEARCH LABORATORY

CYCLE THEFT SURVEY

Please complete this questionnaire by either ticking the boxes, as indicated, or by writing in the spaces provided.

All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used for research purposes only

PART 1 - YOUR STOLEN BICYCLE

SECTION A - THE THEFT

Q1. How many times have you personally had a bicycle stolen since January 1994? (This does not include, for example, a child’s bike which you own but which is not for your use)

One  □1
Two  □2
More than two □3

WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE ONLY THINK ABOUT THE THEFT THAT OCCURRED MOST RECENTLY

Q2. For how long had you owned your bicycle before it was stolen?

_______ Years _______ Months

Q3. Please estimate the value of the bicycle when it was stolen.

£100 or less □1
£100 to £200 □2
£201 to £300 □3
£301 to £400 □4
More than £400 □5

Q4. What type of bicycle was it? (Please tick one)

Mountain bike (thick tyres, straight handlebars, multiple gears) □1
Hybrid (medium tyres, straight handlebars, multiple gears) □2

Racer/tourer (dropped handlebars) □3
Traditional town bike (straight handlebars, mudguards, thin tyres) □4
Small wheel, adult bicycle or folding bike □5
BMX □6
Other (please specify) □7

Q5. When was your bicycle stolen?

_______ Month _______ Year

Q6. At what time of the day was the bicycle stolen? (Please tick one)

Morning (between about 0600-1200 hrs) □1
Afternoon (between about 1201-1800 hrs) □2
Evening (between about 1801 and midnight) □3
Night-time (between about midnight and 0600 hrs) □4
Don’t know □5

Q7. For how long had your bicycle been left unattended when you discovered it had been stolen? (Please tick one)

Less than 5 minutes □1
Less than 30 minutes □2
Less than an hour □3
Less than 6 hours □4
Less than 12 hours □5
Less than 24 hours □6
More than 24 hours □7

Appendix B1 - Theft questionnaire

Ref no: __________

Q8. From where was your bicycle stolen? (Please tick one)

- Your own home or garden □1
- In or near other private dwelling □2
- Garage □3
- Garden shed □4
- Place of work □5
- Student hall of residence □6
- Education facilities □7
- Shopping area □8
- Other public building (eg sports centre, town hall) □9
- Other (Please specify) □10

It came with the bike □C
It was given to me □D
Other (please specify) □E

Q14. What object(s) was the bicycle secured to? (Tick all those that apply)

- Fence/railings □A
- Bicycle rack □B
- Lamppost or other street furniture □C
- Another bicycle □D
- Itself (ie it was immobilised) □F
- Other (please specify) □G

Q15. If bicycle not locked: Why did you decide not to lock your bicycle on this occasion? (Please tick all those that apply)

- It was in a locked building □A
- Only left it for a few minutes □B
- It was out of sight □C
- It was parked where I could see it □D
- In a hurry □E
- Forgot □F
- Didn’t own a lock □G
- Didn’t have lock with me □H
- Another reason (please specify) □I

Q16. Was your bicycle marked to help with its identification? 

- Yes □1 (go to Q17)
- No □2 (go to Q19)
- Don’t know □3 (go to Q19)

Q17. If yes: Please state how it was marked. (Please tick all those that apply)

- Stamped □A
- Etching □B
- Adhesive label □C
- Electronic tag □D
- Other (please specify) □E
Q18. What details did the mark contain? (Please tick all that apply)

Serial number ☐A
Registration Code ☐B
Your postcode ☐C
Your name ☐D
Your address ☐E
Other (please specify) ☐F

SECTION C - REPORTING TO THE POLICE AND RECOVERY OF THE CYCLE

Q19. Was the theft reported to the Police?
Yes ☐1 (go to Q20)
No ☐2 (go to Q23)
Don’t know ☐3 (go to Q24)

Q20. If yes: Did the Police appear sympathetic?
Yes ☐1
No ☐2
Don’t know ☐3

Q21. How did the police appear to regard the crime? (Please tick one)
More seriously than you expected ☐1
About the same as you expected ☐2
Less seriously than you expected ☐3
Don’t know ☐4

Q22. Which of the following details were you able to give the Police to help them identify your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)
Make (ie brand) of bicycle ☐A
Model ☐B
Colour ☐C
Frame size ☐D
Wheel size ☐E
Serial number ☐F
Registration code ☐G
Details of accessories (eg basket) ☐H
Other (please specify) ☐I

Q23. If you did not report the theft to the Police: Why did you not report the theft to the Police? (Please tick all those that apply)
Didn’t think the Police would take it seriously ☐A
Unlikely the Police would recover the bike ☐B
Because the bike wasn’t insured ☐C
The bike was worth very little/very old ☐D
I felt partly to blame for the theft (eg left it unlocked/unattended) ☐E
Another reason (please specify) ☐F

Q24. To your knowledge, was the thief caught?
Yes ☐1
No ☐2
Don’t know ☐3

Q25. Was the bicycle returned to you by the Police or others?
Yes ☐1 (go to Q26)
No ☐2 (go to Q29)

Q26. If yes: How was it found? (Tick all those that apply)
It was dumped somewhere ☐A
Identified at Police station ☐B
Identified in the street ☐C
Identified by registration mark ☐D
Identified by postcode marking ☐E
Other (please specify) ☐F

Q27. How long after it was stolen did you get your bicycle back?
_______ Weeks _______ Days

Q28. Had the bicycle been damaged?
Yes, but it was repairable ☐1
Yes, but it was not repairable ☐2
No ☐3
SECTION E - CYCLE REGISTRATION SCHEMES

Note: These are schemes which enable you to register your bicycle so that if it is stolen and subsequently recovered, you can be identified as the owner and the bicycle returned to you.

Q29. Were you aware that these registration schemes existed before your bicycle was stolen?

- Yes [1 (go to Q30)]
- No [2 (go to Q35)]

Q30. Was your bicycle registered with one of these schemes?

- Yes [1 (go to Q31)]
- No [2 (go to Q34)]
- Don’t know [3 (go to Q35)]

Q31. Under what type of scheme was your bicycle registered?

- Private company scheme [1 (go to Q32)]
- Police scheme [2 (go to Q33)]
- Don’t know/can’t remember [3 (go to Q35)]

Q32. If a private company scheme: What was the name of the scheme that your bicycle was registered with? (Please write in below)

Q33. How much did it cost to register your bicycle? (Please write in below)

£______

GO TO Q35

Q34. If your bicycle was not registered: Why did you not register your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)

- Bicycle was not worth enough to worry about [A]
- Never occurred to me [B]
- Didn’t get round to it [C]
- There was no need - bicycle never left unattended [D]
- There was no need - bicycle was always secured [E]
- There was no need - never had a bicycle stolen in the past [F]
- Another reason (please specify) [G]

SECTION E - CYCLE INSURANCE

Q35. Was your bicycle insured?

- Yes - Separately under bicycle insurance policy [1 (go to Q36)]
- Yes - extension to home contents policy [2 (go to Q36)]
- Yes - under home contents policy [3 (go to Q36)]
- No [4 (go to Q41)]
- Don’t know [5 (go to Q42)]

Q36. If yes: Which company was your bicycle insured with? (Please write in below)

______________________________________________

Q37. Did you claim for the theft from the insurance company?

- Yes [1 (go to Q38)]
- No [2 (go to Q40)]

Q38. If you made a claim: How much did you claim from the insurance company?

£______

Q39. (a) Has the insurance company paid out?

- Yes [1 (go to Q39b)]
- No [2 (go to Q40)]

(b) How much have they paid out? £______

GO TO Q42
Q40. If you did not make a claim: Why didn’t you make a claim? (Please tick all those that apply)

- The bike was worth less than policy ‘excess’ □A
- Didn’t want to lose my ‘no claims bonus’ □B
- It wasn’t covered because I left it unattended/unlocked □C
- No need - the bike was recovered □D
- Another reason (please specify) □E

GO TO Q42

GO TO Q42

SECTION E - CYCLE INSURANCE - CONTINUED

Q41. If bicycle was not insured: Why did you not insure your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)

- Bicycle was not worth enough to worry about □A
- Didn’t get around to it □B
- Cost of premiums too high □C
- Thought there was no need - bicycle was always secured □E
- Thought there was no need - never had a bike stolen in the past □F
- Another reason (please specify) □G

Q43. If no: Do you intend to get another bicycle?

- Yes □1 (go to Q45)
- No □2 (go to Q44)
- Don’t know □3 (go to Q44)

Q44. If no or don’t know: Why not? (Please tick all those that apply)

- Can’t afford to replace it □A
- No longer want/need one □B
- Because of the risk of theft □C
- Another reason (please specify) □D

Q45. Do you presently have access to someone else’s bicycle to ride?

- Yes □1 (go to Q46)
- No □2 (go to Q66)

Q46. If you own or have access to a bike: How many times have you cycled over the last four weeks? (Please tick one)

- None □1
- Five or less □2
- Between 6 and 10 □3
- Between 11 and 20 □4
- More than 20 □5

Q47. Roughly how many miles do you think you have cycled over the last year? (Please tick one box)

- Less than 10 miles □1
- 11 to 50 miles □2
- 51 to 100 miles □3
- 101 to 500 miles □4
- 501 to 1,000 miles □5
- More than 1,000 miles □6
- Don’t know □7

PART II - THE BICYCLE YOU HAVE NOW

SECTION F - YOU AND YOUR BIKE

Q42. Do you own a bicycle for your own use at the moment? (ie this does not include, for example, a child’s bike which you own but which is not for your use)

- Yes, one bicycle □1 (go to Q46)
- Yes, more than one bicycle □2 (go to Q46)
- No □3 (go to Q43)
Q48. By which method of transport do you make the most number of journeys each week? (Please tick one)

- Car/van □ 1
- Bicycle □ 2
- Public transport □ 3
- Walking □ 4
- Other (Please specify) □ 5

Q49. What is the main purpose of your journeys by bicycle? (Please tick one box)

- Leisure □ 1
- Travelling to/from work □ 2
- Travelling to/from school/college/university etc □ 3
- Shopping □ 4
- Other personal business □ 5
- Other (please specify) □ 6

Q50. Since your bicycle was stolen, do you now cycle? (Please tick one)

- More often □ 1
- About the same □ 2
- Less often □ 3
- Not at all □ 4

IF YOU DO NOT NOW OWN YOUR OWN CYCLE, PLEASE NOW GO TO Q66

IF YOU OWN MORE THAN ONE BICYCLE, PLEASE ONLY CONSIDER THE BICYCLE YOU RIDE MOST OFTEN WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Q51. What type of bicycle is the one which you own and ride most frequently? (Please tick one)

- Mountain bike (thick tyres, straight handlebars, multiple gears) □ 1
- Hybrid (medium tyres, straight handlebars, multiple gears) □ 2
- Racer/tourer (dropped handlebars) □ 3
- Traditional town bike (straight handlebars, mudguards thin tyres) □ 4
- Small wheel, adult bicycle or folding bike □ 5
- BMX □ 6
- Other (please specify) □ 7

Q52. For how long have you had this bicycle? (Please write in)

______ Years _______ Months

Q53. Please estimate the value of this bicycle (Please tick one)

- £100 or less □ 1
- £101 to £200 □ 2
- £201 to £300 □ 3
- £301 to £400 □ 4
- More than £400 □ 5

Q54. Is the frame of your bicycle marked with your postcode?

- Yes □ 1
- No □ 2
- Don’t know □ 3

SECTION G - CYCLE REGISTRATION SCHEMES

Q55. Before reading this questionnaire, were you aware that these Registration Schemes existed?

- Yes □ 1 (go to Q56)
- No □ 2 (go to Q61)

Q56. Is your bicycle registered with one of these schemes?

- Yes □ 1 (go to Q57)
- No □ 2 (go to Q60)
- Don’t know □ 3 (go to Q61)
Q57. If yes: Under which type of scheme is your bicycle registered?

Private company scheme ☐ 1 (go to Q58)
Police scheme ☐ 2 (go to Q59)
Don’t know/can’t remember ☐ 3 (go to Q61)

Q58. If a private company scheme: What is the name of the scheme that your bicycle is registered with? (Please write in)

______________________________________________

Q59. How much did it cost to register your bicycle? (Please write in)

£ ______

GO TO Q61

Q60. If your bicycle is not registered: Why have you not registered your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)

Bicycle is not worth enough to worry about ☐ A
Never occurred to me ☐ B
Haven’t got round to it ☐ C
No need - bicycle never left unattended ☐ D
No need - bicycle is always secured ☐ E
Another reason (please specify) ☐ F

______________________________________________

SECTION H - CYCLE INSURANCE

Q61. Is your bicycle insured?

Yes - under bicycle insurance policy ☐ 1 (go to Q62)
Yes - extension to home contents policy ☐ 2 (go to Q62)
Yes - under home contents policy ☐ 3 (go to Q63)
No ☐ 4 (go to Q63)
Don’t know ☐ 5 (go to Q64)

Q62. Which company is it insured with? (Please write in below)

______________________________________________

GO TO Q61

Q63. If bicycle not insured: Why have you not insured your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)

Bicycle is not worth enough to worry about ☐ A
Haven’t got round to it ☐ B
Cost of premiums too high ☐ C
No need - bicycle is never left unattended ☐ D
No need - bicycle is always secured ☐ E
Another reason (please specify) ☐ F

______________________________________________
SECTION I - THINKING ABOUT BICYCLE THEFT

Q64. How does the possible theft of your bicycle affect the following? *(Please tick one box on each line)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How often you cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Where you cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Whether you secure your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. How you secure your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Whether you insure your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Where you park your bicycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. How much you will spend on purchasing a bicycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q65. Below is a list of statements. For each, please indicate whether you always, often, sometimes, rarely or never do the activity (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. When I leave my bicycle unattended, I worry about it being stolen</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I do not ride my bike because I am concerned it may get stolen</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I lock my bicycle when it is parked</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I secure my bicycle to an immovable object</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I only ride my bicycle when I know I will be able to secure it properly</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. If I leave my bicycle for only a few minutes, I lock it</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. I do not ride my bicycle for short trips because of the time taken to secure it</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. I leave my bicycle unsecured if I am going into a shop for a short time</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. I think carefully about where to park my bicycle</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q66. Following the theft of your bike, did you....? (Tick all those that apply)

- Give up cycling ☐A
- Use another bicycle that you own ☐B
- Borrow a bike ☐C
- Buy another bike ☐D
- Buy a better quality locking system ☐E
- Insure your bicycle ☐F
- Register your bicycle ☐G
- Make a note of bicycle details in case it was stolen again ☐H
- Other (please specify) ☐I

Q67. Has the theft of your bicycle affected you in other ways not covered in the questionnaire?

- Yes ☐1 (go to Q68)
- No ☐2 (go to Q69)
Q68. If yes: Please describe below how the theft has affected you

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Q69. Out of 100 bicycle owners, about how many do you think have had their bicycle stolen each year? (Please write in)

__________________ bicycle owners per year

Q70. How do you regard the theft of a bicycle in relation to .... (Please tick one box one each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much more serious</th>
<th>More serious</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Less serious</th>
<th>Much less serious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. the theft of a colour television
b. a car theft
c. vandalism of a public building
d. a burglary

Q71. Please write your postcode in the space. (N.B. This is to enable us to check that we have a nationally representative sample of people)

______________

Q72. Are you .... ?

Male □1
Female □2

Q73. What was your age last birthday? ________ Years

Q74. We may wish to conduct a further survey about initiatives to reduce cycle theft. If you would be willing to participate please write your telephone number (including Area Code) below.

________________________

Please return your questionnaire using the enclosed pre-paid envelope (no stamp required).

Thank you for your help with this survey
TRANSPORT RESEARCH LABORATORY
CYCLING SURVEY

Please complete this questionnaire by either ticking the boxes, as indicated, or by writing in the spaces provided. All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used for research purposes only.

SECTION A - YOU AND YOUR BICYCLE

Q1. How many times have you cycled during the last four weeks? (Please tick one box)

None □1
Five or less □2
Between 6 and 10 □3
Between 11 and 20 □4
More than 20 □5

Q2. Roughly how many miles do you cycle each year? (Please tick one box)

11-50 miles □1
51-100 miles □2
101-500 miles □3
501-1,000 miles □4
More than 1,000 miles □6
Don’t know □7

Q3. By which method of transport do you make the most numbers of journeys each week? (Please tick one box)

Car/van □1
Bicycle □2
Public transport □3
Walking □4
Other (Please specify) □5

Q4. What is the main purpose of your journeys by bicycle? (Please tick one box)

Leisure □1
Travelling to/from work □2
Travelling to/from school/college/university etc □3
Shopping □4
Other personal business □5
Other (please specify) □6

Q5. How many bicycles for your own use do you own? (ie. this does not include, for example, a child’s bike which you own but which is not for your use) (Please tick one box)

One □1
Two □2
More than two □3

IF YOU OWN MORE THAN ONE BICYCLE, PLEASE ONLY CONSIDER THE BICYCLE YOU RIDE MOST FREQUENTLY WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.
Q6. What type of bicycle is the one you own and ride most frequently? (Please tick one box)

- Mountain bike (thick tyres, straight handlebars, multiple gears) [ ]
- Hybrid (medium tyres, straight handlebars, multiple gears) [ ]
- Racer/tourer (dropped handlebars) [ ]
- Traditional town bike (straight handlebars, mudguards, thin tyres) [ ]
- Small wheel, adult bicycle or folding bike [ ]
- BMX [ ]
- Other (please specify) [ ]

Q7. For how long have you had this bicycle? (Please write in)

___ Years ___ Months

Q8. Please estimate the value of this bicycle (Please tick one box)

- £100 or less [ ]
- £101 to £200 [ ]
- £301 to £300 [ ]
- £301 to £400 [ ]
- More than £400 [ ]

Q9. Is the frame of this bicycle marked with your postcode? (Please tick one box)

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]
- Don’t know [ ]

Q10. Were you aware that these Registration Schemes existed?

Yes [ ] (go to Q11)
No [ ] (go to Q16)

Q11. Is your bicycle registered with one of these schemes?

- Yes [ ] (go to Q12)
- No [ ] (go to Q15)
- Don’t know [ ] (go to Q16)

Q12. Under which type of scheme is your bicycle registered?

- Private company scheme [ ] (go to Q13)
- Police scheme [ ] (go to Q14)
- Don’t know/can’t remember [ ] (go to Q16)

Q13. If a private company scheme:

What is the name of the scheme that your bicycle is registered with? (Please write in)

_____________________________________

Q14. How much did it cost to register your bicycle?

______ £

GO TO Q16

Q15. If bicycle not registered:

Why have you not registered your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)

- Bicycle not worth enough/too old to worry about [ ]
- Never occurred to me [ ]
- Haven’t got round to it [ ]
- No need - bicycle never left unattended [ ]
- No need - bicycle always secured [ ]
- No need - never had a bicycle stolen in the past [ ]
- Another reason (Please specify) [ ]
SECTION C - CYCLE INSURANCE

Q16. Is your bicycle insured?

Yes - separately under bicycle insurance policy ☐1 (go to Q17)
Yes - extension to home contents policy ☐2 (go to Q17)
Yes - under home contents policy ☐3 (go to Q17)
No ☐4 (go to Q18)
Don’t know ☐5 (go to Q19)

Q17. Which company is it insured with? (Please write in below)

____________________________________

GO TO Q19

SECTION D - THINKING ABOUT BICYCLE THEFT

Q18. If bicycle not insured:
Why have you not insured your bicycle? (Please tick all those that apply)

Bicycle not worth enough/too old to worry about ☐A
Haven’t got round to it ☐B
Cost of premiums too high ☐C
No need - bicycle never left unattended ☐D
No need - bicycle always secured ☐E
No need - never had a bicycle stolen in the past ☐F
Another reason (Please specify) ☐G

Q19. How does the possible theft of your bicycle affect the following? (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How often you cycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Where you cycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Whether you secure your bicycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. How you secure your bicycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Whether you insure your bicycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Where you park your bicycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. How much you will spend on purchasing a bicycle</td>
<td>☐1</td>
<td>☐2</td>
<td>☐3</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Q20.** Below is a list of statements. For each, please indicate whether you always, often, sometimes, rarely or never do the activity (*Please tick on box on each line*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Always 1</th>
<th>Often 2</th>
<th>Sometimes 3</th>
<th>Never 4</th>
<th>Not applicable 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. When I leave my bicycle unattended, I worry about it being stolen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I do not ride my bike because I am concerned it may get stolen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I lock my bicycle when it is parked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I secure my bicycle to an immovable object</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I only ride my bicycle when I know I will be able to secure it properly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. If I leave my bicycle for only a few minutes, I lock it</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. I do not ride my bicycle for short trips because of the time taken to secure it</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. I leave my bicycle unsecured if I am going into a shop for a short time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. I think carefully about where to park my bicycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q21.** If your bicycle were stolen would you .... ? (*Tick all those that apply*)

- Give up cycling [A]
- Use another bicycle that you own [B]
- Borrow a bike [C]
- Buy another bike [D]
- Buy a better quality locking system [E]
- Insure your bicycle [F]
- Register your bicycle [G]
- Make a note of bicycle details in case it was stolen again [H]
- Other (*Please specify*)

___________________________________________________________

**Q22.** Out of 100 bicycle owners, about how many do you think have their bicycles stolen each year? (*Please write in*)

___________ bicycle owners per year
Q23. How do you regard the theft of a bicycle in relation.... (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>much more serious</th>
<th>more serious</th>
<th>about the same</th>
<th>less serious</th>
<th>much less serious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) the theft of a colour television</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) a car theft</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) vandalism of a public building</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) a burglary</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q24. Are you .... ?

Male □
Female □

Q25. What was your age last birthday? __________ Years

Q26. Please write your postcode in the space (N.B. This is to enable us to check that we have a nationally representative sample of people)

__________________

Q27. We may wish to conduct a further survey about initiatives to reduce cycle theft. If you would be willing to participate please write your telephone number (including Area code) in the space below.

__________________

Please return your questionnaire using the enclosed pre-paid envelope (no stamp required)

Thank you for your help with this survey
Quota (or expected) sample
As described in section 4.1.1, it was envisaged that the percentages of cyclists (theft and control samples) would fall into the distribution shown in Table C1. This was based on DETR figures (Department of Transport, 1996a, 1996c).

Table C1 Expected sample (n=300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>90 (30.0%)</td>
<td>30 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29 years</td>
<td>56 (18.7%)</td>
<td>19 (6.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59 years</td>
<td>45 (15.0%)</td>
<td>15 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>34 (11.3%)</td>
<td>11 (3.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thieves sample
Table C2 shows the age/sex distribution for the number of questionnaires sent out and the number returned for the theft sample.
Analysis showed that the age/sex distribution of the questionnaires sent out varied significantly from the expected sample, shown in Table C1 (p<0.001). Similarly, the age/sex distribution of the questionnaires returned varied significantly from the expected sample (p<0.001).

The response rates (sent out versus returned) were also found to vary according to age and sex (p<0.001).

Table C2 Theft sample: age/sex distribution of questionnaires sent out and returned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Sent out (n=683)</th>
<th>Returned (n=293)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Returned Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>98 (14.3%)</td>
<td>38 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>74 (10.8%)</td>
<td>45 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59</td>
<td>202 (29.6%)</td>
<td>172 (25.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>36 (5.3%)</td>
<td>18 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Control sample
Table C3 shows the age/sex distribution for the number of questionnaires sent out and the number returned for the control sample.
Analysis was again performed on these distributions and the results were similar: the age/sex distribution of questionnaires sent out was significantly different from the expected distribution (p<0.001), as was the age/sex distribution of questionnaires returned (p<0.001).

The response rates (sent out versus returned) were, however, not found to vary according to age/sex (p>0.05).

Table C3 Control sample: age/sex distribution of questionnaires sent out and returned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Sent out (n=1050)</th>
<th>Returned (n=571)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Returned Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>47 (4.5%)</td>
<td>43 (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>87 (8.3%)</td>
<td>76 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59</td>
<td>323 (30.8%)</td>
<td>341 (32.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>72 (6.9%)</td>
<td>61 (5.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C - Response rates to survey: further details and discussion

Interpretation
This shows that the survey method used resulted in the control sample being atypical of the cyclist population. The control sample detected by the telephone survey (ie. the “sent out” sample) is representative of cyclists who have access to a telephone, who were at home when telephoned, and who agreed to co-operate in the survey. This has resulted in females, and people in the age group 30 to 59 years, being over-represented, whilst the others, particularly the young, are under-represented.

If the age/sex distribution of access to a telephone and agreement to participate in the survey are considered to be constant between those cyclists who have had a bicycle stolen and those who have not, it is observed that males aged between 16 and 20 years are over-represented in the theft “sent out” sample, compared with the control sample. This implies that this age group is more at risk of cycle theft than would be expected, probably due to the high levels of cycling for this age/sex group (as indicated in Table C1).

Conversely, females aged between 30 and 59 years are less likely then expected to be a victim of bicycle theft.

If the distribution of returned theft questionnaires is examined in relation to those sent out, it appears that young males were more inclined to complete the questionnaire than other age/sex groups. This could indicate that the loss of their bicycle was more ‘serious’ to them than to other age groups. To a young person, a bicycle could rank highly in their most valuable possessions and, as the DETR figures indicate, they are the most frequent cyclists, particularly, it is supposed, those who are as yet unable to drive a car.
Notes

1. In England and Wales, if more than one crime is committed at the same time, only the most serious criminal act is recorded for the criminal statistics. In Scotland, however, each crime is recorded. The theft of a bicycle from inside a house by someone who is trespassing is classified as a burglary. If the perpetrator is not trespassing, this is classified as theft in a dwelling.

2. ‘Theft and handling of stolen goods’ includes ‘theft of a pedal cycle’.

3. The City of London figures are not included in these graphs as its theft figures are disproportionately high, due to a very low population and high cycling levels by non-residents.

4. This is inconsistent with the number of people who claimed that their cycle was registered at the time of the theft (see section 4.2.3.3).

5. These unpublished figures were kindly provided by the Home Office, via personal communication with TRL.
Abstract

This report presents a summary of international literature on pedal cycle theft, cycle theft statistics for Great Britain and the results of a survey of victims of bicycle theft in Great Britain. The 1996 British Crime Survey estimated that there were 660,000 incidences of pedal cycle theft during 1995 in England and Wales, of which only 28% were reported to, and recorded by, the Police. The Scottish Crime Survey estimated that there were 26,000 bicycles stolen during 1993, representing a rise of 53% on the 1986 figures.

A survey of bicycle theft victims was conducted in December 1996 and January 1997. Topics covered include attitudes towards bicycle theft and how theft and the threat of theft affect cycling behaviour. These are compared with responses from a control sample of cyclists who have never experienced theft. Results from the survey are compared with British Crime Survey findings.

Related publications

TRL266  *Attitudes to cycling: a qualitative study and conceptual framework* by D G Davies, M E Halliday, M Mayes and R L Pocock. 1997 (price code E)

LR1134  *Cycle theft* by J M Morgan and R Roth. 1984 (price code AA)