

## Cycling with George

by Pip Howson

One of the more unusual tasks attached to the CycleCities project was one to provide "interactive humouristic cartoons for fostering awareness...". London Borough of Merton had the responsibility for the task and George is the name of the central character of a series of animations designed to encourage cycling across Europe. This is how George came about.



As usual the first hurdle in any task is finding a service within the budget allocated to the task. After initial investigations of professional animation companies it quickly became evident that the budget was not going to be sufficient. Necessity being the mother of invention, I decided to send an expression of interest to animators who were members of the London Cycle Campaign. I received three responses and from that I invited them into Merton to talk through the brief, budget constraints and milestones from that they were invited to tender.

Two of the responses were deemed equal so I requested funding from Transport for London so that Merton could award two contracts. Ben Ramasami animations, was commissioned for an animation to target teenagers which can be viewed on the <http://www.cyclecities.eu/results> website and has been disseminated to schools across London. The animation was picked up by CycleCities partner Gdansk and images used in their "Cycling May" campaign. The main CycleCities contract was awarded to Pandahouse animation and their animator Natasha Tonkin created George.

George starts off life as, unfit and pumping money into his congestion restricted car. As he watches cyclists passing him by while stuck in a traffic jam, he is inspired to change from car to bike and life begins to get better.

CycleCities is proud to announce that INTERREG has chosen to use George's "cyclefit" animation for their annual Open Day in Brussels this year.