



## MCC REJECTS COLLECTIVE GUILT

In a report in the Kildare Times dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May, Eva Mullen quoted Declan Keogh, Kildare Road Safety Officer as saying that road deaths can be avoided if every driver, cyclist, pedestrian and motor cyclist takes more care. Maynooth Cycling Campaign rejects collective guilt for carnage on the roads and point out that road users are only killed by motor vehicle drivers - not by pedestrians or cyclists. In a reaction typical of road safety experts in countries with high levels of car dependency, the mantra of 'helmets' is repeated as a panacea for cyclist fatalities rather than tackling speeding. This is despite the experience in countries with high rates of cycling which have low helmet use and low fatality rates. MCC consider that helmets are of limited benefit, are a matter of personal choice and should be left at that.

It is also worth noting that in countries with well developed cycling cultures such as Holland and Denmark, the prime responsibility for accidents involving motor vehicles and cyclists rests with the motor vehicle driver. This reflects the reality that the cyclist is a much more vulnerable road user, and that the motorist is in control of a potentially lethal vehicle and should expect unexpected behaviour from other road users. In relation to cyclists weaving in and out of traffic, cyclists choose their mode of transport for a variety of reasons, not least because a bicycle is often faster over short distances in urban areas. Where motorised vehicles are badly positioned with some hugging the kerb and others hugging the centreline, cyclists have little choice but to weave in and out. The only alternative is to cycle on the footpath which we condemn.

In conclusion, Maynooth Cycling Campaign agrees that speeding is one of the main causes of fatal accidents. However, unlike the Road Safety Officer, MCC asserts that those responsible should be blamed - not their victims.