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**Eureka**

**The Times today launches a campaign to improve the safety of cycling in Britain's towns and cities. It comes in the wake of a serious accident involving a young Times journalist**

# Save our cyclists

**Kaya Burgess** on his friend and colleague, whose journey to work ended in critical injury



**T**he reality with any major issue is that it only truly touches you when it comes close to home. However regularly you may cycle on Britain's city streets and however aware you are of the risks of doing so, it is not until you have seen one of your closest friends and colleagues stretched off the tarmac from beneath the wheels of a lorry only yards from the office that the vulnerability of cyclists hits home.

Mary Bowers is a news reporter at *The Times*. She joined the paper as a graduate trainee in September 2009, though her beaming smile and effusive personality were common sights around the office from previous roles as a researcher on the comment and foreign desks.

With a passion for social affairs investigations and witty features, she has a writing style that is as distinctive as her sharp, quirky dress sense. She also has a remarkable singing voice, and it is an honour to have been one of those lucky enough to perform with her on several occasions in the folk clubs of London.

Yet it is only by a hair's breadth that we are still able to talk about Mary in the present tense. Her survival to this point, now almost three months since her accident in London at 9.30am on Friday, November 4, is down to the passers-by who stopped and called the emergency services.

It is down to the paramedics who arrived on the scene within three minutes, to the fire crews who cut



JAS LEHAL FOR THE TIMES

Mary Bowers is still not conscious and is in the trauma unit of a hospital after her accident with a lorry three months ago



Mary and her mangled bike from beneath the wheels of the lorry, and to the doctors and nurses in the intensive care unit of one of the city's busiest hospitals. But Mary cannot thank them herself. Not yet. Not for a long time. Possibly never. Because, though she is stable, Mary is still not conscious and

remains in a trauma unit. Her broken legs, arm and pelvis are slowly healing, but other damage sustained during complications in her treatment, almost inevitable after so traumatic an injury, will be far harder to overcome, though she is making slow progress.

There are also people Mary would

not want to thank. There are the authorities who have neglected to ensure that junctions like those on The Highway in Wapping — or countless others where cyclists have been maimed and killed in Britain — are made safe for cars, lorries and cyclists to co-exist safely.

Mary, a news reporter, would be first to ask why it is not mandatory for lorries driving on city streets to be fitted with sensors and mirrors to pick up cyclists in their blind spots. Or why training for cyclists and drivers on how to share the road responsibly is so poor. Or why some junctions are so dangerous that jumping a red light can actually be a safer option than lining up alongside HGVs at the lights like a race-

Cyclists pay with their lives when they take to the streets



Campaign, pages 8, 9

track starting grid. Or why London trails so far behind cities such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen in terms of the infrastructure and legislation to protect vulnerable cyclists and to help the drivers who are trying to avoid them.

But such questions are not a priority at the moment for Mary's sister, Laura Fawcett, whose constant support by Mary's bedside has been a source of strength not only to Mary, but also to the huge circle of friends, colleagues and loved ones who are guarding her in their thoughts.

Laura said: "I'm angry that the accident happened and that it was even

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## IN THE NEWS

### 74 die in football riot

At least 74 people died and 248 were injured when football fans invaded the pitch at a match in Egypt. **News, page 3**

### Gay ceremonies row

The Church of England faces a rebellion from its clergy over a ban on civil partnership ceremonies. **News, page 3**

### Terror gang guilty

Members of a terror gang who plotted to attack Parliament have pleaded guilty to a series of charges. **News, pages 4, 5**

### Harry: too much tax

Harry Redknapp told a court that he has always paid too much tax rather than not enough. **News, page 11**

### Fitness First sackings

Almost the entire board of Fitness First has been axed in an attempt to stem potential huge losses. **Business, page 35**

## Inside today

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