



# CYCLE TALK

Produced by CTC Scotland

a part of the UK's national  
cyclists' organisation

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## Cycling & Public Transport

Dave Holladay

### All change for trains going South

November 11th saw with promise of HST's returning to deliver 500 seat trains again, with greater cycle capacity, and a plan of internal changes on the Voyager fleet to provide more seats and more luggage space. National Office is in touch with the mobilisation team, and is making sure that every opportunity is taken to keep cyclists represented at any stakeholder briefings - there was one in Edinburgh on 1st October, and others in York, Exeter and Birmingham.

9th December sees the bigger shake-up when National Express takes over from GNER on the Edinburgh-London route, and at the same time the Cross Country services between Glasgow and Manchester/Birmingham and the South-West. Birmingham services become Virgin West Coast (Pendolinos) but Manchester become First Transpennine Express, which would seem to be using their 3-coach Class 185 trains with just 2 bike spaces, and apparently only one reservable.

This does prompt a question over whether this change can be challenged as contra to the Scottish Rail Policy which requires that the bike capacity of a service is not reduced, and something members could ask their MSP to get an answer on. The Scottish detail is not in the Rail White Paper launched later for England & Wales, which instead called for a group to be set up with Cycling England and the rail operators, and pilot sites for station travel plans.

The loss of direct Glasgow-Plymouth/Penzance trains does seem a bit odd given the large number of family links and the End to End (LEJOG) connections where a through service is strongly desirable - just notice how many Daily Records and Sunday Posts are stacked up in Plymouth newsagents and you pick up the clue.

### A helping hand over the hills

Borrowing on operational experience from Sheffield, where Stagecoach runs a 2-bus Rural Links contract which carries around 30 bikes per month, Hitrans has grown their bike-bus coverage with a handy connecting bus from Skipness to Tarbert linking 3 ferry terminals Tarbert (Portavadie), Kennacraig (Islay), and Claonaig (Arran). Latest news is of a new bus order by Colin Craig for this West Coast Motors rural route - to support the original vehicle, which is reported to have carried over 100 bikes since service began in July this year - more detail next year when new ticket machines will have option to record bikes (at present relies on drivers' keeping a basic tally).

There are already bike carrying buses running on Speyside, and coaches provide further opportunities - Grantown is well served in this respect including a twice daily route from Moray along the A95. The most popular services are the Stagecoach Bluebird trips along the A96. On one occasion we hear that 8 cyclists and bikes got off the coach at Fochabers to ride the local forestry trails. The 8 bikes fitted in to the underfloor hold on the latest coaches (rear engine and open-plan (integral) construction) That's 16% of the maximum (seated) passenger load.

Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) secures cycle carriage by making it a condition of supporting bus services on the Outer Hebrides, but as yet this useful base-line standard is not widely taken up.

CTC is currently discussing other potential routes, especially where informal cycle carriage is taking place, or where a full size bus runs almost empty

## CTC Scotland

Sec: Mike Harrison Secretary@CTCScotland.org.uk +44 (0)131 554 7773 [phone may change before next issue]  
Councillor: Peter Hayman Councillor@CTCScotland.org.uk +44 (0)141 552 4336  
Chair: John Taylor johnwtaylor@care4free.net +44 (0)1556 670395

### Web Sites

CTC Scotland: [www.ctcscotland.org.uk](http://www.ctcscotland.org.uk)  
Cycling Scotland: [www.cyclingscotland.org](http://www.cyclingscotland.org)

most of the day (but often has to be a big bus because the school contract requires one). One day the writer provided 100% of the passenger count when he caught the bus from Blackridge, after a tyre exploded - saving a long hike or a big taxi fare, and the operator (Henderson's) noted they had no problem with bikes in this context. Key areas are the Borders (only one service per day officially can take a packed bike to Galashiels), Argyll (Scottish Citylink/West Coast Motors will carry packed bikes) North Angus, Deeside and Callander. Coach services to Banff & Buchan are already used, as are coach services in Fife, and Dumfries & Galloway. Commonsense in using coaches dictates that you should try to join at main stopping points where space is available, rather than at the side of a busy main road.

I suspect that a good starting point will be the smaller independent operators where decisions are free from the problem of setting a corporate precedent, and services are more likely to be the lightly used rural routes where the demand is likely to be greatest.

### Bridge to Nowhere may go Somewhere

The Sustrans bid for Lottery funding for the Connect 2 project will have Glasgow's Bridge to Nowhere - built (?) years ago when the M8 severed many vital East-West Routes including Argyle Street, which was the line of the historic Great Dumbarton Highway a centuries-old route. The vitality of the neighbourhoods through which this road ran - especially Anderston was



destroyed, with one amazing survivor in a lone sandstone tenement which sits ready to be reconnected at the West side of the bridge and houses the famous Buttery cafe. A film is to be made as part of the bidding for the projects chasing the Lottery money, prior to the vote at the end of this year. The Connect 2 projects are listed in full on the Sustrans website.

### A Waste of Money - Cycle Parking at every Station?

Old hands could have told Firstgroup, and The Scottish (Government ?) that this was a daft thing to promise. You only had to show the rusty remains of Central Region Council's cycle racks at every station policy at Dalmailly, Tyndrum (both) and Crianlarich to prove that a targetted policy of delivery of top quality parking where it was needed would have been a much better policy. But it did look good on paper.

It would have remained a simple folly but for the appalling standards of delivery which then followed. Cycle racks have regularly been installed jammed into a corner where cycles cannot be locked to the stand securely and the end hoop is unuseable, and at Linlithgow the old wheelgrip stand remains with the new unit hard against the fence and overlapping it making bike places in both units unuseable. At the Scotrail Cycle forum there seems a great reluctance to admit that this was a real waste on money for many of the locations, with poor specification of installations, and the lack of any selection in delivering a better facility where it would be used. A portfolio of the most pathetic sites is being collated by way of showing where the racks are simply cluttering up the station and serving no useful purpose - do photograph any you see on your travels, such as the 2 bike racks at Corour - as if anyone would have any need to lock a bike, or leave it at the station there!

### Shorts

- Stuart Knowles of Fife Council was in London on 25th October, to collect the award for Best Local Authority contribution in the ATOC Cycle Rail Awards ceremony - the award was for making the rail connection for Glenrothes - which by some rather serious planning oversight (called a focus on car-based communities perhaps?) does not have a railway station at its heart and leaves intending passengers with a long walk to Thornton or Markinch - the latter being on the direct line between Dundee (& Perth) and Edinburgh, and now linked by cyclistroute with access and parking at the station, the award was ironically sponsored by Cycling England!
- CTC is also joining other European organisations in a study of City Bikes, with the Inverness scheme (see Hitrans press release of Sept 2007) similar to the initial OV-Fiets bike hire for commuters running at over 100 Dutch Rail stations.
- There is now a regular meeting of First ScotRail's Cycle Forum.

## CTC Grampian news

The Aberdeen Cycle Forum, consisting mostly of CTC members, continues with its campaign against the proliferation of Central Islands. We are in favour of these islands in roads where there are pedestrians.

Where there are no pedestrians, roads people place them with the sole aim of slowing down traffic. This policy creates pinch points and endangers cyclists. Some councillors are impressed with our campaign and are inclined to ignore the council officers in the roads section.

### Challenge:

The CTC Group in Aberdeen challenges every Group in the country to outdo them in the number of organised rides per week. Last week (end October) was a typical week for the season: There was the weekly Thursday Morning Wobbly Wheelers Ride, the weekly Sunday Try Cycling ride, a Saturday medium pace 55 mile run, a Sunday Morning 30 miler and a Sunday Faster 75 miler.

In these five rides all tastes are catered for. Any challengers?

*Answer from Lothians Group: We can't match the number or variety of rides, but think we can challenge on numbers – our Wednesday Rides have usually between 25 and 30 riders, more in the winter than in the summer. The use of village halls, church halls, community centres as lunch stops is a principal reason. A £5 per person charge covers all Wednesdays from Oct-Mar (incl.) or 50p each time. We get warmth, an urn, toilets, and the chance to eat our own pieces and not spend a fortune on pub food. We can then spend our money on fattening cakes at an afternoon tea stop!*

## We'll take the shirt off your back.....

Brian Curtis has had a good response to his appeal in the last Cycle Talk to his appeal for cycle clothing to aid the South African Bicycle Empowerment Network know as BEN. If you didn't get round to sending him your contribution, there's still time. DO IT NOW!

He said "I would like to appeal to you now to send me at least ONE cycling shirt or piece of cycling clothing". Send it to Brian Curtis 23 Milton Crescent Edinburgh EH15 3PF. 0131 669 5918 [brianpcurtis@aol.com](mailto:brianpcurtis@aol.com)

## "Facility of the Month"

Those in the Right to Ride Network and who use the web will be familiar with Warrington Cycle Campaign's regular feature. Now the 'best' of these have been collected in a book of Britains 50 worst cycle lanes is now available at just £4.99 from [www.eye-books.com](http://www.eye-books.com). If you can't get it via the web, the address is Eye Books, 8 Peacock Yard, Iliffe Street, London, SE17 3LH; Tel: +44 (0) 845 450 8870. Royalties are going to the CTC's Cyclists Defence Fund. An excellent stocking-filler. A lot of the fun is in the ironical captions! Sample below:

### The Coventry Velodrome



This facility is at the heart of Coventry's bid to host the 2020 Olympics. The state-of-the-art stadium provides covered seating for six spectators, with an uninterrupted view of the 5m sprint pursuit event.



Sustrans says:

It has just been announced that the Sustrans' Connect2 project is through to the final vote of the Big Lottery Fund's: The People's £50 million contest in December. We are one of four projects competing for the single award of £50million. There is no second prize and the winner will be decided by a public vote. This is why we are asking all of you to please help us win £50 million to invest in cycling and walking across the UK.

We'd like you to do this straight away:

If you haven't done so already, please register your details now:

- visit [www.sustransconnect2.org.uk](http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk) and complete the blue form; or
- text CONNECT2 to 80010; or
- call 0845 058 1373 to leave us your contact details

We will then be able to get back in touch and let you know when and how to vote as soon as the final voting details are released.\*

Commit now to help us bring in the vote over the weekend of the 8/9th December.

We need you to join Sustrans staff in busy public places on the weekend of the vote to ask local people to vote there and then for Connect2 using their mobile phones. We aim to have a Connect2 team and stall in the larger cities and towns where there is a Connect2 project. Please let us know which day(s) you can help us so we can ensure we have maximum coverage in key places. Contact James Burden at: [james.burden@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:james.burden@sustrans.org.uk) or phone him on 0117 915 0110

With your help we have a very good chance of winning the Big Lottery Fund's: The People's £50 Million contest.

Many thanks in advance

\*Voting will happen online at [www.thepeoples50million.org.uk](http://www.thepeoples50million.org.uk) and by phone following the TV awards show due on ITV1 sometime w/e Dec 8-9.

## November Gathering

We'll report on this in the next issue. Hopefully it will produce some new initiatives to drive CTCs forwards, working more efficiently internally and in co-operation with other cycling organisations.

### AGM of CTC Scotland

**Saturday 19th January 2008 at 11:00 in Edinburgh at 30 Ravenscroft Place, Gilmerton, EH17 8QU**

There may have to be a late change to the venue. Please check on the web or phone your DA Secretary before setting off to the meeting.

ALL members may attend the AGM and the first Committee Meeting which follows it and contribute to the debate. Those elected by the Local Groups and the Rtr network are urged to attend to represent their constituents and to vote.