



CYCLETALK

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Cycle Campaigning

NTS – no, not the National Trust for Scotland, but the **National Transport Strategy**. Originally this was going to be out for consultation in mid-October. It's now looking as if it might be the end of the year, but there has been plenty to keep us going. The Scottish Executive has been running a series of meetings around the country to listen to stakeholders – whether councils, businesses, user groups, transport operators, environmental organisations. There was one specifically for walkers and cyclists within the 'themed' conferences as well as one on sustainable transport, and there have also been regional ones linking into the existing and the new Regional Transport Partnerships. Cyclists have been represented at many of these by people from Cycling Scotland, CTC and Sustrans as well as the local cycling campaign organisations such as Highland Cycle Campaign, Spokes, GoBike and the rest. Almost the last (which had not happened when this was written) planned is one organised by CTC and TRANSform Scotland jointly (26th November – if you get this early and want to attend see www.CTCScotland.org.uk/RtR) to question whether the strategy meets the real needs of cyclists and walkers. Once the draft is published (Nov-Dec 2005) there will be until about June 2006 for us to comment. It will be vital that we do consider it carefully and make appropriate comments both as individuals and as CTC Scotland.

Access - Core Paths

Local Authorities are now engaged in identifying the Core Paths in their areas. These may be ones used only by walkers, or they may be used also by horse-riders and cyclists. They are the ones which are most significant in terms of the connections they make or the people they serve. To quote from East Lothian's explanation on their web site:

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act came into effect in February 2005. The Act places various new duties on local authorities, one of which is to draw up a system of paths "sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area". These paths are to be known as Core Paths. Not all paths in an area will become Core Paths but they will form the basic framework of routes and they will link into and support wider networks of other paths. Whilst each Core Path may not be suitable for all user groups, the Core Path system as a whole will provide for all abilities.

The whole concept is complex (and it's taking Local Access Forums some time to acclimatise to it), but you can contribute. Look out for local consultations and make your comments. In many places these are already under way, other councils will be obliged to take action soon.

A TryCyclingInEdinburgh Ride at the new gates of Caroline Park. These rides are designed to encourage new and returning cyclists by showing them routes and helping them along the way at a speed they can manage. This ride was 15 miles and with stops to point out features and coffee took over 3 hours. CTCs is supporting TCiE.



AGM of CTC Scotland

This is arranged for Jan 21st at 11:00. Any CTC member is welcome to attend the AGM, even though only the appointed delegates get a vote. Sorry the venue is not fixed yet, email or phone Secretary to find out location.

Glen Trool



Several CTC HQ staff came to Scotland in September in connection with planning for the Birthday Rides – Kevin Mayne (Director) and Greg Woodford (Training) to talk with the Forestry and Dumfries Council about mountain bike leader training, and Rob Fuller and Alexandra Geen (Cycling Development) to see what we were planning for the Birthday

Rides. Having brought mountain bikes with them, they had to go for a ride in Glentool forest, while John Taylor and Mike Harrison opted out of the ride. Atypically, it was dull and damp, and they finished up covered in mud and soaking, but happy! The picture shows them starting out.

On cycling and public transport

Dave Holladay is doing a power of work with train and bus companies for CTC. Dave points out that Greater Manchester PTE has a phrase in its walking & cycling strategy draft, which can potentially be used in all LTP and integrated transport documents - the vision that all journeys are from "Doorstep to Destination", and that public transport cannot on its own deliver this package. Trains, buses etc have to connect up to walking & cycling to fulfil this requirement.

First ScotRail has asked a consultant to have meetings with cyclists. Ones have already been held in Glasgow (hosted by Go-Bike), in Inverness (Highland Cycle Campaign), Aberdeen (Grampian DA) and the final one will be in Edinburgh (Spokes).

In Edinburgh we see droves of cars heading out to Glentress at weekends with MTBs on the rack. Buses now are not capable in many cases of taking bikes, but Dave is pointing out to bus companies the potential market – especially with the 7stanes centres in Dumfries & Galloway. Some of these include Girvan (Glentool) - Newton Stewart (Kirkcubright) - Machars (almost Dalbeattie).

North Berwick trains are being replaced with refurbished 322s – with a dedicated cycle space, and there are other train refurbishments in the pipeline. Dave is working to get cycle facilities improved when these operations are taking place.

Cycling Scotland's conference with SE support

Since Cycling Scotland started 2 years ago the old Scottish Cycle Forum has not met. To keep the links with Councils, this conference invited key people from the Councils to come to Victoria Quay for a day. It worked – 30 of the 32 Councils supplied at least one person, and hopefully now councils, and not just the cycle officers in the councils, are better informed about the place of cycling as a form of transport, about the training which is available to council staff ("Making Cycling Mainstream" is the title), about the training which is available to youngsters (not just riding in the playground), about integrating cycling with public transport and much more. We, as enthusiastic cyclists, may know about all of this, but getting the message over to non-cyclists takes a lot of effort, and Cycling Scotland and the Scottish Executive are to be congratulated on this move.

Have you any good cycling photos?

We are looking for photos (preferably digital) to use for publicity purposes, so we are running a competition with a small prize or two. Pictures of cyclists sitting about eating sandwiches will not be accepted! They have to be inspiring (the photos, not the sandwiches or cyclists). Email (file size immaterial) copies to Councillor@CTCScotland.org.uk before Jan 18th to be eligible for the prize.

CTC Scotland

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Web Sites

CTC Scotland: www.ctcscotland.org.uk
Cycling Scotland: www.cyclingscotland.org

Birthday Rides Update 29 July to 5 August

A change has become necessary to the dates as Dumfries & Galloway College will be starting its academic year a week earlier than it has done in the past. This change will be inconvenient for some, but seemed to be the option which involved the least disruption to the plans which had already been made.

Several people from outwith Dumfries & Galloway had volunteered to help, and we hope that your holiday/work schedule will still allow you to be there for the revised dates.

One key job we are still looking to fill is that of **Site Manager**. Anyone who has had experience of running a Scout Camp or similar would be able to do this. They would not be expected to be on duty 24-hours a day (23 would do!), but would have others helping. We would like to have this person in place before the end of the year. I could write a sample job spec. if necessary. Contact Mike Harrison to discuss this if you are interested.

Other things are steadily being progressed. Despite having to shuffle things about with the date change, the plans for the rides are well advanced. The social programme and additional events are almost fixed and, having done the sums, we are almost ready to produce the brochure and booking forms.

Cycling Backwards

We often feel that transport development is going backwards (not only cycling – I used to reckon driving between Leeds and Edinburgh took 4 hours, 4½ on a bad day. Now it routinely takes 4¾ and up to 5¼ on a bad day). Now a well-known Edinburgh architect has taken this literally and cycled travelling backwards on the towpaths between Edinburgh and Glasgow in this fashion.

As National Bike Week ended, and Architecture Week began, Sebastian Tombs, 55, of Edinburgh, A+DS CEO, cycled backwards from Edinburgh to Glasgow. Using the towpaths of the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals, it took 18 hours over 2 days to complete the 58 miles, finishing on Fathers Day! The achievement is believed to be unique, and certainly the first time this means of transport has been attempted across Scotland, between its two greatest cities.

The best of it is that the sponsorship raised for the Project Trust, with whom daughter Rowena, 18, will be working in Sri Lanka with disabled women, will now reach the target of around £1000.

Sebastian commented "Rowena was fantastic – and I had complete trust in her judgement, as I could only very rarely look round to see what was approaching. Cycling backwards requires incredible concentration and focus, so it was pretty exhausting. The width, condition and surface of the towpath is very variable over the 58 miles; the worst are gravel, and cobbles! My bike had had no adjustments made to it, and I just wore my ordinary clothes, so sitting on the handlebars got decidedly sore at times - exacerbated when I came off! I'm offering a bottle of malt to the first person who can do it quicker than us, ie in under 18 hours travelling time."

Sebastian was back at work as normal on Monday 20 June, although he chose the conventional mode of riding his bike into the office on that occasion!

Pedal for Scotland

Pedal for Scotland had its most testing weather conditions in the 6 years it has been running. There was a record number of entrants, and though some didn't turn up and a few gave up at Linlithgow, there was what can only be described as 'grim determination' among the rest who battled their way against a strong headwind and rain to arrive in George Square to cross the finishing line. The promise that it won't be Edinburgh to Glasgow next year makes us hope that the wind will do what it is supposed to do – blow from the south-west!

Editor's Notes - Apology

My sincere apologies for publishing the photograph in the last issue of a lady in a wheelchair sitting beside some cycle stands and the accompanying caption. While I had seen only the humour of the situation, others picked up the elements of insensitivity and the demeaning of disability. A few people wrote about it, and no doubt there were others who felt the same way but did not write – apologies to all.

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A1 Dunbar to Berwick-on-Tweed

Have you cycled this route? No! I wonder why? Well, you can get from Edinburgh to Dunbar by a reasonably direct route along the old A1 to Haddington, then along the cycle-foot path, and if you are prepared to negotiate a few obscure back lanes you can get as far as Thorntonloch, but from there the only way to Cockburnspath is along the A1 itself, which takes all the really heavy lorries that don't want to go over Carter Bar to get south. And from the Eyemouth junction to B-on-T the A1 is the only option. That's why the Sustrans NCN Route 1 goes over the Granites to Innerleithen and then down the Tweed. It's a good route, but sometimes people want to go round the coast (and for the "North Sea Cycle Route" (NSCR) to go inland to Innerleithen seems a bit perverse). The John Muir Way follows the coast through East Lothian and the Council is keenly promoting Nortrail – the walking equivalent of the NSCR. We are asking that the cycling gaps should be bridged. Amey have produced a feasibility report and agree that a cycleway could be constructed on the south verge of the A1 between the Bilsdean and Skateraw roads. Unfortunately, money seems to be the issue as Neil Wands doesn't have any at the moment and the maintenance budget is not for new works.

You can (should) e-mail Neil Wands neil.wands@scotland.gsi.gov.uk and write to your MSP seeking implementation of this scheme.

It's a vital missing link and only 2 kms in length! When Peter Hawkins spoke to people at the CS/SE conference about it, they said one reason for not building it is because there are no cyclists on the A1!!!!

A90 ban

Fife to Edinburgh cycle commuters were dismayed in October when the ban on cycling on the A90 from just south of the Road Bridge to the outskirts of Edinburgh was implemented. A year ago when cyclists objected to the proposal we were told that it would not be implemented until a reasonable alternative was in place. A year later no improvements have been made to the alternative, but the ban has gone ahead. We had asked for widening (so that 2 cyclists with luggage going in opposite directions could pass each other – seems pretty basic on a main long-distance path!), lighting (so that at night you were not dazzled by oncoming headlights) or at least screening from car lights, and a decent surface. Throughout the UK there is concern at the ease with which cycles can be banned from roads because it's easier and cheaper than making provision for them. The argument seems to be "There are accidents with cycles, so cycles are a danger, so we'll ban cycles". We would rather that the argument was "There are accidents with cycles, so motor vehicles are a danger to cyclists, so we'll ban motor vehicles". The real logical argument would be "There are accidents to road users, some are caused by poorly designed facilities, some are caused by poor user behaviour or skills, so we will improve the facilities and improve road behaviour".

Top 4 excuses given by locals for not cycling in Brussels:

- There are too many hills in Brussels
- It rains all the time in Brussels
- Brussels, the capital of Europe, is too big
- It's dangerous to cycle in Brussels

Have you ever heard the like?



3rd GRAMPIAN RALLY

MARYCULTER, ABERDEEN FRI 26 MAY – WED 31 MAY 2006

It will take our usual popular format of (approx) 20, 40, 60 mile led runs on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, together with social activities each evening, culminating in a Buffet Meal & Ceilidh on the last night.

The main contact person for information and bookings is:

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