

ChainLinks

The newsletter of the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ)

Summer 1998

Editorial

First I must thank Robert Ibell who stood in as editor for October after I suffered a minor accident which took me away from the keyboard for a few weeks. I'm sure you'll all agree he did a good job at short notice. Thanks Robert.

Why "Summer 1998"? Well when handing over the reins I forgot to tell Robert when the dreaded "exam time" started, so the November deadline got set during this period and I was busy marking scripts with no time to produce an issue. It was already planned to produce a Dec/Jan issue – between Christmas and New Year if I'm thinking about bikes I hope it is from the saddle not editing *ChainLinks*, and I'm sure you all hope to be in a similar position! So I've decided to go for a bumper summer issue...

In this issue we've got news from around NZ and the world.. Robert, probably to get his own back, asked if I could also include the article I wrote for the *Dominion* on car helmets, so that's here too.

So happy holidays everyone, wherever you may be pedalling (or not)! I myself hope to be over in Canada, where it will be the middle of winter with sub-zero temperatures – cycling is unlikely, but I hope to meet up with the *Ontario Coalition for Better Cycling* and bring back news. ☺

On the Right Track – Railway to Cycleway

More than 200 miles of former railway routes are to be incorporated into the UK National Cycle Network following their acquisition by Sustrans, the charity responsible for the Network's construction. The former trackbeds include some crucial long distance sections as well as many vital urban links. A unique covenant signed between Sustrans and the UK Government will ensure their future use as transport corridors.

Glenda Jackson, Under Secretary of State for Transport, welcomed the acquisition and said that the inspirational National Cycle Network would offer many cycling opportunities for work, school, tourism and recreational journeys.

Most railway line closures in NZ happened before anyone thought of using them for cycleways. The Central Otago Rail Trail, currently under construction by the Department of Conservation, is open to cyclists, walkers and horse riders in some fairly extended sections. We'd be please to get a report from anyone who's tried it out. ☺

Always Look on the Bike Side of Life – Bike Week 1999

No one's come forward yet with offers to help co-ordinate a national campaign or event for CAN in next year's Bike Week (13-21 February). We do know that CAN groups are preparing some great activities at a local level, however.

As for this year's event, Bike Week is again being co-ordinated by the Cycle Steering Committee (a judicious blend of government and non-government organisations with a strong safety focus). People on the CAN email network were asked for their comments on suggested themes for the week. The suggestions had been mostly of the "wear your helmet" variety and CAN members felt pretty strongly that the theme needed to promote cycling as an enjoyable activity.

The theme chosen by the CSC is "family cycling/cycling for everyone", with the slogan "always look on the bike side of life". They're producing a poster for Bike Week on that theme. The poster, together with other very useful freebies are available to people organising events during Bike Week. An order form and a sample of one of the freebies (the Street Skills "6 Skills Disc" for kids) are enclosed for groups. Other members wanting copies should contact CAN or the Cycle Steering Committee (Jane Williams, Heath Sponsorship Council, tel: 04 472 5777 or fax: 04 472 5799). ♿

New Cycle Planning Publication From IHT

The Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) is a British professional body of mainly, but not entirely, roading engineers. Not the sort of body you would expect to produce well thought-out, quality documents on cycling? Wrong!

In the 1990's, the IHT struck up a constructive relationship with Britain's Cyclists' Touring Club, and with them coauthored "Cycle Friendly Infrastructure: Guidelines for Planning and Design". This stressed that measures to reduce and calm traffic can do more to benefit cycling than "cycling facilities" can, and that intersections are frequently a bigger problem than mid-block locations. A much needed reminder when the well-meaning world seems to see providing for cycling mainly in terms of "cycleways" and "cycle lanes".

"Guidelines for Cycle Audit and Cycle Review" is a new publication from IHT, and though I haven't yet seen a copy, knowing the "stable" it comes from I can recommend people to take a look. The strength of *Cycle Audit* and *Cycle Review* is that it considers the road system as a whole. Rather than an "add-on" of "cycling facilities" to a basically hostile road environment, it is an audit of that environment to see what is needed to turn it "cycle friendly". *Cycle Audit* is applied to proposed roads at various stages in the design process. *Cycle Review* is applied to existing roads in the same way.

My only question is whether this should be integrated with the general *Safety Audit* of road proposals, so long as the impact on cycling is clearly itemised, and not “lost”. However, the main thing is that something is being done to try to catch the cycle-unfriendly (euphemism for “b----y dangerous”) gobblers that we all know so well can slip through the road engineers’ net.

“Guidelines for Cycle Audit and Cycle Review” can be obtained from: Institution of Highways and Transportation, 6 Endsleigh Street, London, WC1H ODZ, UK. Price (including postage to NZ) £29 one copy, £78 three copies, send payment with order. 🚲

Roger Boulter

Further Transfund Foray

In last month’s Chain Links I reported on a meeting I’d had with Dr Ian Appleton, Safety Audit Manager at the head office of Transfund NZ. Since then I’ve darkened their door once again. I spoke to Ian Melsom, who’s in charge of their Project Evaluation Manual, the document that says what criteria will apply when assessing transport funding applications.

It was a timely visit. Transfund had recently rejected a draft working paper from Australian consultants called “Evaluation of Cycleways” and were about to start all over again and issue revised instructions to a new consultant. CAN was given the opportunity to make suggestions for the new review. Many thanks to those members of the email network who responded on this.

We particularly stressed the need to stop seeing segregated cycle facilities as the answer – they should only be used where specific circumstances warrant it, and unless they are well constructed they may be worse than no facilities.

CAN has been told it will be given the opportunity to peer review the new working paper prior to it being considered by the Transfund board. If you would like to be involved in this, please contact me.

I’d been asked by a couple of CAN members to find out what cycling things Transfund will consider funding, and under what criteria. I’m hoping to have a succinct and useful answer to these questions soon. 🚲

Robert Ibell



VeLOZity

Registration brochures are enclosed for this cycling conference in Australia in Feb 99 (extra copies are included for groups to send to local authority staff, councillors, Transit & Transfund offices, etc.). Some CAN members have already indicated they hope to attend – if we can get 10 registrations, we qualify for the group discount. If you’re keen, contact CAN asap. 🚲

Pedestrian Crossings: Endangered Species?

Recently in Palmerston North there has been debate over the use of “raised pedestrian platforms” rather than pedestrian crossings – in particular for a new, in the local council’s words, “unique pedestrian” development. These wonderful inventions of the car-centric age provide places for pedestrians to cross the road without the inconvenience of giving them priority over the cars. However the AA has also raised concerns over them due to the ambiguity of their function – most people do not know what they are or who has priority.

The following article was written for The Press in 1996 by CAN member Dave Kelly of Christchurch. In the light of the emergence of the raised pedestrian platform it makes interesting reading [Ed].

Pedestrian crossings in Christchurch are under threat from two directions: driver behaviour and City Council changes. Dave Kelly argues that they are too important to lose without a fight.

Anyone from Christchurch visiting Britain is bound to be struck by one major difference in road behaviour: British drivers fall over themselves to stop at pedestrian crossings. On returning home it seems that some local drivers will go to any lengths short of manslaughter to make the pedestrian wait for them, rather than the other way around. The net effect is that pedestrian crossings feel much more dangerous than they once did, although the data to measure changes in actual injury rates are not available. To metaphorically add insult to injury, the City Council has now begun to remove pedestrian crossings from city streets, replacing them with median refuges – which take priority away from the pedestrian and give it back to the cars. Are pedestrian crossings in danger of extinction? I would certainly mourn their passing; they protect the vulnerable and make a statement about the rights of even the carless to a place on our roads. If we are to preserve them, determined action will be needed from both pedestrians and drivers right across the city.

Legally speaking, pedestrian crossings are marked sections of road where a person crossing the road on foot has right of way over vehicles moving along it. They are not installed lightly; stringent criteria must be met regarding pedestrian numbers, traffic densities, visibility lines and so forth. In the UK and the USA, the right of way for pedestrians is taken very literally. One soon learns in Britain not to linger on the footpath near a crossing, because the traffic will stop assuming that you intend to cross the road. In New Zealand, the opposite is often true. You can walk part way out on the crossing, clearly hoping to cross, and many cars will squeeze by as long as they can miss you by the narrowest of margins.

It was not always so in this country, and this is more than nostalgia for the “good old days”. There was a sudden worsening in driver behaviour from 1978, precipitated by an ill-advised change in the law. Rather than require drivers to stop when a pedestrian was anywhere on the crossing, as before, the new law merely required drivers to miss pedestrians by 4 metres (quite a generous amount). Drivers, however, forgot the 4 metres

and took this to mean only that they shouldn't hit pedestrians. Terror ensued, and the law was changed back within the year, but the behaviour patterns were not so easily unlearned. Over the years since, drivers have on average become much more callous about intimidating pedestrians into not claiming their right of way – although there is even now, thankfully, a sizeable group of courteous drivers who willingly stop at crossings.

So one threat to pedestrian crossings is that some drivers do not yield right of way when they should. Enter the second threat to crossings: the Christchurch City Council. Recently, more than a dozen crossings throughout the city have been removed, and replaced by median refuges. Examples include in Riccarton Rd near Harakeke St, by St Martins School near Albert Terrace, and at the top of Yaldhurst Road.

The refuges allow you to hide safely in the middle of the road, but provide no assistance whatsoever in crossing the traffic lanes to and from them. Where new refuges are added to a road which had no pedestrian facility (such as on Park Terrace opposite the Salisbury St footbridge) they are a welcome addition which has been shown by the Land Transport Safety Authority to improve safety. Where they replace a crossing, and thereby strip the pedestrian of rights and give them over to the vehicles, they represent a fundamental attack on the equitable balance between various road users.

Remember, pedestrian crossings have to be justified in terms of traffic densities and so forth, and these tiny strips represent the only places on the entire roading network where motor vehicles take second place to humans on foot. Their removal forces pedestrians to wait until no motor vehicle will be delayed before they may cross the road. At busy times, this may be a considerable wait. The principle is odious.

So why has the Council taken this step? It does not have the status of a formal policy, and Council officers are far from unanimous about the wisdom of such moves, but the motivation is for the best: to improve safety. The argument goes that a particular pedestrian crossing may have become dangerous (because cars don't give way), so there will be fewer injuries if it is removed.

This seems to me to miss the point entirely. It is as if, in response to attacks on women at night, the problem was solved by not letting women go outside their homes. In other words, shift responsibility to the victims. If accidents decrease when a crossing is removed it would be because pedestrians are bearing the costs of longer delays and greater caution in order to cross a road. Meanwhile drivers are rewarded for their bad behaviour by no longer having to slow down. Surely this is a gross inequity. Will we so easily give up on the principle that rights of way on the roads should be shared among large and small, among powerful and powerless, among fast and slow users of the roads? Surely better to somehow improve driver observance of pedestrian crossings.

Road behaviour can be changed for the better. Twenty years ago few wore seat belts and driving while drunk was a sign of manliness. Ten years

ago few wore cycle helmets or used child restraints. It would be possible to improve behaviour towards pedestrian crossings, and the City Council has a publicity campaign planned for this year along those lines. This makes the removal of crossings all the more puzzling.

Moreover, the removal of pedestrian crossings runs contrary to an explicit policy of the City Council. Late in 1995 the Council resolved to “cultivate the rights of pedestrians on roads”. Clearly, removing pedestrian crossings runs completely counter to this resolution, and could only be justified on serious safety grounds. Surely things have not come to such a perilous state of affairs that this is necessary?

Perhaps we need a Society for the Conservation of Pedestrian Crossings. Everyone can be a member; there are things we can all do to preserve them. Drivers can remember that this is one of the few places where pedestrians have right of way, and yield way willingly rather than as a last resort. The delay to your journey really will be minuscule. Also, take care that the car in front of you may stop at a crossing! Pedestrians, without being foolhardy, assert your rights to cross. Step onto the crossing to signal your intentions, fix the driver with your gaze, and implicitly request the right of way which is legally yours. Don't fight to the death for this right, however, as the death would likely be your own. And residents, if there is a pedestrian crossing in your area (perhaps near your local school), adopt it, care for it, and tell the Council or your local Community Board that you would very much like to keep it. You could even ask for new ones to be put in – a sort of breeding programme for this threatened species.

Dave Kelly lectures in ecology in the Plant and Microbial Sciences Department at the University of Canterbury, and takes an interest in the effects of transport on the environment. ♻️

Towards Sustainable Transport for Tourism



Cycling and the National Cycle Network have important parts to play in developing sustainable tourism in the UK, according to evidence from Sustrans to the British Government's consultation paper “Tourism – Towards Sustainability”.

Already helping to raise the profile of cycling, the Network has the potential to increase significantly the number of tourist trips by cycle to the level achieved by the more cycle-friendly countries in Europe.


Reducing car dependency by domestic holidaymakers and day trippers has become a target of public policy – tourism is now recognised as adding to congestion and pollution in a number of areas. This problem is both urban – for example in York, Bath and Cambridge – and rural, as in the Lake District, Dartmoor and the Peak District.

The National Trust has set itself targets to reduce the number of visitors to its sites by car and a number of Millennium projects, such as the Earth Centre in Doncaster, are proposing differential pricing to encourage the use of bikes and public transport.

Sustrans has identified three ways in which the Network is important to the growth of tourism:

Domestic and overseas holidays: Long distance flagship routes such as the West Country Way and the Sea to Sea (Whitehaven to Sunderland) are attracting growing numbers of UK and overseas visitors.

Local leisure & day trips: The Network passes within two miles of 20 million people. The most popular sections of route, such as the Bristol and Bath path, attract large numbers of local day trippers and leisure users – near to their homes.

Providing links – cycling as transport: By offering safe, attractive routes linking urban centres to countryside, tourist attractions, rail stations and neighbouring towns and villages, the Network is providing the means to travel without the need for a car. At least 270 railway stations are within one kilometre of the Network. 

Source: Network News, Sustrans, UK, 3rd quarter 1998

[This raises a few issues which Robert Ibell will follow up in the next issue, relating to the NZ situation and proposing a modest Millennium Fund project in NZ to kick-start a national cycle touring route network. Ed.]



Dear Sir...

I was at the Auckland Regional Cycle Group recently. A new map is being prepared to show cycle routes in and out of and through Auckland. On the back are various safety messages, tips at intersections, etc. I was reminded by the LTSA rep that cycling straight ahead on a left only lane is illegal. I have since checked the traffic regulations. No matter how hard I looked for ambiguities, the LTSA are right, it is illegal. This won't stop me. It is safer to mix with lesser volumes of slower left turning traffic than to take up a position in the faster through lane – at least at the intersections I regularly use.

To make my intentions clear I often indicate a right turn or lane change although I am going straight ahead (in the left only lane). Because it is not legal the Auckland Regional Cycle Group won't give the above advice on the back of their map. Anyone interested in helping me to put a case to LTSA to have the regulations changed? What other changes could be made to traffic regulations to make things safer for cyclists?

John Gregory, Auckland

[You may contact John by email as gregory@buckley.pl.net, by fax on (09) 625 6505, or by letter c/o CAN for forwarding.]

UK: Phone Company Gets On Its Bikes

A few years ago a Norwegian company rewarded employees with cheap bicycles. This time a British phone company has equipped four office facilities with free bikes

British mobile telephone company *One 2 One* has announced that it is to encourage employees to cycle. The firm, based in Borehamwood, has bought 16 bikes so that staff can cycle between its four sites in the Hertfordshire town, 40 miles from London.

A company spokesman said that due to the distance between buildings, staff had been walking or driving to the different sites, which was either environmentally unfriendly or a waste of time.

The vastly increased number of employees had also led to car park congestion.

The spokesman said that each site would have four bikes, provided by Halfords, the national bike company, and “with the warmer weather, we hope employees will take the plunge, leave the car behind, and see for themselves the benefits of cycling.”

The scheme was the idea of employee Kathy Hunter and was quickly backed by director John Murray. It was launched by James Clappison MP, and Hertsmere mayor Martin Haywood. 🚲

Will Bramhill/Bicycle News Agency

Going Dutch: New Traffic Law Puts the Burden of Proof on Motorists

These days, going Dutch means more than splitting the bar tab. When it comes to settling the high cost of a car/bike crash, the Netherlands are about to tip the scales of justice in favour of cyclists. Last November the Dutch government began drafting a law giving cyclists legal right of way on city roads. Motorists will automatically be at fault and liable for all damages in a collision with a bike.

“The idea behind the law is that if you drive a car you present more of a threat than someone who is non-motorised,” says Dutch Ministry of Justice spokesman Wijnand Stevens. “And because drivers must be insured, it made sense to put liability for damages with the driver. This is not determining responsibility for an accident, just liability.” Of the 1,300 people who died on Dutch roads in 1996, 400 were pedestrians or cyclists.

Up until now, Stevens says, an injured cyclist would have to take the case to court to establish liability – a long and costly process for the uninsured cyclist. Under the new law drivers are automatically liable and can only get off the hook in a case “where a conscious deliberate action by the cyclist causes the accident, like being drunk or cycling through red lights during rush hour.”

Automobile organisations condemn the legislation saying guilt, not mode of transport, should determine liability. They argue that the proposed law will mean an increase in car insurance rates. Some voice concern that the changes could lead to more cyclists breaking traffic rules. But Stevens says this hasn't been the case in France where a similar law was introduced in 1985.

The Dutch law should be in place by 1999, and the government hopes it will draw even more of the nation's 16 million bikes (for a population of 16 million!) onto the roads. ☺

Bruce Thorson, *Bicycling*, July 1998

News From Italy



Italian Bicycle Promotion Law Approved

Recently the Italian Senate approved a new law on "Rules for financing bicycle mobility", which was already approved by the Chamber of Deputies.

The law places responsibility on local regions to draw up plans for cycling facilities, and also provides funds for publishing of cycle maps, education in the schools about sustainable transport, etc.

A press report from FIAB (*Federazione Italiana Amici della Bicicletta*, the Italian Federation of Bicycle Advocacy Groups) states that "the budget is not very high – slightly above 60 million Euro, where as our original proposal was that 3% of all the funds designated to road constructions had to be used for cycling facilities and bike promoting – but it will be possible to use funds from the European Union and 20 percent of the governments income from fines."

"Now," says Luigi Riccardi, chairman of FIAB, "the big work is to be done by local authorities, and local advocacy clubs have to urge them to plan bicycle facilities, using regional and municipal funds where needed."

An Association For Cycle-friendly Journalists

Its rather seldom for journalists to dedicate themselves to promoting a specific cause. But on October 3, 15 Italian journalists formed the "Associazione Giornalisti Italiani Cicloambientalisti" (Italian Association of Cycle-Ecologist Journalists)

"As media operators", it is said in the manifesto of the association, "we commit ourselves to promote the use of the bicycle, giving visibility to its personal and social convenience and to its health-benefits." Upcoming initiatives are meetings to discover touristic places by bike (and to report about them) and a forum about improving health by cycling.

New Official FIAB Web Site

FIAB, Italian member of the European Cyclists' Federation, has redesigned their official web site <<http://fiab.freeweb.org>>.

The site now provides information about bike advocacy in Italy (translated into English, German and Spanish whenever possible). Update your bookmarks and links if you get that Italian urge once in a while. Contact webmaster, Stefano Gerosa (email gerry@micanet.it), to be put on the Italian mailing list of bicycle advocates. ☺

Loris Tissino/Bicycle News Agency

Helmets for Cars Would Save Lives

Wearing helmets in cars has been proved more effective in preventing serious injury than cycle helmets, but promoting car helmets is likely to meet heavy opposition, writes Nigel Perry

The recent media reports (*Teletext 27/9, Dominion 28/9 & 29/9*) on helmet wearing for motor vehicle occupants brings to the public attention an issue that many would rather they not hear about. The media reports originated from the release of a report by the *Federal Office of Road Safety* (FORS), the Australian counterpart of New Zealand's *Land Transport Safety Authority* (LTSA), which states there would be huge savings if motor vehicle occupants wore helmets.

New Zealander's might be forgiven for thinking that the FORS report contained new information, whereas in fact the benefits of wearing helmets, or padded headbands, in cars has been known for rather a long time. Indeed not only has this been known, but the advantages of helmets/headbands over such things as airbags is also old information. There are also real concerns over the negative aspects of airbags, such as the injuries they can cause, the difficulty of fitting them to many existing cars, and their high cost – especially when compared to the \$15 for a helmet or headband.

The Minister of Transport, Maurice Williamson, was quick to respond to the recent reports saying "The Government not the LTSA makes road transport policy. The issue of safety helmets for drivers is not a goer" (*Dominion, 29/9*). Why such a quick and decisive put down of the FORS report? Why have we not heard more about helmets for motor vehicle occupants, while helmets for cyclists have been promoted and made law, especially when from a scientific perspective, helmets for motorists make far more sense than helmets for cyclists?

The answer lies in politics. FORS has broken ranks with the rest of the helmet promoting community and in doing so has endangered a situation others have taken years to produce: when promoting helmets you never mention motor vehicles!

Those promoting helmets have only had a few successes worldwide. In Sweden they succeeded in promoting cycle (and sport) helmets to such an extent that children wore them even when not cycling. This ended up causing problems and the Swedes reported deaths caused by helmets getting stuck in trees, railings, etc. and the straps strangling children. The response was to design a new buckle which comes undone on impact... which they admit makes the helmet even more useless for on road use...

In Japan one City allowed schools to require children *walking* (that is not a misprint) to school to wear helmets. This proved as unsuccessful at reducing injuries as cycle helmets, and what negative message was imprinted on the children's minds of their rights to walk freely we can only surmise.

Finally of course, two countries were persuaded to pass national laws requiring cyclists to wear helmets, even though by the time this happened the problems were well known. Today only New Zealand still has a nationwide law for all its citizens.

The scientific verdict on the efficacy of helmets for activities such as cycling is at best undecided, though the evidence tends towards not supporting their compulsory use. Indeed research published in both Australia and New Zealand has shown that compulsory helmet legislation is usually less than successful and can in fact have negative effects. When the New Zealand research was presented at an international safety conference in Australia its authors commented that it had been sent back "2 or 3 times" by the LTSA to be checked as the results were apparently not politically acceptable. Since then it has not been widely publicised here but is well known abroad. Recently it has been cited as showing the failure of cycle helmet legislation to reduce deaths and serious head injuries in a Coroner's investigation of 38 cycling fatalities over a 11 year period in Toronto, Ontario.

Some of the key research that helmet promoters rely on to support their case has also been shown to be fundamentally flawed by an Australian researcher – apparently the work also "proves" that helmets (worn on the head) reduce knee injuries! On top of this helmet promoters face the problem that helmets make more sense for motorists than cyclists. The head injury risk per hour is about the same for motoring and cycling, there are many more driving hours than cycling ones, driving offers no health benefits unlike cycling, and on average motor vehicle occupant accident victim health care costs are higher than those of cycle accident victims.

However, as the response of the NZ AA shows (*Dominion 29/9*), promoting helmets for motorists will meet heavy opposition from the motoring lobby, but that same lobby will back helmets for other activities, in particular the potential victims of motorists...

Why does all this matter? Some of course will find requiring cyclists, who are invariably the victims, to wear helmets while motorists who would benefit more, and happen to be those causing the injuries to cyclists, is a

little hypocritical. However for a more worrying answer we turn to Australia where one researcher has stated that despite all the efforts put into helmet wearing that an un-helmetted Danish cyclist is still far safer than a helmetted Australian one. This it is claimed is a common pattern. Where helmets have been rejected but other measures adopted, the cyclists are safer than where “cycle safety measures” and “promote helmet wearing” have become synonymous, as in New Zealand and to a lesser extent Australia.

Given this, it is not surprising that after 5 years of our “successful” cycle helmet legislation, New Zealand remains the only country with such a law for all its citizens. Meanwhile other Governments have used the New Zealand experience as part of the reason not to introduce their own cycle helmet legislation. And it is not only Governments, when helmet promoters tried to introduce a law in Quebec both the Police and medical profession objected!

To summarise: the current cycle helmet legislation has failed to provide the benefits claimed; non-helmet based cycle safety programmes have been more successful; overseas Governments have rejected cycle helmet legislation based partly on our failure; and helmets make at least as much sense for motorists.

Do we not owe our children, and ourselves, more than the current hypocrisy? Why are not other countries racing to copy our “success”?

Nigel Perry, Massey University computer science lecturer, published a paper on helmet safety at the 3rd International Conference on Injury Prevention and Control (Melbourne, 1995) 🚲

Dominion

Sustainable Transport Network Newsletter

This newsletter has been put together by the *Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA)*. It aims to provide a link tying together an informal network of groups with a common interest in creating a more sustainable transport future for New Zealand, thereby realising the full range of benefits associated with improving transport energy use in New Zealand. In particular, EECA wants to include the activities and views of sustainable transport end-user groups alongside those of central and local government and other transport providers.

Under the umbrella of “sustainable transport end-users” are:

- public transport users
- pedestrians
- cyclists
- car-poolers
- telecommuters.



The newsletter will be distributed primarily by email, initially every three months. If you would like to receive it contact Liz Yeaman, Transport and Local Government Executive at EECA, PO Box 388, Wellington. Phone: 04 470 2228. E-mail: Elizabeth.Yeaman@doc.govt.nz. Please let Liz Yeaman know of others who would like to receive the newsletter by email, or of any groups who would like to receive a printed version because they have no access to email. Ideas for items are also welcomed. ☺

In Brief

- Bike to Work Day – Wellington's second BTWD of the year happened on Friday 13 November, a day Cycle Aware Wellington described as being unlucky to drive your car on. The event got heaps of media attention, including a front page photo and article in the Evening Post and a 15 second slot just before Jim Hickey's weather show on TV1. CAW members at three stalls on key commuter routes handed out drinks, chocolate fish, leaflets and encouragement to hundreds of cyclists. There'll be another BTWD on Wednesday 17 February 1999 during Bike Week. ☺
- Capital City Cycle Guide – many months of work by Cycle Aware Wellington and Wellington City Council have come to fruition in Wellington's first cycle route map. It's a full colour A2 affair – on one side there's a map showing key commuter, scenic and mountain bike routes. Bike shops, crucial cafes, views, actual and proposed cycle facilities are also shown. On the reverse is information about CAW, WCC's transport policies, safety hints and some great recreational trips in the area.

The Guide has gone to all bike shops, libraries, council service centres and transport termini in the City. If you'd like a copy, contact: CAW on tel. 04 383 4041, email caw_wgtn@hotmail.com or WCC on 04 499 4444, email cycling@wcc.govt.nz. The Guide is also available through the internet at <http://www.wcc.govt.nz>. ☺

AA Waxes Lukewarm on Helmets for Car Occupants

The article "Helmets for Cars Would Save Lives" refers to comments from the AA. Since it was published the AA has printed its own article "What Next: Motorists Wearing Crash Helmets" in AA Directions, Nov 98. Though Directions contains no copyright notice, or prohibition against reproducing articles, given that the article might be construed as exposing double standards held by the AA, and our deadline precludes obtaining permission, we have decided not to reproduce it here. Instead we briefly review the article. Readers are encouraged to read the original article [Ed.]

Just before the introduction of compulsory helmet wearing for cyclists the AA heralded the decision as long over due. Ironically to some their lead example of why helmets were needed was the case of a postie who,

while cycling along the pavement delivering the mail, was “skittled” (AA terminology) by a car reversing at speed out of a driveway. Those that disagreed with the AA stance pointed out the fact that the postie could easily have been a child *walking* along the pavement didn’t seem to dawn on the AA and that whatever the incident showed it wasn’t an argument for or against compulsory cycle helmets.

In “What Next: Motorists Wearing Crash Helmets?”, Directions, Nov 98, the AA responds to the same Oz research covered in the article “Helmets for Cars Would Save Lives”:

“head injuries to car drivers and passengers could be cut by 25% if they wore light protective helmets, or padded headbands. Bicycle style helmets were found to be as effective as driver airbags in preventing injuries. They also provided better protection than improved interior padding, side-impact airbags or advanced seat belt designs.”

This is a fair summary of the research and something the AA might, given their support for cycle helmets, be expected to back. Apparently this is not so:

“Though sympathetic to the good intentions behind the proposal, the AA has reservations. ... there are disadvantages: reduction in hearing and vision; heat build-up within the confines of the car; restricted headroom for tall people; a sense of false security if the helmet is badly fitting or improperly worn.”

These statements don’t appear to stand up to analysis. Don’t cyclists need to see and hear? Don’t some of them complain of heat build up? Isn’t the headroom issue addressed by the headbands? And given it is estimated that up to 90% of cycle helmets are worn incorrectly and cycle helmets are designed for impacts of less than 20Km/h, is not false security for cyclists also an issue? Note also that apparently none of these issues concerned the AA when supporting cycle helmets.

What can we conclude from this? Well its not that the cycle helmet law is wrong, or that there should be a helmet law for motorists – go read “Helmets for Cars Would Save Lives” elsewhere in this issue for a view on that. Maybe its that we need a strong pro-safety voice talking to Government which doesn’t put the “rights” and “convenience” of the motorist above a little consistency? Or maybe you feel the AA’s standpoint is not hypocritical? What do you think? Letters to the Editor please! 🚲

Reviewers Needed



Members and others often send us articles and other publications, many of which might be of interest to others in CAN. We need people to write them up for *ChainLinks*. In return for a brief review, you’ll get a copy of the article to keep plus your name in print. Irresistible! Contact CAN to offer your services. 🚲

ChainLinks by Email?

We've had some requests to send out *ChainLinks* by email. Currently it is printed and posted, and some rather variable time later it appears on the CAN web site <<http://www.kennett.co.nz/can/>> – we now have a new “web master”, Paul Woodward, so issues may appear quicker in future.

To provide email copies of *ChainLinks* to members we need to use what is known as a “platform independent” format, to those of you to which this means nothing its simply saying we need to distribute *ChainLinks* in a format PC, Macintosh, Linux etc. computer users can read. We currently can offer three choices:

- a) *Plain old text*. No graphics. No styles (italic etc.) Minimal layout. If you can receive email you can read *ChainLinks*.
- b) *Portable Document Format (PDF)*. Requires recipients to have Adobe Acrobat Reader. All formatting is preserved and only a single file per issue is produced.
- c) *HTML (“web”) format*. This would be the same version as appears on the web site. Formatting would not be the same as the print version due to limitations of the format. Multiple files would be emailed, bound together in an archive. Advantage is you only need a web browser to read the issue.

If you would like to receive *ChainLinks* by email please let us know via email, chainlinks@altavista.net, what your preferred and acceptable formats are. We will then make a decision based on this information. This issue will also be produced in PDF, if you'd like a sample copy to see what it is like just email and we'll post one to you. ☺

New Articles at LTSA



Newly arrived in at the LTSA's head office library are the following articles:

What is Auckland doing about transport? Energy-wise News. no.59 (Sept 1998) pp.25-26

More roads, cares and congestion – is this future for Auckland in the country's best interests? Auckland's car population is growing faster than the number of people. Because traffic congestion affects businesses' ability to function efficiently, it's a national problem. What is being done to deal with this car explosion?

Cycle of fear. Williams, Mary. Autocar. v.21 no.9 (2 September 1998) pp.38-39

This article argues that the UK Government bid to make bikes more popular will lead to a rise in road deaths unless motorists become more safety conscious. Current approaches to road safety have reached a dead end. This article looks at cycle deaths and what is being done to minimise them.

The cities and their people: New Zealand's urban environment.
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 1998

This report investigates the state of the urban environment, identifies the key issues and strategic risks. It poses a series of questions regarding how we may advance the sustainable development of our cities and towns.

Indicate or Crash: Evaluation report on Hamilton's roundabout safety campaign, Hamilton City Council, 1998

As a result of growing public concern at the number of crashes occurring at Hamilton roundabouts, the Hamilton City Council roads and traffic unit embarked on a roundabout safety campaign as the principle safety project during the 1997/98 year. This is the evaluation report for that project.

Urban transport in Germany: providing feasible alternatives to the car.
Pucher, John. Transport Review. v.18 no.4 (October/December 1998)
pp.285-310

With the second highest level of car ownership in the world and the third highest population density in Europe, Germany has adopted a range of policies to balance the many private benefits of car use with its serious social and environmental problems. This article discusses this new range of policies.

This material is best borrowed from your local library via Interloan. You could also try getting it directly from the LTSA (04-494 8600). ☺

Please submit news items, articles of what is happening in your part of the country, "Letters to the Editor", "comment" etc.

You can post items to: Chain Links, c/o CAPN, PO Box 961, Palmerston North; or email ChainLinks@altavista.net – electronic submission of items is strongly encouraged. ☺



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The views expressed in *ChainLinks* are not necessarily those of CAN.