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ChainLinks

The newsletter of the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ) Nov-Dec 02

Roundabout in Friern Barnet, North London, UK
Each approach and exit has a cycle lane, as does the roundabout.

CAN
CYCLING ADVOCATES NETWORK

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Cyclists To Bombard 'Insurance Bully'

Cycle Touring Club, UK, September 24, 2002

[Sometimes when you read horror stories like this one you are encouraged to support the victims "before it happens here." However in this case New Zealand must surely carry a large part of the blame for what is happening. If NZ and Australia had not passed laws discriminating against bicyclists the insurance companies would have less support in blaming the victim. We encourage you strongly to support the CTC. And of course, you could lobby our Government to stop lying about helmets (which are NOT designed to protect against cars) and blaming bicyclists for the results of bad driving here... Ed.]

Cyclists have threatened to withdraw their custom from a multi-national insurer who is ducking responsibility after its car driving client hit a cyclist.

They will bombard the National Insurance and Guarantee Corporation (NIG), part of the Credit Swisse Group, with protests after the company reduced it's out of court damages offer despite admitting liability for the collision.

NIG is claiming contributory negligence because the cyclist was not wearing a helmet. There is no legal requirement for cyclists to wear helmets but cyclists fear that if NIG is successful, they will be forced to bear some of the responsibility for reckless driving.

CTC Director Kevin Mayne said: "This is a case of the big man bullying the little man. NIG is trying it on not because it believes its stance is right but because it knows cyclists don't have the money to fight this type of case in court."

"Cases like this are crucial to the future of cycling in the UK. Insurers regularly make spurious claims of contributory negligence and, if we allow NIG to succeed, insurers will continue to duck responsibility for clients' incompetence. NIG's claim is scandalous and must be dropped. Otherwise, clients will withdraw custom from a business whose practices are unjust and morally reprehensible."

Alan Millet, from Walsall was struck by a car entering a roundabout on the A41 in Walsall in March 1999. He suffered serious head injuries, a broken collar bone and severe bruising in the crash.

NIG has reduced its out of court offer of £100,000 by 15 per cent claiming contributory negligence because Millett, 63, was not wearing a helmet. The company claims that failure to wear a cycle helmet is as irresponsible as ignoring seatbelt, motorbike helmet and drink driving laws.

The case is not the first in which an insurer has attempted to shift some of responsibility for injuries onto a cyclist when the cyclist has not been at fault. CTC has called on cyclists and others concerned with road safety to

write, call and email NIG to condemn the company's move. In a case last year, Provident Insurance lost money as outraged clients cancelled their policies in protest.

In countries where helmets are mandatory (the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada), the numbers of cyclists have dropped by up to 40 per cent. CTC says that it is driving standards, not the effect on the victim that should be addressed. In countries such as Holland where there are far more cyclists, very few wear helmets because motorists drive more safely.

- In January 2001, Provident Insurance threatened a negligence claim against the parents of 12-year-old Darren Coombs because Darren, then nine, was not wearing a helmet and was not supervised by an adult when he was hit by a car while riding his cycle.
- The company was forced to back down when bombarded with furious protests from cyclists, parents and legal experts who cancelled Provident policies, staged demonstrations outside its Bradford HQ and offered free legal advice to the Coombs' family.
- The Coombs' case prompted the formation of CTC's Cyclists' Defence Fund, a ring-fenced account set up to protect and improve cyclists' rights in law. It currently totals £17,000, a figure too small to fight Millett's case but CTC has appealed to all those concerned with road safety to dig into their pockets to help.
- To make a donation send a cheque made payable to CTC Cyclists' Defence Fund to CTC, 69 Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3HS. To set up a regular contribution or join the Cyclists' Defence Network, CTC's network of legal and expert witnesses willing to support the work of the Fund, call 0870 873 0060 or email <defence@ctc.org.uk>.
- To protest to NIG write to: Mr P Bunker, Managing Director, NIG, Crown House, 145 City Road, London EC1V 1LP, call 020 7656 6000 or email information@nig-uk.com. You can email NIG by visiting <http://www.nig-uk.com/contact_us.htm>.

CTC

In The Rest Of This Issue

Letters

Dear *ChainLinks*,

Our Chairperson Harry Hall had a very bad bicycle accident in Hawkes Bay, multiple fractures in his left leg, has had to be off work for 3 months. Recently he was told he must now exercise his legs and that he should get one of those home exercise bikes. No Way! said Harry and he went and bought himself a second hand three wheeler cycle, fixed it up, put a box on the back with a gadget for his crutches. Now he can get around to visit friends and help out with advice at his work and at the same time exercise his leg, getting it back in working order. Rehabilitation! What a useful thing a cycle is!

Here in Otaki we have tried to get elderly people to use the marvellous tricycles you can get now, but it seems there is a bias towards them. This is a pity since they provide mobility and exercise unlike the mobility scooters. Is there a Tricycle manufacturer out there who would like to promote these bikes as smart ways to get around?

Elisabeth Mikkelsen, Kapiti Cycling

[Try getting in contact with Trikes New Zealand, Levin, they will probably be keen to assist. Ed.]

Editorial

What's So Special About Nandor?

Back at the time of the election, then candidate, Nandor Tanczos was photographed arriving to vote riding a bicycle but lacking a bicycle helmet. There was a minor reaction to this "crime", and it was reported that Mr Tanczos made a remark about his dreadlocks providing sufficient protection.

Now, Member of Parliament, Nandor Tanczos, has apparently been granted an exemption. Why?

If you write to the LTSA or Minister of Transport for an exemption and quote research and statistics showing the law has failed you will be told in no uncertain terms to take a hike. Scientific argument may be "reasonable grounds" – one of the reasons you may claim exemption on – to most, but not to the Government. Indeed anybody with knowledge of the facts could claim to find the law morally abhorrent, and if they are a religious person would hence likely find it against their beliefs to support it – grounds for a "religious" exemption you might think. Not likely. The Government has even rejected medical certificates from doctor's claiming exemption for patients on "medical grounds." The Government/LTSA stance on the law is simple: it's law, so the fact that it has failed, violates the basic human rights of bicyclists, and in every possible way is a generally very bad idea, is totally irrelevant – wear your helmet or else is the message from Wellington.

So what's so special about Nandor? Do dreadlocks really protect against head injury? This all rather smacks of favouritism. Or maybe the Government just sees a dreadlocked Green as less of a threat than someone armed with statistics or moral outrage – after all giving out exemptions on the basis you've violated someone's human rights is rather admitting guilt…

Of course we don't really believe Nandor should be required to wear a helmet, no bicyclist should (though maybe it should be so for motorists). We only hope that now Mr Tanczos is no longer subject to the discrimination suffered by the majority of bicyclists he will dedicate himself completely to freeing the rest of the population from this blight which is reducing the health and safety of New Zealanders (and elsewhere, as our opening article demonstrates).

Well Mr Tanczos?

Inventor Of The Three Point Safety Belt Dies

Nils Bohlin, who invented the three-point safety-belt, a standard safety device in most cars that is credited with saving up to a million lives worldwide, has died. He was 82.

Bohlin died on Saturday 21st September in Ramfall, Sweden, after suffering a heart attack, his wife Maj-Britt said.

His lap and shoulder belt was first introduced by car maker Volvo in 1959 and is now required by law in many countries.

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates three-point safety belts reduce the risk of deaths in car crashes by at least 45 percent.

Born on July 17, 1920, in the central Swedish city of Haernosand, Bohlin developed ejection seats for Swedish aircraft maker Saab before joining Volvo as a safety engineer in 1958.

Safety belts at the time used a single strap with a buckle over the stomach, a design which risked injury to body organs in high-speed crashes.

Bohlin sought to find a simple, comfortable alternative that would protect both the upper and lower body. His three-point solution allowed occupants to buckle up with one hand, using one strap across the chest and another across the lap and the buckle placed next to the hip.

“In a way, my design works as much because the belt is comfortable for the user as it does because it is safer,” Bohlin said earlier this year, after learning he had been inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in the United States.

“The pilots I worked with in the aerospace industry were willing to put on almost anything to keep them safe in case of a crash, but regular people in cars don’t want to be uncomfortable even for a minute,” he said.

Bohlin was supposed to have been honoured by the National Inventors Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Akron, Ohio, on the day of his death. His two stepsons attended the ceremony in his place, organisation spokeswoman Rini Paiva said.

“His safety-belt is everywhere. It’s become a standard,” she said. “Everyone has a story about how the seat belt saved the life of someone they know.”

A Volvo research team recently found Bohlin’s invention had saved about 1 million lives.

Bohlin received numerous awards and was elected to the International Safety and Health Hall of Fame and the Automotive Hall of Fame, both based in the United States. In 1995, he received a medal from the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences.

He retired in 1985 and lived for the last 10 years with his wife in Ramfall, 200km southwest of the Swedish capital, Stockholm.

In addition to his wife and two stepsons, Bohlin is survived by three children and 11 grandchildren.

The funeral was held on October 1 at Torpa church in Ramfall.

Associated Press

EnergyWise Rally Burns Up New Zealand

Petrol's cheap in New Zealand and the most popular cars in the country are big-six sedans. So who's worried about fuel consumption?

The car industry, apparently. The Motor Industry Association (MIA), which represents new-car distributors, has announced a major fuel economy competition dubbed the EnergyWise Rally. The event is sponsored by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and Gull Petroleum.

More than 50 cars in 14 categories will take part in the four-day, 1,500km event on a variety of North Island roads on November 11-14.

Classes are determined by engine capacity, body size and fuel type. Petrol-electric hybrid cars such as the Honda Insight and Toyota Prius are excluded from the main competition, but will take part for comparison purposes.

The winner of first prize, the EnergyWise Environment Award, could come from any class. It will be calculated by a formula that balances fuel consumption and emissions against the vehicle's size and practical people and luggage-carrying abilities.

Set times will be established for each stage, with the idea that vehicles travel at 100km/h on the open road wherever possible.

Source: MSNXTRA

Comment:

I contacted EECA for an entry form. With 14 categories I assumed there must be a place for a humble pedal-driven vehicle. But no, it turns out that the Rally is limited to gas-guzzlers of the four-wheeled variety.

Last time I pedalled from Auckland to Wellington, my fossil fuel consumption, was, let me see, zero. Let's calculate my fuel efficiency: 660 kilometres divided by zero litres = infinite fuel efficiency. If any car in the EnergyWise Rally can beat that I'll eat my bike.

And I wonder if fuel consumption for the rally teams will include fuel burned by support vehicles.

I look forward to an EnergyWise Rally where bikes take on – and thrash – cars.

Patrick Morgan

Transfund All Set To Fund Cycling & Walking Projects

The Transfund Board last month approved revised funding policies and procedures for promotion of walking and cycling. A new output group dedicated solely to walking and cycling was included for the first time in the 2002/03 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

The Board also approved an indicative priority list of projects targeting the promotion of walking and cycling that could receive funding during the present financial year, and endorsed a simplified evaluation procedure for cycling construction projects with a capital cost of less than $400,000.

In general, Transfund will apply the following order of priority to funding requests:

- development of walking and cycling strategies
- promotion of walking and cycling activities in a region
- walking and cycling infrastructure projects.

Policy Changes

There are three main changes to the existing funding policy. First, the development of *strategy studies for walking and cycling* and the *promotion* of walking and cycling will both be eligible for financial assistance.

Second, the construction (but not maintenance) of *pedestrian facilities* that meet Transfund's funding criteria — as set out in the Funding Allocation Framework — will be eligible for financial assistance.

The third change is to make cycle paths on State highways a *State highway charge* rather than a local roading charge, which was previously the case. This should help to ensure that the most cost effective options are chosen for the safe provision of cyclists on State highway projects, either by allowing adequate shoulder width or providing a separate cycle path.

Transfund's policy of not financially assisting the maintenance of footpaths, other than footpaths on structures, will remain in force.

Work Categories

The Programme & Funding Manual will include four work categories for walking and cycling. In all cases the objectives must be to integrate walking and cycling with other transport modes; to reduce the number of short car trips; to encourage safe and friendly roading networks for walking and cycling; and to enhance public health, fitness and tourism.

The four categories cover:

- the preparation of strategy studies to promote walking and/or cycling as viable modes of transport
- promotion of walking and cycling initiatives
- construction of cycle facilities
- construction of pedestrian facilities.

To qualify for funding assistance for the preparation of strategic plans, authorities must consult walking and/or cycling advocacy groups during the preparation of the plans. The manual also specifies a minimum list of items to be included in a plan, including measurable objectives.

Possible Projects For 2002/03

The indicative list of walking and cycling projects approved by the Board, for which $3.7 million has been allocated this year, consists predominantly of cycling projects, with two authorities planning safety improvements for pedestrians – new footpaths for safe access in Manukau City and five projects in Christchurch City for safer road crossings.

Apart from an indicative allocation to Transit for implementation of its cycling strategy on State highways, a wide range of cycling projects is included from regional, district and city councils. Some of the more significant ones include:

- continuation and completion of the North Western cycleway linking Henderson to the Auckland CBD, and development of a Southern Isthmus cycleway (generally following SH20)
- a total of 10 projects in Christchurch involving installation of cycle lanes on arterial routes over a five year period
- a number of cycle paths in Dunedin
- cycle lane projects in four Wellington suburbs
- implementation of Hamilton City's cycling strategy
- implementation of a further section of Nelson's cycleway network
- construction of the first stage of the Cameron Road cycle lane in Tauranga.

In July Transfund approved funding of $250,000 towards investigations for a number of cycle path proposals, and anticipates that the list of specific projects to qualify for funding this year and in the future will become clearer as authorities develop or complete their strategic studies into cycling and walking initiatives.

Reprinted from: Transfund News, September 2002, Issue 43

Quotable Quotes

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

George Bernard Shaw

Why Would Our Children Want To Ride Bikes?

The following essay was written by Mike Ward, a BNB member and MP, for the 2001 Falco Lecture competition (run in conjunction with Velocity). The essay was sent in by Iain Dephoff of BNB.

I have to ask why would our children want to ride bikes? As long as the rest of us insist on climbing behind the wheel at the drop of a hat? As long as doting parents continue to drive their wee darlings every where? As long as our roads remain battle zones? And trying to push them into it smacks of insisting on our children eating soup with a fork while the rest of us sit down to ice cream. Why would they want to? While the goal of making our children into cycling devotees is entirely desirable, getting them there and ensuring they stay devoted requires a substantial culture shift. While it may be very attractive to think that children may lead the culture shift, why should they ignore the messages the rest of us have long since succumbed to: Our streets are not safe places for cyclists, cars are cool and while bicycles may make interesting toys they are hardly likely to be seen as a serious transport option.

While we may manage to teach our children to ride and we may even insist on their cycling to school why should they behave any differently from children who learn to read? Those who grow up in families that read continue to read. Those who grow up in families that don't read, are likely to stop reading. Children are unlikely to want to continue cycling and may well lose the skill if the folk around them do not share their interest.

If children are to cycle, the rest of us need to become more attractive role models and our communities need to be made cycle friendly. A culture shift may seem like a big ask but will anything else suffice to create a future where our children begin to turn their backs on the range of behaviours that threaten not only our health but our very existence. Choosing to ride a bike epitomises the kind of about turn we all have to make if we are to learn to live within the capacity of our planet to provide.

A big ask? Yes but anything less can only promise disaster.

So is this lecture about getting our children onto bikes?, Yes but more importantly it is about changing the culture so that children and all of us want to change.

In November 2000 a panel of 3 commissioners, following a week of hearings into the pros & cons of constructing a new 2km stretch of highway into my city, deferred the decision until September 2001 to allow the applicants to gather additional information to show that the environmental impacts of the expected 25000 motor vehicles per day past 3 schools, 2 pre-schools and through a bustling community would not be as serious as predicted or that those impacts could be avoided remedied or mitigated.

The Nelson City Council, which has been largely responsible for designing and promoting the stretch of highway (down an existing cycle way/walkway),

already acknowledges that within 10-20 years the expected growth in traffic volumes will have outstripped the capacity of the 2 existing roads and the proposed road.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that another new highway, The Southern Bypass, completed at a cost of $30m in February 2000, has already resulted in substantially more motor vehicle trips and more congested streets. The problem? The authorities: Transit New Zealand, the body entrusted with planning and providing for New Zealand's transport needs and the Nelson City Council, appear to understand that building roads is at best a short term solution, none the less they have accepted as inevitable that motor vehicle use will increase.

There is considerable evidence for that belief. Worldwide, communities have discovered that traffic will surely expand to fill the space allocated to it. While it may be attractive to think that new roads will leave more space on existing roads for children on bikes, the reality is that new roads feed into existing roads making them less safe. But of more concern is the message that they send to my community: the motor car is OK. Cycling, public transport and walking are not forbidden but more cars means fewer catching the bus. Fewer people catching buses means reduced services, means more cars, means more crowded roads. I am describing the very antitheses of the kind of culture shift we need to make if our children are to behave any differently from their parents.

The Nelson Transport Strategy Group, presented the argument, that rather than continuing to pander to an enormously expensive totally unsustainable and unnecessary 1.2 people per motor car habit, what was needed was a comprehensive transport strategy designed to point out to the 60,000 people of our region the error of our ways and to persuade us to embrace the advantages of adopting a range of less expensive, and more socially acceptable and sustainable transport options. In short to change the culture.

Accepting current behaviour as inevitable accepts that people don't care. That we don't care that our roads are dangerous places (or that our planet is overheating, our weather patterns are changing, our air & waterways are polluted, or our cities are congested.

The reality is that most of us haven't noticed how bad things have got.

In fact we have shown that we are indeed capable of caring. Tell us there is a water shortage and we shower together, fix the leaking taps, stop watering the garden and mulch. Power shortages see us turning off the heaters and sleeping in our overcoats.

We need to begin noticing that our children are not walking, cycling or running around. Their pleasures are passive: play station and computer. They have become as motor car dependant as their parents. Our children are becoming fat and unfit. But more frighteningly, we are perpetuating expectations that probably have a very limited future in the face of diminishing fossil fuels. Our children deserve better.

However before we begin to care, before we are likely to be prepared to change our behaviour, we need to be convinced there is a problem, and the new behaviours need to be made a whole lot more attractive.

New roads, car sale yards at every intersection, cheaper car prices resulting from the removal of tariffs and the availability of cheap used foreign car imports, and a plethora of press and TV advertising showing the virtues of motor car ownership and life in green field subdivisions, are all designed to convince us that there is no problem. 50 to 100 Km.p.h. speed limits adjacent to unprotected and unseparated and frequently unmarked cycle lanes, infrequent public transport that never gets near to many destinations, never operate at night and rarely in the weekend, and real estate advertising that uses shortened travelling times to sell out of town housing estates, do nothing to encourage us to live closer to the places we work, play or go to school, or to use more environmentally friendly transport options.

So how do we change?

We begin by acknowledging that we have a problem that no amount of road building can fix. Local Councils and traffic planners need to announce that all new road building will be put on hold until we have explored and implemented all of the other options.

We need to publicise the inevitable consequences of current strategies and set achievable targets and suggest reasonable alternatives for creating a transport future that empowers all of us to choose the most appropriate transport for each of our trips.

Do we suggest getting rid of the motor car and climbing onto bikes or buses? Hardly a winning strategy. While I do not own a motor car and have never had a driver's license, I am not above climbing into a car. I have even been seen to drool over an E type or a BMW and my friends and neighbours all drive.

While I choose to live close to town and my primary mode of getting around is a racing cycle, I understand all too well that our cities have largely been designed around the motor car.

Carless days and compulsion are last resorts. Convince us of the necessity for change and most of us will make an effort. Tell us we have to change and kiwis become bloody minded and devious in our efforts to get around the rules.

So what is an achievable target?

Suggest folk leave their cars home one day per fortnight and discuss how they might do it – work from home, travel with their wife, husband or neighbour, catch the bus, walk, bike or spend a night in town. Some may never change, but some may get to like their changes and make them more frequent and regular.

And strategies?

- Publicise the success stories: convoys of children cycling to school; the prominent businessman or woman who cancels their subscription to the gymnasium as a result of cycling to work; the increased sales of motor car cycle racks and folding bikes so that folk can combine transport options more easily; the bus company providing radio news broadcasts, complementary newspapers; and cycle racks & the joys of arriving at work unstressed and informed.
- Indicate the impact of the strategy by regular news releases showing the changes in traffic volumes, vehicle occupancy rates, public transport usage, cyclist numbers. Erect large billboard graphs on main highways illustrating the effectiveness of the strategies. People are more likely to change if they can see that others are changing and that their changes are effective.
- Give incentives to those who are prepared to change: cheaper and more central parking for car poolers; wet weather bus passes and hot coffee vouchers to cyclists and pedestrians and public transport users. The motor industry is not above giving away a small fortune in incentives to users of its products. Appropriate prize draws of bicycles and bus passes and other behaviour changing paraphernalia seem pretty inexpensive alternatives to the millions of dollars spent annually on road construction and maintenance in my city alone.

Is this just a strategy to get our children on to their bikes? Obviously not, but reducing overall traffic volumes and encouraging folk to adopt a wider range of transport options are prerequisites for making our roads safer for cyclists. Providing alternatives for those journeys where cycling may not be an option is likely to make cycling more attractive.

So this is a strategy aimed at changing the mindset. It is a strategy for establishing a new vision. It is a vision of communities where all of us are able to access the places, spaces and activities that enrich our lives. So far it is a strategy that requires little in the way of changes to infrastructure. At our average 1.2 people per motorcar the present road capacity could theoretically be quadrupled even without anyone else riding a bicycle, walking or catching the bus. Just increasing the average occupancy to 1.5 would reduce traffic volumes by 20%. Existing bus services could certainly meet the needs of many commuters and help to reduce the peak traffic volumes and there are still a few brave souls who might be persuaded to climb onto their bikes, but realistically we need to make the public transport, cycling, car pooling and pedestrian options more attractive, and free up spaces for cyclists.

At recent Nelson hearings, critics frequently referred to these strategies as the do nothing option. This is understandable. Compared to the $15m budgeted for the new highway, the $60.000 per year spent on public transport and the pittance on cycle way development to date must indeed look like do nothing options.

We have suggested that if the community is prepared to spend that $15m for a piece of highway that will only create further demand and perpetuate the present culture perhaps a more substantial budget might be worth investing in a long term solution.

So what infrastructure changes are needed?

I will use my city as an example.

- Grade separated crossings on the 2 existing roads into the city for pedestrians and cyclists – bridges or underpasses.
- Upgrade public transport services; More comfortable buses. Low level access buses. More frequent services. Cycle racks on buses.
- Seal and complete all of the existing cycleways.
- Smooth seal and clearly mark all designated cycle routes and institute 30Km.p.h. speed limits on those routes at least before and after school to encourage youngsters to ride to school.
- Where present footpaths are wide enough or space is available for widening put in a cycle lane for children. Good arguments can be mounted for making all footpaths wider and making them shared pedestrian cycleways – such developments have enjoyed widespread acceptance in my city is spite of early scepticism.
- Mark in cycle lanes on all roads – particularly where the roads are narrow. While motorists may move into the cycle lane when there are no cyclists, they frequently need reminding that if there is insufficient room to pass without endangering the cyclist, they may have to wait.
- Educate our roading engineers about the needs of cyclist – send them out on bikes to experience first hand: cycle lanes that disappear at intersections and roundabouts; traffic warning signs in the middle of cycle lanes; stormwater grates that run parallel with the road and neatly fit cycle wheels; the effect of repeated road works and rough sealing for alterations to pipes and wires under the cycle lanes.
- Let us complete a network of off road cycle routes from one end of the country to the other to cater for the growing numbers of cycle tourists.
- Let us construct covered cycle ways or in their absence publicize the virtue of a plastic bag over the seat.

While there is no shortage of ideas for increasing the attractiveness of cycling, walking, bussing etc, unless we can convince our communities of the need for change they are likely not only to resist that change, but to resent it and to resent seeing their money funding that change.

It will matter not, that all of us have seen our money squandered on futile roading exercises, and seen the quality of our lives severely undermined by those activities. If we are to make the necessary changes and those changes are to work we must all be convinced of the need.

It is important that our streets are made safe for our children and that our children are encouraged to cycle. Whereas in my youth the cycle stands in our schools were full, in one large Nelson secondary school last year there were only two bikes in the school bike stand. One belonged to a teacher friend of mine who has since retired. Cycling is not cool.

My 21 year old son still does not drive, my daughters learnt at 24 and 30. Motoring is a learned behaviour. So is cycling. My children do not cycle. I discouraged them because our roads have not been safe places for children. My grandchildren deserve better.

Cycles, scooters and skateboards have never been more upmarket. If our children are not to perpetuate the current drive to make the human legs redundant we ought to capture the marketing genius that until now has managed to convince most of us to behave in a whole range of ways that are hardly in our own best interests. I am sure that there are ethically acceptable ploys for reprogramming all of us behave in more constructive ways, ways that will make our littlies want to climb onto their bikes.

Look at the advantages: the reduction in obese children; road smart kids; less crowded roads. Children just might avoid making some of the mistakes their parents have made. Families may even get rid of one of the cars – although even if they never drive it, the motor car has used up a fair share of the energy and resources it will get through during its life before it even leaves the factory. Most importantly we just might produce a generation less enslaved by the motor car.

While it would be nice to think that governments might recognise the magnitude of the risks posed by the car and impose appropriate advertising restrictions on the motor industry, that may be harder to swing.

Daniel Quinn in “The Story of B” writes of the importance of vision. He says that if the planet is to be saved it will not be saved by old thinking and new programmes, it will only be changed by a new vision. He says that programmes are reactive and vision is pro-active. We need to be pro-active. We need to excite our communities by the thought of more relaxed lives, lives where we do not spend so much of our time moving ourselves and our families around needlessly and ever longer hours earning the money to pay for the motor cars and the fuel to do the moving.

We need to begin to prepare our communities for a future where dependence on cheap fossil fuels is unlikely to be an option. Where we replace the acquisition of possessions, with the pleasure of enjoying the processes of living and where we consciously seek to make our surroundings more conducive to enjoying life.

Is it possible? Only if we aspire to it.

There is a deep sense of unease in my community that finds expression in record levels of youth suicide, in record levels of consumption, in the breakdown of communities and families. Do I think that having everyone climbing onto a bike will stop our children taking their own lives, or

people working too long to consume too much, or that some how cycle lanes will miraculously recreate our communities? That we should be so lucky.

What I do say is that learning to live well is a prerequisite, not just for enjoying life, but for our survival and the survival of many of the species with whom we share the planet, and that adopting a whole new attitude to transport is fundamental to learning to live well.

If the vision takes on we probably won't have to worry about how to make it happen. Folk have a habit of finding ways to realise their visions and before you know it we'll be beating our BMW's and Citrons into cycles. It is a vision of communities where the air is clean and our inner cities safe and given over to parks and plantings and pedestrian precincts. It is a vision of communities where folk have made the effort to minimise the need to travel, and which recognise that growing numbers – for reasons of youth, or old age, disability, poverty or choice – do not drive, and have provided a range of alternatives so that all can access, participate in and contribute to the life of our communities. It is above all a vision of a future in which the getting there has once again become as much fun as the arriving.

Henryk Skolimowski, a Polish philosopher speaks of living frugally and reverently. While that may sound a tad severe, it need not be. Appreciating the need, and learning how to live within the capacity of our planet and our communities to provide may just provide us with the purpose and the skills to avoid motoring our way into oblivion.

When I began preparing the address I felt a little constrained. Concentrating on getting children onto cycles for someone who has spent many years grappling with the big pictures: climate change, globalisation, rebuilding local economies etc, requires a mind shift. In fact focusing on making our cities safe for children is a stunningly cunning ploy.

While governments in my country have frequently overlooked the impact of their actions on children and indeed the very problem which this issue raises testifies to this, my experience has been that whenever I begin to talk about the effect of our excesses on my grandchildren, about the kind of future they are likely to inherit, it always strikes a chord.

I have spoken about the need for a culture shift, a mind set change, if our streets are to be made safe for our children.

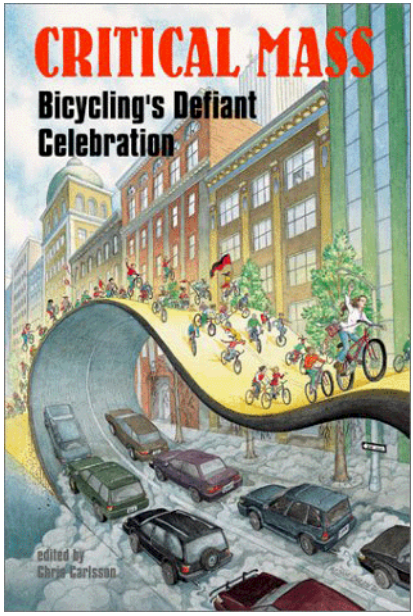
It just might be that the kind of culture that creates communities that our children take to their bikes in, is the kind of culture that might make our planet a little safer for the rest of us as well as all of the other species, communities and generations with whom we share it.

Mike Ward, BNB

Book Reviews

"Critical Mass – Bicycling's Defiant Celebration"

Edited by Chris Carlsson, AK Press, USA, 2002. 256 pages, ISBN: 1902593596, US$13.27 from amazon.com



Critical Mass is a monthly bike ride held in hundreds of cities around the world. It seeks to celebrate cycling, while pointing to an alternative future free from oil and car dependence.

Part art, part protest, but always a spirited ride, this book traces the history and pulse of this popular event.

Chris Carlsson helped start the first rides in San Francisco in 1992. In this book he has collected hundreds of articles, essays, photos and leaflets reflecting on Critical Mass. Much of the writing demonstrates the passion of those fed up with waiting for the velorution; those who prefer to start building a new world where we are able to pedal in peace.

I recommend this book for lovers of alternative media, do-it-yourself activists, and bikers everywhere. My favourite thing about the book is the collection of flyers, leaflets and photos. For example:

"I ride a bike because I can't afford a car.

- I can't afford to pollute my city.
- I can't afford to get commuter stress.
- I can't afford to risk others' lives.
- I can't afford to support the domination of the oil and insurance industries.
- I can't afford to miss Critical Mass."

Read the book? Try the ride: last Friday of the month in 300 cities from Delhi to Dublin. The Wellington Critical Mass leaves from Civic Square at 5:30pm. All non-motorized vehicle welcome.

Related website: <http://www.critical-mass.org >.

"Classic New Zealand Mountain Bike Rides"

Written & published by the Kennett Bros, <http://www.mountainbike.co.nz>, $30

This new fifth edition of the mountain bikers' Bible is the best book ever written – funnier than the Bible and more religious than the Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It describes 404 rides from Cape Reinga to Scott Base, illustrated with maps, altitude graphs, photos and a funky flip cartoon. Fifty new rides are featured. It makes your mouth water to get out there and pedal.

Disclosure: I wrote a couple of chapters of this book.

Patrick Morgan

A Limerick

Paul Doherty (Cycling Support, NZ) submitted the following limerick to a competition being run by St Stephen's Church, Onerahi, Whangarei ("north of the big car-parking lot called Auckland" as Paul puts it). Paul suggests that maybe *ChainLink*s could run a competition as well, but all we can offer at present is your composition in print – any other poets out there?

The Mayor of Auckland is Banksie
Congestion has tickled his fancy,
He builds lots of roads
'Cos "Cars are the mode!",
And he commutes in a Bentley!

Most of the journeys we make,
Are just down the road give or take,
So get out and hike,
Or better still bike,
You might like it for goodness sake!

We need to get healthy you know,
The bike is the best way to go!
You puff up the hills,
No need for those pills,
And arrive with a healthy glow!

The bike is the best way to go,
It's healthy as I'm sure you know.
It's good for the soul,
And seems on the whole,
To be fun and not all that slow!

From Seattle: "Pave The Lake"

In Seattle they are wrestling with how to deal with congestion. Sound familiar? Banksie, have you looked at the harbour recently?...

Dear *Seattle Times*,

Lake Washington, as aesthetic as some may think it, must be recognized for what it really is: an impediment to private automobile transport.

The Washington State Department of Transportation is well-staffed with former road engineers who are well-connected with contractors who could quickly implement the only realistic answer: Pave the lake. And quickly. Before anyone ties it up in court.

W.F. Bloxom, Sept 29

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People + Places + Spaces

A Design Guide for Urban NZ – Seminar

I had the honour of being sponsored by Cycle Aware Wellington to attend a seminar about the new urban design guide for New Zealand, recently released by the Ministry for the Environment.

Initially we had assumed that the seminar would be an opportunity to provide feedback on the guidelines in draft. In the event, however, the guidelines had just been published and the point of the day was to give some pointers as to their application.

The day began with a brief overview of the guidelines, followed by a series of practical group exercises in which we applied the principles to a series of real and imaginary urban design scenarios. Our group was dominated by architects and provincial local government officers (sadly none from the Wellington City Council turned up). I was impressed with the way that walking and cycling alternatives were to the forefront of the minds of the designers when it came to laying out our imaginary developments. My cycle and pedestrian advocacy seemed generally in tune with the thinking of the group.

The guidelines follow the principles of New Urbanism, the goal of which is to improve urban sustainability. Among the principles we discussed were:

- *Intensity of development patterns*. In particular, achieving higher density around nodes (as per the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy) strengthens communities, business opportunities and public transport viability; improves the efficiency of resource use and travel (including making alternatives to car use more viable); and reduces environmental impacts on the periphery (i.e. limits urban sprawl).
- *Integration and Connectivity*. Urban places that are joined together with others in a complex web of spaces and streets, rather than being isolated pods, are easier and more enjoyable to get around, especially on foot, cycle etc. Better connectivity provides for ease of access, economy of movement, and enhanced social interaction (including safety). The need for better integration between public and privately-owned space was emphasised.
- *Diversity and adaptability*. A diversity of activities brings a place to life. Designing buildings and urban areas to suit a mix of activities and uses means that as needs change, urban areas can remain viable (cul-de-sac type suburban development is not favoured because it is only suitable for residential use).
- *Legibility and identity*. Buildings and places that help people get around by marking key points, framing views and vistas, celebrating important

places, and reflecting local identity make for urban areas that are special (in contrast to the world-wide homogenisation of urban areas that results from tacky, tasteless strip mall development).

- *Environmental responsiveness*. Environmental responsiveness helps to reduce the environmental 'footprint' of the city, while improving amenity and recreational opportunities. It also involves improving water and energy efficiency, reducing waste and improving urban biodiversity.

I thought the principles were really exciting. Critical to their success, of course, will be the will and ability of councils and developers to implement them. In particular, councils will need to become more directive in terms of urban development, including encouraging (or requiring) greater provision for wider public interests by developers.

The guide contains very practical tools with which to apply the principles. These would be useful in assessing new proposals in terms of their compliance with the principles. As such the guide would be a useful addition to the lobbying arsenal of CAN and the local cycling advocacy organisations. The document is available on the Ministry for the Environment's website: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz>.

The seminar was jointly sponsored by MfE, the Planning Institute, the Institute of Landscape Architects, and BRANZ. Kobus Mentz (Sinclair Knight Merz) was the principle speaker. Thanks to the organisers for the generous discount provided to CAW and for a very interesting day.

Chris Cosslett, Cycle Aware Wellington

Big Hopes for Commuting by Bike

LAS VEGAS, Oct. 7 — For decades the bicycle industry has drawn its inspiration from the racing world. But this year the stars of the industry's annual trade show, the International Bicycle Expo held here this week, were closer in spirit to Volkswagens than Ferraris.

Seeking to ignite growth with products appealing to more than the athletic and aggressively outdoorsy, the nation's bicycle makers are exploring the commuter bike. The idea is to provide an inexpensive and comfortable bicycle that comes with all the essentials — lights, locks, suspension, fenders and even a bell — necessary for getting to work and back.

The $4.2 billion American bicycle industry also senses a market opportunity in the continued sluggish, travel-compromised economy. "People aren't travelling by airplanes and they're staying closer to home, and that's probably good for the bicycle industry," said Marc Sani, publisher of Bicycle Retailer.

Already, bicycles that are designed to be more accessible to non-skilled riders are the industry's fastest-growing category. These so-called "comfort"

bicycles grew to 20.8 percent of the estimated 17 million bicycles sold in the United States last year. That was up from 13.6 percent in 2000, according to statistics from the National Bicycle Dealers Association.

Now the industry is hoping that the market is ready for a true everyday transportation or commuting bicycle.

Joe Breeze, an inventor of the recreational mountain bike during the 1970's, demonstrates a new line of bikes, the Breezer, at the industry's annual trade show, the International Bicycle Expo.

Photo: John Gurzinski for The New York Times

"I think support for this kind of bike is growing," said Mike Sinyard, founder and owner of Specialized, one of the nation's largest bicycle manufacturers.

Several years ago Specialized tested the commuter-bike idea in the United States with a European-inspired Globe Voyager, a bike that came with a rack, chain guards, lights and fenders — the sorts of accessories that racing cyclists abhor as encumbrances. Specialized plans to introduce a production-line bike similar in concept to the test model, according to several industry executives.

Joe Breeze, one of the inventors of the recreational mountain bike during the 1970's that is now the industry's most popular product, demonstrated a new line of bikes, the Breezer, at this year's show. The response, he said, is an indication the bicycle industry is reawakening to cycling as basic transportation.

"It feels similar to the way the mountain bike was received 20 years ago," he said. The Breezer is produced by the SimpliCity Cycle Company, based in Fairfax, Calif., which Mr. Breeze co-founded in an effort to help cycling gain the kind of acceptance it has long had in Europe and Asia, but not in the automobile-oriented United States.

"The bike has been more like a recreational thing in the United States and not tied to daily life," he said.

Mr. Breeze said Americans were still far from the European view of the bicycle as basic transportation. But he said he was optimistic because the bicycle industry has begun to act more effectively as a lobbying force.

Much of the industry lobbying focus is on the renewal of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21, which is expected to come up for a vote next year. The industry's wish list includes financing for bike routes and for roadway renovations to make commuting by bicycle more practical.

Although Republican administrations have not traditionally supported bicycle activists, the industry advocates point out that President Bush is friendly with Lance Armstrong, the star American cyclist who has won the Tour de France four consecutive times.

Yet, even with federal support, bicycling would require more accessible bikes if wider segments of the public are to embrace them.

"It's a chicken-and-egg thing," said Ray Keener, a bicycle industry consultant who works with Bikes Belong, an industry lobbying group. "Until now the advocacy groups have been frustrated that the industry hasn't been ready."

The industry has been slow to recognize the commuter market because many of today's executive decision makers and designers are former racers, according to Felix Magowan, president of Inside Communications, which publishes VeloNews, a cycling newspaper. "Racing bikes and mountain bikes are great," he said. "But it's like using your downhill skis to go to work."

That is why start-ups like Mr. Breeze's are noteworthy. So is the new interest in adult-friendly bikes by large makers like Giant Bicycles, a Taiwanese manufacturer.

Giant coined the term sport utility bicycle, or SUB, last year to describe a new line of bikes that went beyond the comfort category, which had previously been aimed at baby boomers who shied away from mountain bikes and racing cycles. Now the category is expanding to those who consider themselves youthful at heart, if not necessarily young of seat.

At the expo, Giant introduced the Revive, a bicycle that features an adjustable wheelbase and a back support, and is a kindred spirit to the increasingly popular recumbent bicycles that the industry has been making in growing numbers in recent years.

"A lot of baby boomers want the ultimate in comfort if they're going to get back on a bicycle," said Dean Bradley, a Giant product manager.

"People tell us, 'My back hurts, my neck hurts, I'm too tall, or I don't like swinging my leg over the bar,' " he said. "We're trying to take away all the excuses."

John Markoff, New York Times
Submitted by Glen Koorey

Troubled Bridges Over Waters…

Bridges present some of the most difficult barriers for cyclists, either through their narrowness or non-existence. Although they are often the most expensive part of developing cycle routes, they are crucial to providing overall connectivity and must be planned for. Unlike problematic roads that can often be avoided, in many cases there are no alternatives to problem crossings.

New bridges for cyclists (and usually pedestrians too) don't come cheap. Recent bridges and "clip-ons" constructed in New Zealand have typically cost about $1200-1600 per square metre. The costs of course vary somewhat due to different lengths, widths and structural methods but for (say) a 2.5m-wide cycle bridge, you could expect it to cost about $350,000 per 100m (more for additional columns and approach works). Fortunately, recent changes to Transfund's project evaluation procedures allow for additional benefits to cyclists in removing bridge constraints, so that the economics are a *little* easier to manage.

But there may be other ways to minimise or remove the problem. Some possible treatments include:

- Install prefabricated structures for small crossings.
- Recycle disused road/rail bridge structures (e.g. retain the old bridge for cyclists when upgrading).
- Use abandoned bridge abutments & piers to create a new crossing facility over top.
- Provide a lightweight crossing in conjunction with existing utility (pipe/cable) bridges.
- Make alterations so that cyclists can use an existing footpath on a bridge. This should not cause considerable conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians however.
- Re-mark the road to provide narrower traffic lanes with adequate shoulders. It may also have the effect of slowing traffic down!
- Consider a lower speed limit on some long narrow rural bridges.
- Provide warning signage and/or ban overtaking on the bridge. A good example of some signage in advance of a narrow bridge is shown on the right.
- Add clip-on lanes to the bridge sides for cyclists and pedestrians.

- Provide alternative routes via sealed fords across generally dry channels.
- Widen the existing bridge carriageway (perhaps in conjunction with strengthening projects).

An excellent example of a recent bridge solution was the construction of an off-road bridge link across the Manawatu River on SH1 south of Foxton. This traverses the floodplain to a simple bridge over the small main channel, avoiding the narrow 1-km highway bridge.

As with cycle paths and lanes, adequate width is important. It's even more important on bridges for a number of reasons:

- Unlike paths/lanes, which have adjacent road or berm space, cyclists are usually constrained on a bridge by safety barriers immediately adjacent to them.
- In some cases, the bridge may also be the focus of recreational activity (e.g. fishing), requiring even more clearance
- It's much harder to come back and widen a sub-standard bridge later!

Use the normal path/lane width standards (based on usage) as a guide and allow extra clearance from any railings, etc. Generally **at least** 2.5-3.0m is recommended for segregated (two-way) crossings. It's disappointing that some recent bridges, intended for two-way shared pedestrian/cycle use, have been constructed only 2m wide. Try comfortably going past someone in that width! The analogy would be to build a two-way road bridge only 5m wide… get it right the first time!

As usual, look for the little details when providing bridge crossings. Provide good safe approaches (a cycle facility on one side only of a bridge can be hazardous for cyclists who have to cross the road). Handrails must be an adequate height (e.g. 1.4m), and if slightly tapered out can provide a wider perceived width. Make sure bridge joints won't cause any problems. And be wary of the bridge surfacing – some wooden bridges can be a menace for cyclists in winter!

When you're talking about a crossing for a railway or busy road, don't forget that the alternative form of "grade separation" is to go under, i.e. an underpass. Underpasses get a bit of a bad reputation sometimes security-wise, but it's nothing that good design (e.g. no hidden recesses) and good lighting can't fix. Underpasses have the advantage of usually not requiring as much vertical change (height gaps for bikes being smaller than gaps for trucks), but they can present some drainage problems. Again, if possible, look to use existing structures, e.g. putting cycle paths under bridge ends or large culverts.

Finally, an intriguing example where trying to provide for cyclists seems to have overtaken common sense. Visitors to the Mackenzie high country may have come across this innocuous looking bridge:

The bridge carriageway is more than 8m wide and little more than 30m long, so it's hardly a menace. If you choose to obey the direction signs on your bike however, you'll find yourself faced with:

- A rough gravelly path leading onto a bumpy wooden footbridge,
- A very narrow (~0.7m) bridge width to squeeze along,
- Only a 0.6m high handrail to protect you from the river below, and
- Chicken wire across the far end preventing you from getting through!

I know where I'll take my chances…

Some Relevant Reading

- Austroads, 1999. *Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 14: Bicycles*, Section 7 (Provision at Structures)
- FHWA, 1998. *Implementing Bicycle Improvements at the Local Level*, Chapters 4 (Breaking Bicycling Barriers) & 7 (Roadway Bridge Modifications). US Federal Highway Agency, Publication No. FHWA-98-105. Web: <http://www.bikefed.org/bike_guide_online.htm>.
- *Transit NZ Bridge Manual*, May 1994 (4th amendment Jun 2002) provides some local guidance, especially Appendix A (Bridge Widths & Clearances), but needs some more work on cyclist provision.

All feedback please to Glen Koorey (koorey@paradise.net.nz)

How Fast Does The Average Kiwi Cycle?

Have you ever wondered what these black tubes are for that are sometimes pinned onto a road? Connected to a box, which is usually chained to a power pole? Well, these things count traffic. And if there are two loops some distance apart (usually 1.0m), the loops also measure speeds. So why am I telling you that? Cause our exec member Andrew Macbeth has done some research, which showed that you could use the same technology to count bicycles (and measure their speed).

I got hold of some count data the other day and was interested in the results. You might say that this is a bit academic, and you could also look up the values in a design manual.

Well, to the former, I have to say that you would have to know these data if you cared about getting the time settings right for traffic signals. If you don't, cyclists may legally enter a wide, signalised intersection, but traffic may start up on them before they have reached the safety of the far side. (Unfortunately, I have to inform you that hardly anybody in this country seems to care about signal settings that take cycle speeds into consideration, but that's worth a separate article).

To the latter, I'd have to say that the main reference document in NZ is AUSTROADS Part 14 (1999). I once questioned the technical editor about his speed data source, because the values seemed on the high side to me, and he somewhat ashamed conceded that he had only had a very small sample size (from which it is hard to determine the statistically sound values needed for proper design).

Anyway, the piece of road where the measurements got taken is outside the University of Canterbury. As with any good Christchurch road, it's flat as (i.e. the data are not distorted by a gradient). It's a mid-block location, and the road is wide enough that an un-impeded cruise speed of the cyclists can be assumed. Data are available for one direction of travel only, and the tubes were taking measurements for 5 days (Fri to Wed). The counter cannot differentiate between bicycles and motorbikes or scooters, but the wheelbase and the speed, of course, are recorded. Eliminating the long (motorbike) wheelbases (1.2m and over) and the high speeds of the 1.1m wheelbase vehicles (I've assumed that it is appropriate to eliminate the speeds over 40km/h), I was left with 961 speed measurements. 109 speed values got removed with that procedure. Figure 1 shows a speed histogram (or the distribution of speeds).

For the engineers in the readership, the following speed values could be calculated:

15^{th} percentile speed = 18.6km/h

Median speed = 22.3km/h

85^{th} percentile speed = 26.8km/h

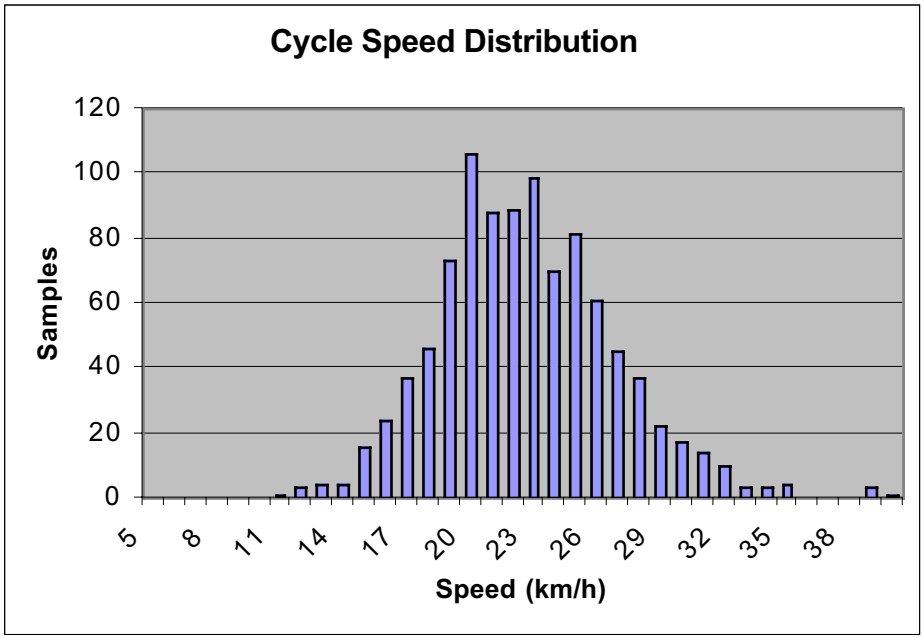

Figure 1: Cycle Speed Distribution on a Level Road

As an explanation, 85th percentile speed refers to the speed that is not exceeded by 85% of all cyclists. These values are only about 2 or 3 km/h lower than the values given in table 5-2 of AUSTROADS part 14, so that guide is not too bad after all.

Apart from the speeds, the number of cyclists is also interesting. Two of the count days covered full weekdays. 264 and 300 cyclists were recorded during Monday and Tuesday, respectively, and that's only for one direction. So the council has good reason to incorporate cycle lanes when the kerb and channel replacement gets underway on that road soon.

Axel Wilke

Cycling News From Around New Zealand

July

- Porirua City Council and Transit NZ are building a new pathway allowing cyclists to bypass the busy Paremata roundabout and get across the soon-to-be-duplicated State Highway bridge.
- The coroner investigating the death of a teenage cyclist in Palmerston North calls on the city council to consider a bylaw banning heavy vehicles from heavily-used school routes during school traffic times, and to provide more dedicated cycle lanes.

- Kapiti Cycling calls for improved cycle facilities in the district, after finding that 50 percent of pupils surveyed would bike to school if it was safer.
- Marlborough Roads constructs a $55,000 cycle path to bypass the narrow Fairhall Bridge on the popular cycle route between Blenheim and Woodbourne airbase.
- Environment Canterbury confirms its support for the proposed Christchurch-Little River cycleway by allowing part of the route to follow the Halswell River on council-owned land.

August

- Wellington coroner Garry Evans criticises the Police for their investigation into the death of a cyclist in 1999, after failing to reach a finding on the death.
- Tauranga District Council plan to spend $430,000 in the coming year developing cycle lanes along Cameron Road, the main arterial route into town.
- Manukau City Council develops a cycling and walking strategy for public consultation, that proposes creating a network of separate cycling and walking routes across the city.
- A depositions hearing in Christchurch concludes that the organiser of the 2001 Christchurch-Akaroa cycle race, Astrid Andersen, should stand trial for the death of a competitor whose bike collided with an oncoming vehicle.
- Local cycling enthusiasts are appalled that the Tasman District Council hasn't allocated money this coming year for either cycleways or a strategy.
- Hutt City Council spends $50,000 upgrading the recreational cycle route along the Hutt River eastern stop bank, particularly to improve entry/exit points.
- Transit NZ proposes adding a cycle lane to a major roundabout in Wanganui, the scene of a number of cyclist accidents, as part of a safety upgrade of the site.

September

- After much disagreement over two route options for a cycleway from the city south, Nelson City Council decides to defer spending on either and puts the money towards the next priority cycle project.
- Auckland City Council votes for the introduction of further green bus/bike lanes along five of the city's major routes.
- Wanganui District Council earmark $50,000 for the development of a local cycling strategy.
- Wellington City Council proposes an $80,000 suburban cycleway from the airport subway to the existing Evans Bay cycle track.

- North Shore City councillors' lukewarm reaction to proposals for more cycle paths, following a dubious survey of residents, generates a heated reaction from cyclists.
- Transit NZ officially opens the new $1.5 million pedestrian/cycle path on Wanganui's Cobham Bridge, two years after two boys were killed on the bridge while cycling.
- LTSA's 2010 road safety strategy plan includes an emphasis on new programmes to support safe access to the road network for pedestrians and cyclists.

IPENZ Traffic Management Workshop 2002

Every year the Institution of Professional Engineers NZ (IPENZ) Transportation Group (i.e. traffic engineers and transportation planners in NZ) holds an annual workshop to catch up with the latest industry happenings. This year the event was in Rotorua during September and three CAN exec'ers from Christchurch, Andrew Macbeth, Axel Wilke and Glen Koorey were among the 150 or so present. Below is a quick summary of some of the presentations of interest to cyclists. If you want any more info, talk to Andrew, Axel or Glen.

- Peter Croft of LTSA Head Office gave an update on a number of Rules they have been developing. The public drafts of the Road User Rule and the Traffic Control Devices Rule (which between them set out to update our existing traffic regulations) will be out in October, with submissions due in December and January respectively. CAN has made submissions on the previous drafts and having both out together will enable consideration of the links between them. The Setting Speed Limits Rule will also (finally) be enacted in November, and come into effect next year; regional workshops should be held in early 2003.
- David McGonigal of Transit NZ Head Office summarised the development of a NZ Cycling Design Guide (CDG), a project being undertaken by Andrew Macbeth through MWH (NZ) Ltd. This will provide a local design document to sit in conjunction with Austroads Part 14 (Bicycles). A survey of current local authority design practices has just been carried out as part of the project and the draft CDG should be available for wider comment early in the New Year.
- Glen presented a remit on the Transport Strategy being developed at Canterbury University. This is designed to reduce the demand for driving to and parking at campus and increase car-pooling and other modes such as buses, cycling and walking. The draft strategy recommends introducing parking charges, with the revenue generated going towards encouraging the alternatives, e.g. discount bus passes, better cycle parking, etc. Some other major institutions are starting to look at similar strategies, including Auckland University and Christchurch Polytech.

- Axel gave a brief presentation on how to estimate daily cycle traffic counts from short-term (e.g. peak-hour) counts. Getting this right is quite crucial to having an accurate idea of project benefits for Transfund funding. Using some sites in Christchurch that are counted on a regular basis, Axel has developed a spreadsheet to scale up short-term counts into suitable daily counts.
- Axel also updated the audience on the progress in getting a technical training course underway for Planning and Engineering for Cyclists. Transfund funding has now been made available this financial year for the development of the course and it is hoped that the initial courses can be presented in the first half of 2003.
- Andrew highlighted the continuing problem of road surface build-up at the edge of the road when it is regularly resealed. This can produce a deep lip that is hazardous for cyclists if they get caught on it (at least one fatality in NZ had it as a contributing factor). Andrew has recommended the development of some standards or guidelines defining the maximum vertical drop allowed; these are likely to be included in the CDG.
- Andrew also presented an interesting recent case, where a new State Highway overbridge was being designed to cater for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians in an optimal manner. A lack of suitable guidelines was found both here and overseas with regards to recommended cross-sections for accommodating everyone. In the end, some consultation with CAN has resulted in a solution that provides both on-road and off-road options for cyclists, but it does still highlight the lack of clear guidelines on this issue. Hopefully it can be incorporated into the forthcoming CDG.
- Andrew has also been busy carrying out some Transfund research into automated bicycle counting techniques. After reviewing the options available, rigorous testing of two types of rubber tube counters demonstrated that (with the right setup) they can successfully be used to count cycle traffic, even in conjunction with other traffic. Road controlling authorities have little excuse now not to collect cycle counts as part of their regular counting programmes.
- Ian Clark of Opus Auckland summarised some findings he uncovered when faced with the question of how cycling usage is related to the level of cycle facilities provided. While a number of places have found anecdotal evidence of cycling increases with more facilities, there have often been a number of confounding factors occurring at the same time, and few scientifically valid studies were found.
- Tim Hughes of LTSA Christchurch presented an interesting study of the effects of different lane markings on cyclist and motor vehicle behaviour in Christchurch. The aim was to identify the most suitable layout for keeping cyclists clear of both parked cars and passing motor

vehicles. Some layouts, such as hatched "safety strips" had the unexpected effect of actually bringing cars closer to cyclists, and more work is needed to come up with the best solution.

- Tim also summarised the introduction of a cyclist "hook turn" in Christchurch (as described in the last *ChainLinks* issue), designed to make turning right easier for school cyclists near a busy road. Initial video analysis of the installed layout suggests that it is working without difficulties, but further sites should be trailed.
- Paul Burden of Christchurch City Council summarised the "Living Streets" concept that CCC have been exploring in the last few years. The idea is that virtually all streets can have a greater emphasis on the "liveability and access" functions, without necessarily compromising the "movement" function of arterial routes. For example, while speed humps might be inappropriate on a main road, lane narrowing and planting may be used to reinforce traffic calming. Similarly, cycle and pedestrian facilities make the street more inclusive to all people. To date, Living Streets have been developed on relatively quiet local streets, but currently a plan is in place to redevelop a busy suburban route as a Living Street in the next year.
- Finally Peter Croft gave a "hot off the press" summary of the LTSA's 2010 Road Safety Strategy. Items of particular interest to cyclists included the promotion of "Safe Routes" programmes for pedestrians and cyclists, annual travel surveys to provide better cycling usage data, and the development of a "cycle network planning guide" to complement the CDG. CAN's press release on the strategy plans was picked up in some papers.

Cycling Research

There Goes The Neighbourhood…

Safe off-road (segregated) cycle paths between key locations are generally seen as a good idea. But when paths are proposed away from the road (e.g. through reserves or along railway corridors) there are often many concerns by neighbours about the problems that the path might attract, such as crime, vandalism, litter, and so on. More specifically, many homeowners often fear that the neighbouring pathway will adversely affect their property values. Is this concern justified?

In the US, the development of "rail-trails", i.e. paths along abandoned or current railway corridors, is a big industry and a number of references have cropped up to explore the kinds of problems mentioned above. The Trails & Greenways Clearinghouse (1999) identifies the significant economic benefit that can arise from popular new trails to small communities. It also identified a number of studies that confirmed the positive effect on property values that trails tend to have. Another review of over 300 rail-trails by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (1998) found that crime was not a

significant factor along the routes. Only 3% of trails had experienced any "major" (personal) crime and only a quarter reported "minor" crime (burglary, vandalism, litter, etc), with crime rates very low compared with national rates. Indeed, many respondents cited heavy trail usage as a crime deterrent in areas of former isolation.

Lagerway & Puncochar (1988) investigated an 8-year old urban pedestrian/bike rail-trail in Seattle. An estimated 600,000 cyclists annually used the 7-mile long track, which was not patrolled and had no special lighting. Interviews were carried out with nearby residents, real estate agents, and local police. About 70-88% (differing between groups) felt that proximity to the trail was an advantage or had a neutral effect when selling homes. Fewer than 10% of homeowners believed they would sell their home for less because of the trail, with houses close but not immediately adjacent to the trail generally having a more positive reaction. Homes along the trail did not experience a higher rate of break-ins or vandalism. Perhaps most significant of all, 100% of the residents along the trail felt that it should be kept open.

Another study of three trails in Denver, carried out by Macy & Alexander (1995), gave similar findings. Residents were generally either positive or neutral in their outlook towards property values and public safety. Indeed, over 20% were positively influenced by the trail in their decision to move to the area. The most serious security issues were graffiti and tagging at underpasses, but none of these incidents were focused towards other trail users and usually occurred when there were no other people on or around the trail.

Sustrans have carried a lot of research of the likely impacts of their national cycle network in the UK (Sustrans 1999). Their studies found that people who live close to a cycle path do not suffer problems and most actually enjoy having the facility nearby. Landowners who have a path on, or adjacent to, their land reported similar views and again, real estate agents and property owners alike generally saw such paths as an amenity, not a drawback. The community benefits of useful transport links, recreation options, promoting health & fitness, and possibly additional business trade were all identified too.

Sustrans noted that visual appearance of the finished product will have an effect on the perceived and actual benefits. Often the land used has

been derelict or poorly maintained before, so a new pathway can generally improve the appearance of the district. The effect on privacy for adjacent homeowners also has to be considered; selective use of fencing and planting can usually resolve both surveillance and trespassing by path users. Of course it has to be remembered that having additional eyes on a nearby path can also be a great security tool for both the path and its neighbours.

The studies mentioned above contain numerous other examples of the effects on specific locations. There is a common thread in all of it that points towards segregated paths producing a positive experience overall for all parties. And this applies whether we're talking about an inner-city path or a long-distance tourist trail.

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Glen Koorey (koorey@paradise.net.nz)

More From Seattle: "I Choose To Ride My Bike"

Banksie, maybe this is more practical?

Dear *Seattle Times*,

I work as a nurse [and] commute on my mountain bike about 7 miles each way, 4 days a week…We currently have only one car … [and] make a point of doing any errands that require a car at non-peak hours.

I think, as a community, we need to work on changing our attitudes toward public transport. People tend to associate it with those of lower-class standing. I am a professional, and I choose to ride my bike, I don't have to.

Elsie Reay-Ellers

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Deadline for next issue is Dec 13th 2002

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