

# ChainLinks

The newsletter of the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ) Dec '05 – Feb '06

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Great! A new bike park...perfect for very small bikes which can fly over cars.

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Cycling Advocates Network (CAN)

PO Box 6491, Wellesley St,

Auckland, New Zealand

Tel/Fax: 04-972-2552

Email: [secretary@can.org.nz](mailto:secretary@can.org.nz)

[ChainLinks@can.org.nz](mailto:ChainLinks@can.org.nz)

(newsletter)

WWW: <http://www.can.org.nz>

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

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## EDITORIAL

I hate to boast (no, really!) but I believe that I have one of the best cycle commutes in New Zealand.

The first 50 metres from my house are the only time that I am not in a cycle lane or on a shared path for my 7.5km ride from Ilam to the Christchurch city centre. I ride a shared path through a small park and then get onto the road which won the best cycle facility project last year. I ride on good cycle lanes all the way to Hagley Park where I wait in my own lane until the bicycle traffic light tells me to cross into Hagley Park. Then I whiz along the shared path. Riding through the park is a great start to working day. In summer the sun is already shining. In autumn I get to crunch over the fallen leaves. In winter the steam comes off the frosty ground in the dawn light (or else the stars are still out). In spring the daffodils are blooming. Back off the poetic track, I cross a street where I can choose to wait for a break in traffic, use a pedestrian traffic island or hop off and use the pedestrian crossing. Then I zig-zag the tramlines for the final straight until I turn left into secure parking. The fabulousness of my commute doesn't end there. As I have secure storage at work for my gear, I cycle with a very small bag. When I park, I leave helmet, lights, pump etc on my bike. I've never had to wait for the shower. (This is a bad sign actually as only one other woman in an office of around 200 staff cycles.) The weather is even in my favour as the prevailing weather patterns mean that I usually have no wind in the morning and a tail wind at night.

I'd love to hear about your commutes or regular cycle trips to school, study, work or wherever. We have two CAN "One Less Car" backpack covers to give away. One is for **the ride which makes us all jealous** and another for **the ride which gives us nightmares just reading about it**.

The best story, in each category, received by 31 March will be eligible for these prizes. Please email to [chainlinks@can.org.nz](mailto:chainlinks@can.org.nz) or post to ChainLinks Commutes, CAN, PO Box 6491, Auckland.

After one such wonderful commute, I came home to a copy of ChainLinks asking for a new editor and thought it was time for me to get off my bike and into my chair and do something.

My cycling history consists of many years of cycling to school in the Bay of Plenty and a bit of cycling in Wellington before heading overseas. I started cycle touring while living in London and discovered the joy of riding on cycle paths. I returned to NZ and ended up in Auckland where my idea of a bike ride was putting the bike on the back of my car and driving to the forest and going for a ride. I moved to Christchurch three years ago and have been cycle-commuting most of the time since. I'm still working on ways to reduce my car journeys.

Make sure you check out page 6 for details of the BikeWise Business Battle and do anything you can to encourage non-cyclists or occasional cyclists to get on their bikes.

*Jean Dorrell, ChainLinks Editor*

PS The day after smugly writing this, I got headwinds both ways and roadworks commenced on one of my cycle-friendly roads.

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### Still available: CAN 'One Less Car' backpack covers!

Keep your stuff dry, increase your visibility on the road and identify yourself as a CAN member with one of these waterproof, incredibly loud yellow backpack covers. Reflective strip, the CAN web address and 'One Less Car' in big friendly letters on the back-remind those car drivers why they should love you.

One size only: now available to CAN members for \$25, and to non-members for \$35. To order, send your cheque to: CAN, PO Box 6491, Auckland, with your name, address, size required and contact phone or email.



## NOTICES AND EVENTS

### **Need funds to print some fliers, stage an event or host a breakfast presentation?**

CAN has established the "Local Group Fund" which has \$700 per annum to assist local cycling advocacy groups affiliated to CAN.

Local groups may apply for up to \$200 for projects where the local group is prepared to contribute a minimum 20% (eg: claim \$200 for a \$250 project) or apply for 100% funding of projects up to \$100 in cost.

For an application form or any questions, please contact Bevan... [bevanw@can.org.nz](mailto:bevanw@can.org.nz)



### **Bike Wise Week 2006**

Bike Wise Week 2006 will run from 25 February - 5 March. To help plan events and share ideas and success stories, Bike Wise are producing a Bike Wise Week newsletter called 'Chainletter' (if you want to receive it, go to [www.bikewise.org.nz](http://www.bikewise.org.nz)).



### **Christchurch Supermarket Challenge**

To kick-start BikeWise Week in Christchurch, a "supermarket challenge" will pit three bikes (with various home-made and/or commercially available trailers) against three cars to travel on three specified routes (2km-5km) to a supermarket. They will all carry one or two pre-schoolers from Cathedral Square to their particular supermarket where they will load up with a week's worth of groceries (from a specified list), then return to the Square. Upon arrival the eggs will be inspected for damage, the ice-cream eaten to test its frozen-ness, and a count made of plastic bags used. The event will take place on Friday 24th February 2006 starting at 4:00pm and ending around 5:30 pm.



### **Bike Taupo invites you to attend the Redwoods Ride opening**

The Redwoods Track is a 2.5km ride from Huka Falls to Reids Farm. It provides a unique riding experience through 80 year old redwoods and a great way to get back to town from Huka Falls. Big thanks to the sponsors, LePine and Co barristers and Solicitors, Malcolm Flowers Insurance, Cheal Consultants Surveyors, Placemakers, Suncourt Motor Hotel.

Where and when: Saturday 26 February 2005, 2:00pm @ Bangers Bridge (half way).

Bring along the whole family and your kikes and try out the Redwoods Ride! Access track opposite Reids Farm or 50m south of Huka Falls on Huka Falls Rd.



## **Funding applications open for Sustainable Management Fund**

Applications are now invited from local government, iwi, industry and community groups for the 2006/07 round of the Sustainable Management Fund (SMF). For more information go to <http://www.smf.govt.nz/new/smf-brochure.pdf>



## **Nominations open for road safety innovation awards**

The 2005 Road Safety Innovation and Achievement Awards recognise innovation and achievement in road safety, and encourage the pursuit of innovative practices to improve road safety.

Nominations are open from 25 October 2005 until 10 March 2006, and the entries will be judged by a panel of experts. The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in Wellington in April 2006. The focus is on road safety initiatives that have been developed to address a road safety issue, implemented and evaluated to determine their success.

The awards cover five different categories. One of these, Road Engineering, recognises the most innovative road engineering or technical management initiative designed to improve road safety. This category is open to road controlling authorities, or road controlling authorities in association with consultancies/contractors.

More information on the awards can be found at <http://www.roadsafetyinnovationawards.org.nz>



## **City Cycling with Confidence (in Christchurch)**

Get your friends and family to gain confidence and keep fit and find out how to ride safely on our city streets. Great fun with serious practical hints and tips to get you from A to B on two wheels, save money and feel healthy. Students will need to have their own bike and be able to ride it.

8 Wednesday nights 7-8:30pm starting on 15 February. Venue is Aranui High School, Shortland St, Christchurch.

Fee is \$25.

Tutor: CAN member Lyneke Onderwater

Contact: Ph (03) 382-6064 or email [lyneke@can.org.nz](mailto:lyneke@can.org.nz)



# THE BIKE WISE BUSINESS BATTLE

25 Feb – 05 Mar, 2006



“The bicycle is the most civilised conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart.”

Iris Murdoch

Wouldn't it be wonderful if more people knew that biking is not only an enjoyable, environmentally friendly and efficient means of urban transport but also an enormously beneficial activity for your health and wellbeing?

Biking can give you your thirty minutes of physical activity a day whilst getting you places faster than those bumper-to-bumper cars!

Now is the time to let people know, so grab your bike!

The Bike Wise Business Battle is a fun, free inter-business challenge that aims to get as many people as possible out of their cars and into the fresh air to experience the joy of cycling.

All it takes is getting people at your work (the more the merrier) to hop on a bike and go for a short ride, perhaps ducking across town for a meeting, or for a quick trip to the supermarket - for a minimum of 2kms or 10 minutes during Bike Wise Week. It is as easy as that! Why waste money on petrol when you can cycle for free? Watch your wallet get fatter, while you get fitter!

Get your friends and business competitors involved as well and challenge them to see who can get the largest number of colleagues cycling. You can keep track of who is winning online.

You and your colleagues will not only feel satisfied and revitalised but you can also win some excellent prizes including great Avanti bikes and awesome Ground Effect gear!

This year we are giving away 20 SPARC Push Play Participation Awards and sumptuous shouts to the businesses that get the highest percentage of their staff on a bike. There are four geographical regions and five different sized business categories for you to compete in. This levels the playing field so that businesses of all sizes and cyclists of all abilities have an equal opportunity to win.

**We are hoping that the benefits of cycling will extend far beyond the finish line as people build cycling into their daily routines and enjoy the health and environmental benefits of leading an active lifestyle. Bike towards better health and a cleaner environment!**

**You can register online for this great event, which promises a whole heap of fun while working towards creating a happier, healthier workplace.**

**For more information and to register your interest, go to: [www.bikewisebattle.org.nz](http://www.bikewisebattle.org.nz)**

## **CYCLING ADVOCACY WORKSHOPS 2006**

### **The Cycling Toolbox Workshops 2006**

BikeNZ is holding a round of workshops to discuss ideas and techniques (the toolbox) for making the transport system more cycle-friendly for all types of riders, and increase the numbers cycling. This follows on from the first round of workshops held this year.

**Content:** To be confirmed, but currently topics will likely include:

- how to get local government more cycle-active
- road user education, including cycle skills education for both children and adults
- travel planning and cycle promotion
- how different sectors (transport, health, sport, education, energy) are working co-operatively, and how this could improve;
- encouraging more reporting of accidents and near-misses
- an update on the implementation of the national walking and cycling strategy
- integrating cycling into public transport - bikes on buses, trains, planes

Note that a separate workshop on planning and road design for cycling will also be offered. These workshops focus on best practice guidelines for such things as how to make roads more cycle-friendly. If you are interested in finding out more about the Fundamentals of Planning and Design for Cycling workshop, please let me know.

**Length:** The workshops will be 3 1/2 hours.

**Who Should Attend:** The workshops are primarily for the advocacy community. However, as the objective is to encourage discussion, we will invite representatives from local government, Land Transport NZ, Transit, district health boards, police and schools, as well as cyclists.

**Previous Workshops:** Selected material from the previous workshop can be found on the BikeNZ website [www.bikenz.org.nz](http://www.bikenz.org.nz) and go to the Advocacy Toolkit icon in the left hand column).

**For more information on dates and locations, please contact Stephen Knight at Bike NZ via email** [Stephen@bikenz.org.nz](mailto:Stephen@bikenz.org.nz). or on (04) 473 8386.

# MAKE YOUR OWN PANNIER

*by Ian Butcher*

The bicycle pannier which I have designed and made is far, far better than any I've seen on sale. It certainly makes commuting easier when you can conveniently carry a wide variety of things you may have thought would require a car. With my pannier on your bike you save on the many and increasing transport costs (petrol and parking, etc.), your health will improve and the environment will thank you.

It can carry all my shopping at the supermarket, where I can detach it instantly from my bike and load up inside to avoid plastic bags, and attach it just as quickly again outside. Weekly specials at the different supermarkets are now genuine bargains, because the petrol costs don't cancel the savings!



## Features:

- The whole bag can be expanded (vertically as well) and used as a brief-case.
- Bottles of different sizes can be kept upright in the expandable pocket.
- A firm flat pocket holds documents, artwork, maps and so on without bending and folding.
- Plenty of pockets for glasses, tools, food, a small packet of tissues, etc... making it easy to remove what you need without rummaging through the bag.
- Quickly and easily removed from, and re-attached to, the bike, for security and convenience.



This is the third model of such a bag I have made, so most problems have been eliminated. All have worn well for many years.

## **What is Involved:**

The material I used was tent canvas. When I called in to a manufacturer to buy this material, he was happy to give me some off-cuts. You don't need to be a skilled machinist to make it. A domestic sewing machine will do if it can be put into reverse to allow **both** hands to guide the material. Remove the flatbed to expose the cylinder arm containing the bobbin, as some corners are awkward. Sometimes hand-stitching is necessary (and you may need to make holes in the leather with some other sharp tool to allow a needle through).

## **Materials:**

- Canvas, 1300mm x 870mm (possibly two smaller sheets)
- Zips:
  - two 30cm open-ended for bottle pocket: for inner panel and pocket's extension,
  - two 45cm open-ended, for opening (only 1 ½ used)
  - one 105cm open-ended, for gusset expansion,
  - one 58cm for top expansion (seldom used; not absolutely necessary),
  - one 38cm closed-end for pocket.
- 1 wooden panel at least 310mm x 250mm x 4.5mm (hardboard better than chipboard) to fit into and strengthen the documents pocket.
- 1 plastic "tunnel" tube to hold canvas tunnel open when empty (not absolutely necessary).
- 36cm (roughly) strong metal tubing.
- 1 plastic cap (as used on metal chair legs) to match diameter of metal tube, above; it will need part of its side cut off to fit onto tube sideways.
- 2 simple leather straps roughly 19cm x 2cm with buckles, for fitting onto carrier.
- 1 leather handle (I used old leather belts to make it collapsible, or a leather worker can make it). If the top expanding zip is not used a solid handle could be used.
- 2 firm pieces of leather (about 2mm thick), one for the patch on the side which wears against the carrier frame, the other for under the top to spread the load when lifting.
- 1 small piece Velcro for closing the screwdriver pouch.
- Bias-binding to cover the gusset and bottle pocket edge-seams; and to provide pull-tags for closing the zip on the pocket and the closing zip.

For instructions and a cutting plan, write to me at 1 Bradford Ave, Christchurch 2 and I will supply the full-size plans for \$4 plus postage and packing. My bicycle is an old 27" 10-speed; so you may need to amend the pattern for your bike, to prevent your heel hitting the pannier when pedalling, and to position it both below the carrier-frame and above the back axle. With this useful bag, you will be the envy of every cyclist you meet.

## **MEET THE CAN EXEC (PART 1)**

### **Axel Wilke (axel.wilke@can.org.nz) - technical advisor**

I started my “career” in cycle advocacy in 1989 when I joined an organisation that promotes sustainable forms of transport in Germany. Looking for a career change, I studied towards a degree in Civil Engineering. I worked as a traffic engineer for Christchurch City Council from 1997 until recently and have now formed my own traffic engineering consultancy.

I’ve been with CAN since the Palmerston North cycle conference in 2000, and with Spokes in Christchurch for a little longer again. Looking back, I’m amazed how much has changed over the years in the transport sector, and I’m hoping that the positive momentum in this country can be maintained (apart from Christchurch, where there's some back-peddalling going on).

I enjoy the outdoors (mainly mountain biking) and socialising. Christchurch is choice for lifestyle reasons. And as long as the CAN committee is made up of such a great bunch of people, I’ve got energy for many more years of cycle advocacy.



### **Robert Ibell (dawbell@actrix.gen.nz) - chairperson/ campaign secretary**

I’ve used the bicycle as my main means of transport for most of my 40-something years, recently to cart my cello around Wellington (with the help of a trailer!). There’s a decent sprinkling of cyclists amongst my workmates at the NZSO and the touring that goes with the job has given me opportunities to meet CANners in many parts of NZ. I first got drawn into advocacy via the London Cycling Campaign and have since been part of getting Cycle Aware Wellington and CAN up and riding.



### **Lyneke Onderwater (lyneke@can.org.nz) - Treasurer**

I was born in the Netherlands, so I was brought up with bicycles. I came to NZ in 1985 and just kept on cycling. Apart from a few years of living in the country here in NZ, I have always used my bike for transport as much as possible. In 1995 I left NZ for a cycle trip around the world, which lasted 4 years and took me mostly through Africa and the Americas.

Habitat restoration is what I do for a living, i.e. planting natives and removing noxious weeds. I do this 3 days a week and the rest of my time I do voluntary work for the Greens, SPOKES and CAN. Tramping and gardening (natives and veges) are my hobbies and I am learning to play the cornet and public speaking (Toastmasters). Bas is the love of my life and he is also a keen cyclist. We often have touring cyclists staying and are part of the Warm Showers List for cyclists ([www.rogergravel.com/wsl/](http://www.rogergravel.com/wsl/)). CAN members are welcome too.

I joined Cycle Action Waikato and CAN in 1999, moved to Christchurch in 2001 and became treasurer of SPOKES in August.

## **Andrew Macbeth (andrew.macbeth@can.org.nz) - policy and technical advisor**

I've been a cycling advocate since the mid-seventies with Christchurch's Bicycle Planning Committee, then was president of the Canterbury Cyclists' Association (now called Spokes) for a while in the 80s. I've been a touring and recreational cyclist in a dozen countries and a year-round bike commuter in Christchurch, Wellington, Lower Hutt and Toronto. I'm now working for MWH New Zealand Ltd in Christchurch as a traffic engineer and transportation planner specialising in pedestrian and cyclist issues.

I attended the VeloCity international bicycle conferences in Copenhagen (1989) and Montreal (1992). While working for the City of Toronto through the 90s, I was responsible for designing and installing 40 km of bicycle lanes on arterial roads which helped Toronto be recognised by Bicycling Magazine as "North America's Most Bicycle-Friendly City" in 1995. Bicycles are a powerful symbol of a sustainable lifestyle, nation and world, and I'm proud to be part of the "velorution"!



## **David Laing (laingmaguire@paradise.net.nz)**

David Laing arrived in Wellington from the UK in December 1995. He has lived there ever since. He has been involved with cycle advocacy for the last eight years with Cycle Aware Wellington, and has held the position of Chairman for the last six years. His main focus in CAW has been under the Education & Safety sub-committee, and has represented CAW on the Wellington City Council Road-Safety Reference Group as long as he has been Chairman.

He is currently employed by CentrePort as IT Manager. He is absurdly proud of his 2 and a half year old son (David J), and wife Teresa, and considers that being a parent is the greatest thing anyone can do!



## **Adrian Croucher (secretary@can.org.nz) - Secretary**

I biked to school from about age 9, even though my primary school didn't allow it. In those days everyone got their driving licences as soon as they turned 15, but I've never liked doing things just because other people do them, and I didn't see why I couldn't keep cycling for most of my transport needs. No one's given me a good reason yet, so I'm still riding.

I joined CAN in 1999, and have been CAN secretary since 2000. I'm also actively involved in Cycle Action Auckland. I work mostly as a researcher in Engineering Science at Auckland University, but also enjoy exercising the other side of my brain on various creative projects.

I've done a fair bit of cycle touring in NZ and overseas (including Hungary, Romania and Turkey). My partner Sally McAra and I live car-free in Auckland, with the help of various mountain bikes, a BoB trailer, and our two beloved Birdy folding bikes!



## OTAGO CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL

*By Elisabeth Mikkelsen*

My planning for “doing the Rail Trail” between Christmas and New Year was bad and I suffered for it. But I did it, even if I floundered at the end. Hoping to help someone else attempting it in much the same way as I, but with better planning, here is my tale.

Not having a car, but some airpoints to be used up, I decided long ago to fly to Dunedin to start the trail from Middlemarch. I booked the ticket and left the rest until a couple of weeks before I was due to leave. When I enquired about the Taieri Gorge Train to take me to the start of the trail, I discovered that it only goes Middlemarch on a Sunday as it ends at Pukerangi on the other days and I would miss it on the day I arrived at Dunedin airport. Alas a lost day as I had to wait to take the train at 9.15 am the next day.

The logistics of travelling with a fully loaded bike from the Kapiti Coast to Wellington airport were complex to say the least. Add to that my fumbling ways of taking the bike apart and slotting it into the Ground Effect bag at the airport (having only learned how to do so on the previous day from my son), concern about overweight luggage, I arrived at Dunedin airport feeling a bit tense and tired, only to learn, that unlike other airports, Dunedin airport is located 30 km out of the city! Well, after putting the bike together and packing tools away, I found one pedal was still in the bag. I was finally ready to start off to Dunedin along SH1 in thick traffic and no road shoulders, I decided to stop in Mosgiel and continue in the early morning to the Dunedin Train Station.

The Taieri Gorge Train is a must. Very enjoyable! Scenery is breathtaking, the commentary informative and you can get coffee and sandwiches on board. Arriving in Pukerangi, I was dismayed to find that although there were quite a few cyclists on board the train who were going to do the trail, they were picked up by a shuttle and taken into Middlemarch – NOT CYCLING! You may say I am a purist, but really! Fortunately the bike was stored on the train as is, so I just got on and WENT – 20 km to Middlemarch. I stopped in the shade for a cuppa for a while until the sun abated a bit. Of course this meant that by the time I arrived at Blind Billy’s Camp (nice camp), it was too late to start on the trail (or at least I told myself so). This is where I met George and Gill Mate, our members from Westport – intrepid cycle tourists like myself – oh, did we have stories to swap. Having just come through from Clyde, they encouraged me saying that certainly I could do the trail in the two days left to me, since I definitely wanted to spend New Year’s Eve in Clyde and had booked a bus ticket from Cromwell to Christchurch on 2 January continuing on Air NZ from Christchurch to Wellington.

So I started off the next morning at 7.30 am to beat the sun and wind – only to cycle 10 km the wrong way at first – just for a little warm-up ☺ The trail started uphill on an easy gradient which wasn’t too bad, especially since it stayed cloudy almost all the way to Hyde. At Hyde a café with cane chairs with lovely soft cushions and toasted sandwiches on a shaded veranda provided a good rest for the behind. Hyde is a crossroads, with cyclists arriving from both directions. At one stage there must have been 30 of us there. Some were Freedom-cyclists, having all baggage brought on shuttles and cycling on smart suspension mountain bikes, clad in lycra, gloves and all. I felt quite antique on my giant ladies bike with fat tires and well-used canvas carrier bags and no suspension.

The next stage, Hyde to Waipiata, was enjoyable, a winding trail and some uphill but also some nice downhills. Free campsite along the Taieri River just before Waipiata looked enticing, but unfortunately I had to get to Ranfurly that day. The last section between Waipiata and Ranfurly that day was painful – dead straight, hot and a strong headwind. Unfortunately the surface of the trail is not great for 2/3 of the way. In fact the gravel roads crossing the trail were smoother than the trail. Unless you have suspension on your bike, it is painfully bumpy and slows you down. Whereas my usual average speed is 20 km per hour, on the rail trail it was only 10-12 km per hour.



The next day, I made a 7 am start to try to get ahead before the sun got too hot. There was still 85 km to cover to Clyde. I stopped at Wedderburn Tavern for a coffee. The inn was not open, but the publican took pity on me and gave me a free cuppa. From the inn there is a shortcut you can take back to the trail. The inn is a very nice place with a garden and terrace setting in the middle of farmland. 3 km from the Tavern is the Summit, where I met Linda Kerkmeester (Cycling, Walking and Bridleways coordinator, Kapiti Coast district Council) with family. We had discussed that surely we would meet. The summit was a good place as we were all congratulating one another for having got that far. Now it was supposed to be DOWNHILL right? I didn't like to tell Linda that there was some uphill too... Myself I was pretty confident that from now on it would be a breeze.... Instead - I had a breeze - yes, a strong headwind – this time a South Easterly and some more uphills – easy grade, but straight to the horizon – a real killer on a bike. I had lost my light and so I had to keep my tongue straight in the tunnels. I met a nice Christchurch cyclist who told me about the trail along the Clutha River between Alexandra and Clyde. This trail turned out to be delightful and shaded albeit a little longer.

I stopped at **all** refreshment/watering places for shade and rest. Oturehua was a great place to have coffee and look at the old General Store & Museum. Omakau has a good little café and an upmarket guesthouse.

I finally arrived at the camp in Clyde in a zombie-like state. Some campers spotted me trying to erect my tent in slow motion and came over with a welcome long drink of juice. After a 2-hour sleep, I joined them for New Years Eve drinks at the campsite and later we wandered to the Clyde New Years Street Party. I danced the rest of the night away to rock & roll and sang the “Auld Lang Syne” at midnight.



I cycled to Cromwell the next day to catch the bus. It is very dangerous to cycle between Clyde and Cromwell. Transit, PLEASE let us have some shoulders on this road! There were very few cyclists – NO WONDER! Cromwell is a beautiful town and for the first time in New Zealand I saw residential housing with a 20 metre wide tree-shaded asphalt walkway/cycleway between blocks of houses - twice in the same street. WOW!

After some tenseness as to whether the bike would be allowed on the bus and the payment of an extra \$10 for the bike, I settled in on a front seat to a panoramic view of the sensational Central Otago landscape with the dark hills covered in waving tussock and lakes, both natural and manmade. The Inter City bus driver gave a good commentary. There were stops at Lake Tekapo and other places for ice cream or coffee.

Altogether a wonderful if tough trip!

A few technical details: My bike weighed 16 kg with front and back carrier - enveloped in the Ground Effect bag. Tent, sleeping bag, clothes, cooker & tools etc. weighed 12 kg. I did not have to pay for excess baggage as I was able to carry the surplus 8 kg as cabin luggage.

## **CYCLING NEWS FROM AROUND NEW ZEALAND**

### **80km Cycle for 80th Birthday Celebration**

Octogenarian cyclist Ken McDonald wasn't even stiff after riding 80km to celebrate his 80th birthday last Thursday. Winner of three gold and two silver medals at the 1991 Masters Games, the Alexandra man cycled five 16km circuits in less than four hours in a bid to match his age with road mileage.

"I hadn't done 80km for years but I've been keeping fit - I get on the exercycle now and then." The cycle ride was a present to himself -- one he announced at his birthday bash.

"Some thought it was just the drink talking... but if they thought that, they didn't know me at all." The circuit, looping Dunstan Rd and the airport, was Mr McDonald's only concession to his age.

"The main idea was I wasn't too far from home and the ambulance wouldn't have far to come," he said.

At age 19, the former Invercargill man was a "late starter" in cycling, but caught up fast and in 1945 - after less than a year's involvement in the sport - he was runner-up for a national title.

Later, Mr McDonald spent more than a year in southern Japan as part of the Occupation Force. On his return to Southland in 1952, work and family commitments left cycling on the backburner until 1991, when the new Masters Games meant he could compete with men his own age.

"I thought, I'll just see if I can hold my own with my own age group," Mr McDonald said.

He cleaned up - going on to compete in a further five Masters Games, before laying aside his bike at last. "They haven't got my age group - that was Lassiter's Last Ride, that 80km," he said. Although he says he might have a few rides left in him yet.

"I'll do a wee bit - just to blow the cobwebs out," he said.

[The Southland Times, 30 December 2005]



### **Cyclists Set Challenge After Cycleway Moratorium Lifted**

Spokes Canterbury, the local cycling advocacy group, has challenged the Christchurch City Council to get serious about encouraging cycling after it voted today to lift its moratorium on cycleway projects.

In June the Council voted to halt tendering of all projects involving cycleways, pending a review of the cycle strategy and its implementation. Since then, two seminars and two Council meetings had failed to sway Councillors. But today's report back from staff saw a unanimous vote to lift the freeze, albeit after another lengthy discussion.

Spokes Chair Glen Koorey said that he felt relieved more than anything else.

Our chief concern all along has been the process by which this happened, and it was made quite clear to Councillors today about the untenable nature of their stance.

Mr Koorey also took issue with Councillors' concerns about cycleways not being 'safe'.

"It's a poor term to use; nothing can be 100% "safe" said Mr Koorey. "However we can make cycling "safer" by various means, including on-road cycle lanes where appropriate."

Spokes was now looking forward to working with the Council to look at additional options for promoting and increasing cycling in the city.

At a deputation to Council last month, Spokes presented a "Top 10" of initiatives for boosting cycling in the city. They included lower urban speed limits, the development of sustainable travel plans for organisations, and more road user education and enforcement.

"We applaud the Council for finally seeing sense on this issue", said Mr Koorey. "We accept however Councillors'; concerns about the progress being made in the cycling strategy. Now we want to help them see what could be achieved."

[Spokes media release, 24 November 2005]



## **High Petrol Prices Linked To Strong Interest In Cycling**

New Zealanders seem to be turning to pedal power in the wake of high petrol prices. Figures show that imports of cycles continue to increase, and cycle events are also growing in popularity.

HSC walking and cycling programme director Brent Skinnon says Statistics New Zealand figures show cycle imports have been increasing since 2002, with growth of about 20% from the previous year in 2004 and 2005. Nearly 268,000 cycles were imported into New Zealand in the year ending June 2005.

He puts some of the renewed popularity down to high motoring costs, environmental concerns and the current emphasis on fitness.

"As petrol prices peak and dip at dizzying speed, and publicity around vehicle emissions rises, bikes are an obvious choice for people of all ages. Biking is good for you, and it's good for the environment."

"New Zealand already has more than 750,000 bike owners and if the last three years' trends are anything to go by, imports will continue to rise. I don't think we've peaked yet."

Organisers of this summer's big cycle events say entries continue to increase, as do spectators. November's Wattyl Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge saw almost 1,500 more riders entered than in 2004. The race attracted over 11,400 riders, and was inundated with late entries.

Joce Moyle, media liaison officer for the race, says the event has undergone significant growth every year for the past six years. "Cycling has enjoyed something of a renaissance over the last few years." The increased popularity of cycling is also being reflected in retail outlets. Murray Howe, Avanti Plus manager, Lower Hutt says the days when parents only bought bikes for the kids are gone.



"Now they buy one each and ride with their kids. The women's market has also really taken off, which I think is due to the manufacture of both bikes and cycling gear for women, with a lot at the high end of the fitness fashion market."

Brent Skinnon says the support provided to cyclists by local and national government also encourages people to get on their bikes.

"Special facilities for cyclists, such as cycle lanes, are starting to make the roads safer than a few years back. Competitive cyclists also receive the spin-off with plenty of safer training areas."

[Extract from Press Release by Health Sponsorship Council, 2 February 2006]



## **Future Oil Shortages May Change The Way We Get Out And About**

The harsh realities of escalating oil prices and potential future fuel shortages are weighing on the mind of the Auckland Regional Council.

A recent amendment to the 10-year Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) acknowledges oil-related issues Auckland may face in years to come.

With global oil production expected to peak, then decline, within the next two to 20 years, the fallout from oil price hikes is set to become a fixture of the region's future development.

The new chapter anticipates oil scarcity may transform Aucklanders' present transport habits.

It says as the 'risks' involved with relying on only one form of fuel become apparent, the region will probably see more small engine cars, hybrid cars and two-wheeled vehicles.

Public transport stands to benefit, with fares expected to rise alongside patronage, a development that could see Aucklanders cycling and walking on a never-seen-before scale. Location decisions for businesses and households may be altered too, with more people and companies gravitating to public transport routes.

Rail freight is also expected to take over a lot of the long distance road freight market.

The shift in habits is expected to impact some demographics and communities more than others, with a greater emphasis on public transport expected to disadvantage disabled and rural people. To cope with an uncertain future, the amendment cites the need to develop a "resilient" and "sustainable" transport system that can evolve alongside new technologies and fuel sources, expected to materialise as a response to oil shortages.

The RLTS was reviewed this year and is about to be re-released.

The ARC received 224 public submissions. The revised strategy allocates \$3.8 billion to developing the region's public transport network over the next decade

[Howick & Pakuranga Times, 29 November 2005]



## Work On Waimakariri Park Begins

Work is under way on Canterbury's first regional park, as part of a plan to improve the use of the Waimakariri River. Environmental Canterbury (ECan) is developing the park on land it owns along the banks of the North Canterbury river as a flood protection area. It is hoped the park will eventually cover 12,000ha.

Work has begun on stage one of the park including a new 10km mountainbike track near McLeans Island.

The new 500ha mountain-bike park will be based at the Chartered Clubs Picnic Area, which is adjacent to McLeans Island Road. The lease of this area has been surrendered back to ECan which has also bought the facilities from the Combined Chartered Clubs.

ECan has budgeted \$700,000 in the 2005/06 annual plan for the mountainbike area. Maintenance of the park will cost \$1.09 million a year.

Over the years the river banks have been used to dump cars, which are often burnt or destroyed, leaving ECan to pay the cost of disposal.

Last year councillors approved stage one of a 15,000ha regional park, which, if funded over the next few years, will stretch from Bexley to Kaiapoi by 2012.

When completed, the park will include carparks and facilities with space for picnics and children's tracks.

North Canterbury councillor Robert Johnston yesterday said it was hoped the community would "take ownership" of the new park and put it to good use.

"We have this huge area of land and if we can convert that from its present use, which is seen by some as a dumping ground for old cars, then some of those more negative uses will cease."

[The Press, 3 January 2006]



## Life Cycles

Whether they're training for a triathlon, appalled at the price of petrol or on a health kick, more and more people are getting on their bike in Wellington.

The first time Joanne Kriebel rode a bike again, four years ago, a slog from Northland to Wadestown and back left her exhausted. "It was really difficult - it had been a long time." Now she regularly tackles rides of up to 40 kilometres with a group of women. They tend to be picky about weather conditions, but on a good day she reckons there's nothing nicer than cruising around the bays with a view of the Kaikouras or through green valleys down Makara way.

She was a keen cyclist when younger, but hadn't done it for years after a stint living overseas and having three children. It was the lure of the Lake Taupo cycle event that got her back on a bike. She enjoyed it so much, she does it every year as part of a relay team. The rise and rise of the 160-kilometre Taupo round-the-lake "challenge" ("The main event is not a race," insists organiser Keith Crate) is one indication of a gradual revival of interest in

cycling. This year it attracted 11,500 riders, about 150 of them competing in the elite race, but the bulk are recreational riders doing the whole course or bits of it and taking anything from four to nine hours to do so. The median age was 40.

"The last four years is when the number of entries has gone up very steeply," Mr Crate says. "I think it's all to do with health – people wanting healthier lifestyles and looking for alternative means of transport, because the roads are clogged up."

This year more than 1100 individual riders from the Wellington region took part, plus another 400 as part of relay teams. That's up on 2004 and compares with 891 individuals and 330 relay participants in 2003.

There's no doubt that cyclists with serious intent multiply on the region's roads in the weeks before the Taupo race. But observers think the trend is more enduring than a build-up to one weekend in November. There have even been several small cycle shops open in suburbs such as Northland and Aro Valley, mainly tackling repairs for the new band of enthusiasts.

Bike New Zealand, which represents biking associations for road, track, mountain and BMX biking, thinks there has been a substantial increase across the codes, perhaps as much as 40 per cent. There's little hard data, at least till next year's Census asks people how they got to work that day. Bike New Zealand spokesman Ted Jones says one of the few figures it has to go on is bike imports, which were 240,000 in 2004 compared with 205,000 in 2003. New Zealand is not alone - sales of specialty bikes have increased 10 per cent in the United States, apparently spurred by increased petrol costs and concerns about obesity.

"We've also seen a big increase in the number of people turning up at competitive events, especially at school level," Mr Jones says.

He's joined the ranks himself, biking to town from Wadestown and sometimes around the bays at the weekend. It's led to him taking part in a relay at Taupo, and a 50km race in Wairarapa. "A year ago, it would never have crossed my mind. But once you're out riding, you notice how many people there are doing it."

Figures from the 2001 Census showed Wellington cyclists bucking the national trend of a decline in cycling. They indicated that 2 per cent of work journeys were made by bike, up on 1996. Wellington City Council cycle counts between 1999 and 2005 show a slight increase in cycling in the city between 7am and 9am.

Wellington woman Jodi McMahon started biking to work a few months ago, prompted by the hike in petrol prices. She's still at it and has just sent in her entry form for the round Mt Taranaki race next year.

On the whole, she says, she finds drivers courteous, though it pays to be constantly alert. "You have to be really wary about everything that's going on around you."

Robert Ibell, who chairs the advocacy group Cycle Aware, lives in Newtown and zips around town on his bike. His workmates used to pity his lack of a car and offer him a ride. But even as a passenger, he says, he found the traffic and the hustle for a park frustrating.

"Biking is an incredibly convenient way to get around and there's undercover parking right by my work. It's got the benefit a car has of being personal transportation - you can pick it

up anywhere, unlike a bus - but it's got the advantage over a car of being really manoeuvrable."

He thinks more people are giving it a go, and not just fitness fanatics with all the flash gear. "I think there are a lot more ordinary people out there - businesspeople, probably a few more women, people wearing street clothes."

Cycle Aware runs the annual Bike to Work day, with breakfast in Civic Square for participants. It has grown at a faster rate than similar events in other cities and next year it hopes to attract 900 to 1000 people, up from the record 750 this year.

Mr Ibell thinks part of the growth is the development of mountain biking routes around Wellington. Mountain biking is popular in the capital and people then take those robust bikes, with plenty of gears, on to the roads.

But cycling is not, he concedes, a realistic option for some people because of safety concerns. He's part of an active band of people around the country trying to get the needs of cyclists on to the agenda at local and regional council level. "We have tried to work with Wellington City Council, with some success, but there's a level of frustration. There's not a lot of political support - good projects get put up by officers, but turned down by councillors. "

He says there are some parts of the city that are too narrow for dedicated cycle lanes, but, elsewhere, trade-offs need to be made between parking spaces and more room for cyclists. He'd also like to see boxes marked out on the road for cyclists at the lights, so they can get a head start on cars.

If there is a cycling revival, it's off a low base, even in Wellington. New Zealand travel survey data suggests the number of cycle trips fell by almost 40 per cent throughout the 1990s, with the decline most noticeable among under 20-year-olds. Cycling has a long history in New Zealand and almost everyone over the age of 20 would have biked in their childhood. Growing up in Tawa, a bike gave Joanne Krieble the freedom to go to friends' houses and do a paper run. Holidays were often spent cycling in Wanganui, where her grandfather, a former New Zealand cycling representative, biked to work till he was in his 60s.

But across New Zealand that pattern began to change in the 1980s and 90s. As Glen Koorey, University of Canterbury transportation lecturer and cycle advocate, says: "We are starting to see the first generation of parents who didn't bike themselves. We're potentially going to lose that link, if kids don't have the role model of their parents." He says 12 to 15 per cent of Christchurch people used to bike to work or school. It's probably half that now. "The numbers have remained pretty static for the past five years or so. So we've managed to stop the decline, but there's been no great growth. Recreational cycling seems to have increased, but the real decline is among school children."

Mrs Krieble is not surprised that parents are reluctant to let their kids bike on the roads. Her husband bikes to work and she says she was somewhat dismissive of his safety concerns - till she tried it. "Some cars have just got no idea and they give you no space at all." Part-time work gives her more flexibility over when she bikes, and her group tends to plan routes around avoiding the worst of the traffic.

Mr Ibell runs adults' cycling skills courses, partly funded by the Wellington City Council and particularly popular with women getting back into cycling. He'd like to see comprehensive programmes in schools, including things like signalling techniques and bicycle maintenance. "It does concern me that people are maybe picking up cycling again and don't really have the skills or the knowledge to do it safely."

The best answer, says cycling enthusiast Patrick Morgan, is to get more people on their bikes. There's safety in numbers. That was the approach that succeeded in Denmark, outlined by transport planner Troels Andersen at a national cycling conference in the Hutt in October. Having more cyclists cuts down traffic and means most drivers are also cyclists, so are more tuned-in to how they operate on the roads.

Mr Morgan says working against that is a belief within Wellington City Council that cycling around the city is dangerous and not a good thing to promote. He says the council has been promising for years that it will come up with a cycling strategy and hasn't done so. "It's so short-sighted."

Hutt City Council has just put out a strategy for consultation and Porirua City Council, though it has the lowest proportion of cyclists, is gaining kudos for helping fund new pathways.

Bike New Zealand advocacy manager Stephen Knight is more diplomatic. "There hasn't been a lot of political support for cycling in Wellington - it's not so much anti-cycling, but they're into promoting public transport instead. "

Yet, he says, Wellington is a good city for cycling - as witnessed by the high number of cycle couriers. If you can handle the weather, it's compact, flat in the inner-city and on routes in from the east and south.

Mr Ibell says that, in an odd way, the traffic congestion can make it easier. It slows everything down. "Maybe that's why more people are taking to it, because they're stuck in the traffic in a queue and they see this cyclist keeping up with them, or overtaking them."

Traffic is the least of Sridhar Ekambaram's worries. Having biked in India before coming here five years ago, the roads still feel empty, the cars slow moving. The cycling fanatic lives near Newlands and scoots down the Ngauranga Gorge to work in the inner city. If he leaves at the same time as his wife, who takes the bus, he's usually at work first.

Then he hit an obstacle - his company, EDS, changed buildings and the new one had an open car park with no safe places for bikes. So he led a campaign for a secure bicycle lockup facility in the basement. It was eventually provided, though several car parks had to be sacrificed. The upside was that more staff have started biking. No doubt some will soon be entering the Taupo race.

[Dominion Post, 17 December 2005]



**When I see an adult on a bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race.**

**H.G. Wells**



## OVERSEAS NEWS

### Plan to axe cars from Melbourne city centre

Cars will be driven out of the city in favour of public transport and bicycles under a radical new council strategy that abandons plans for a multibillion-dollar cross-city tunnel and suggests slashing speed limits in the CBD. Under Melbourne City Council's draft strategy, commuters would be "weaned" off cars. But Lord Mayor John So has conceded that the strategy would work only if the State Government invests more in public transport and cycling alternatives. "The council does not want more cars in the city, but we recognise that people need better transport choices before they will give up the convenience of a car," Cr So said.

The council has also backed away from its previous interest in a multibillion-dollar road and rail link, proposed by the influential Committee for Melbourne last year, which would have connected the Eastern Freeway to the Western Ring Road at Deer Park. The proposals in the strategy include several dramatic shifts in council policy, including:

- Cutting speed limits in the central city area from 50 to 40 km/h to "reduce pedestrian injuries and improve the walking and cycling environment."
- Opposing increased road access for cars into the city, arguing that "more road capacity would threaten the long-term viability of the city (and) that the more space is devoted to private vehicles, the less space there is for people."
- Blocking any further removal of tram stops at city intersections to build "superstops" in the middle of city blocks because "tram speed cannot be improved by this initiative given the necessity to stop at each corner" at traffic lights.

The report recommends the council use its authority over roads in the CBD to introduce bus and tram-only lanes in several streets, as well as allocating more space to pedestrians and cyclists. The council's planning committee chairwoman, Cr Catherine Ng, said: "Like it or not, the car can no longer be king in Melbourne." The council is also considering a plan to boost public transport patronage by offering city residents discounted fares in return for relinquishing parking permits, along with discounted tickets for shoppers.

The strategy calls on the State Government to invest heavily in improved train, tram and bus routes, including upgrading the city loop, as well as lobbying for off-peak tolls on roads such as CityLink to spread peak-hour demand. An average of 640,000 people visit the city each weekday, with that number forecast to rise to 1 million by 2014. Almost half of those commuters travel into the city by car.

The strategy is based on months of consultations with transport and business lobby groups. Most of the 232 submissions considered have been calls for better cycling, public transport and pedestrian access, with scores of complaints about current road policies favouring cars. The strategy will be on the council's website on Friday and finalised in June.

[Melbourne Age, 1 February 2006]



## Cycling Accidents Fall in Edinburgh

The number of accidents involving cyclists in Scotland's capital has fallen by a quarter in the last five years, it was revealed yesterday.

More people than ever are using bicycles to get around Edinburgh's streets, but there has been a huge drop in the number of injuries. Since 2000, just over 850 cyclists have been injured in the city compared to nearly 1,150 in the previous five years. Ian Maxwell, a member of the cycling campaign group Spokes, said cycling in Edinburgh was getting safer, not more dangerous.

"The actual accident figures back up the Spokes view that cycle accident rates will fall once more people are seen to be riding bikes in the Capital. That is what has happened where cycling has been encouraged, both in Britain and Europe." The figures have also been welcomed by city transport leaders who aim to increase the proportion of commuters who cycle to their workplace from the current 5 per cent to 10 per cent by 2010. However the number of cyclists who have died on the city's streets has not fallen and police are encouraging both motorists and cyclists to take extra care.

[The Scotsman, 27 December 2005]



## Shopping mall bans bicycling paramedics in Norwich

Cycling paramedics have been banned from a new shopping centre in case they knock down shoppers who then sue for compensation.

The paramedics, who have been credited with saving hundreds of lives since taking to their cycles in Norwich five years ago, have been told by managers of the Chapelfield centre that they must push them to patients, despite fears that the extra minutes could cost lives.

Security staff at the shopping centre, which opened in September, ordered one paramedic to dismount as he was on his way to treat a shopper who was having a fit.

Introduced as a means of getting around Norwich's maze of narrow streets and alleys, the bicycle service has responded to more than 6,000 emergency calls, about 300 of which were categorised as life-threatening incidents.

A spokesman for the East Anglian Ambulance Service said that the bicycle crews had cut response times in the city centre from eight minutes to three. He said: "We have one mountain bike equipped with a siren and flashing lights to get people out of the way and a team of four paramedics who take turns to use it.

"They are all highly proficient, trained cyclists and, in more than five years, I have not heard of them knocking anyone over."

Mike Redfearn, the operations manager for Chapelfield, said: "It was agreed that the cyclists can operate but we have asked that they dismount because we feel riding would be too dangerous with a large amount of people."

[Source unknown, 16 November 2005]



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## Weblinks

- The Auckland regional cycle maps and Cycle Guide are online at [www.maxx.co.nz](http://www.maxx.co.nz).
- Overseas Cycle Tourism data – a summary of data on overseas visitor cycling behaviour in NZ, during 1997-2005. It includes both on- and off-road cycling, and includes both cycle tourism and cycling at specific destinations. [www.bikenz.org.nz](http://www.bikenz.org.nz) – go to Advocacy Toolkit panel on the left, and scroll down to Tourism.
- Extracts from recent news items on road user charges and carbon taxes suggest possible changes in the way roads are funded and, consequently, how cycling (among other things) might be affected. these papers, and links to the papers themselves, on [www.bikenz.org.nz](http://www.bikenz.org.nz) – click on Advocacy Toolbox on the left). This will be beneficial to those putting together submission on transport-related matters, or applying for funding or in-kind support from central/local government agencies, community trusts or other organizations.
- Bicycle Commuting for Fun and Profit: RoadbikeRider.com has an e-book on bike commuting, downloadable for US\$12.95. Read excerpts from it at: [http://www.roadbikerider.com/bc\\_excerpt.htm](http://www.roadbikerider.com/bc_excerpt.htm)
- Census at School: an online survey for year 5 - 10 students, includes figures on 'how kids travel to school': <http://www.censusatschool.org.nz/2005/summary-tables/>

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