



RE-CYCLE
FREE BIKE LOAN SCHEME FOR INVERNESS
A FIRST FOR THE UK

Jim McCreath, the Development Officer for Inverness and Nairn Transport Forum (Intrans), was a guest at the last HCC meeting. Fora like Intrans are usually concerned with public transport innovations (Dial a Bus, volunteer taxi services etc.) for people without cars who live in sparsely populated areas, but Jim has also been innovative on the cycling front. Major centres of employment in Inverness have in recent years moved to the periphery of town, and are now located at places like Fairways or Beechwood Business Park. (What a revolting phrase that is!) People who travel to Inverness by public transport for work or other purposes may be faced with lengthy walks or bus rides to get to their final destination and timing of transport into town may leave long gaps before appointments or meeting times.

Hmm? Wouldn't it be nice if you could jump off the train/bus, onto a waiting bike, whiz up to your work place past the stationary ranks of woeful motorists, park your bike with ease in the sheltered, close-to-entrance bike storage space (those of you who've got them) and plunge merrily into another day sifting through e-mails, or whatever other inspiring task you do to earn your daily bread? Some people already do this by leaving a second bike somewhere in the city; a favourite spot is the high security parking area at the station.

This thought had occurred to Jim as well and he did something about it. He started RE-CYCLE; a project to help persuade those teetering on the brink of a sustainable transport mode shift to take the plunge. Free bikes at the transport interchange would be supplied. You pick one up

and return it in the evening or after you have finished with it.

OK !OK! -- But how do you know there'll be a bike.?..... what if it's nicked?..... suppose it's a bike I don't like?.... it might be too big?..... or too small?..... suppose something breaks?..... what if the colour doesn't match my anorak?.....etc. etc. (What a bunch of wimps - GC).



Jim was not deterred. All the bikes are nicked anyway! You may even get one of your own! No, he doesn't cruise round Inverness in white Transit.... he has got Northern constabulary involved. They have donated stolen but unclaimed bikes to the project from their store. This is a brilliant idea because a variety of types and sizes (and colours!) have been made available - step-throughs, hybrids, road bikes. Some 30 are in stock.

The scheme is located in Farraline Park multi-storey car park under the sign above. (It's in the corner of the bus station beside the Library.) Jim has also got "MP 33" involved. That's an organisation in Merkinch that teaches bicycle maintenance to young people under the guidance of the resident mechanic.

To register with the scheme phone MP33 at 01463 717639 beforehand. Then when you wish to use a bicycle, whether for an hour, a day, a week or longer let Re-Cycle know and they will confirm that a locked bicycle of a suitable size will be ready at the agreed time. They will also tell you the combination lock number. You go to Inverness, get your bike and lock and go to work.

It's a great project. The first free bike scheme in the UK., operated with a minimum of expenditure using second-hand bikes and supported by Highland Council and Hitrans. Congratulations to Jim, Inverness and Nairn Transport Forum and all others involved.

GC

RE CYCLE LAUNCH 12TH SEPTEMBER

Re-Cycle was launched at Farraline Park multi-storey car park where the bicycles are based (see p.1) early in September. The Provost, Cllr. Bob Wynd was present along with Commonwealth Games cyclist and cycle shop proprietor, Kenny Riddle. Between them they performed the opening ceremony. Press and TV were in evidence and the Provost had fun trying out the bikes. Dick & Mary Langridge and Ged Church were there for the opening ceremony at 10.30, but earlier Stewart Campbell had arrived and been interviewed by BBC Scotland for the radio programme “Good Morning Scotland”. (It was good to have HCC representation at this event.) A first for the UK.

[The scheme was also featured on Radio 4’s “You and Yours” on Monday 1st October. Ed]

GC

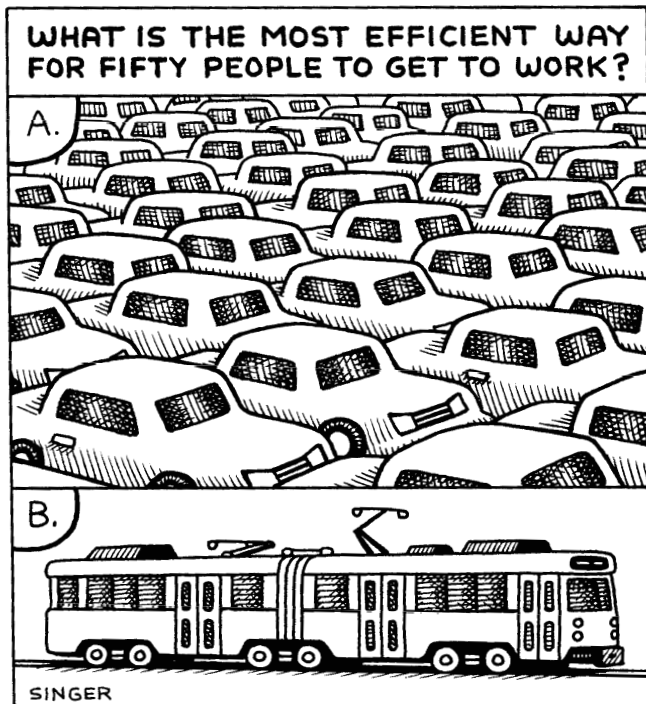
ALTERNATIVENESS - IN TOWN WITHOUT MY CAR EUROPEAN MOBILITY DAY 19TH SEPTEMBER

A week after the launch of Re-Cycle (see p.1) Jim McCreath of Intrans initiated Inverness’s participation in this Europe-wide event. To qualify a city has to

- close a street to motor traffic for a day. [The street closed in Inverness was Castle Road. It runs between the castle and the river from Ness bridge to Ness Bank.]
- develop a permanent project to reduce car use. [The permanent project was Re Cycle.]

The day-long event was supported by a number of organisations, primarily Highland Council and Hitrans.

HCC went along with a stall manned by the Langridges, Rebecca & Christie Kail, and Ged Church. Various Highland Council departments



“The automobiles required to transport the equivalent of one train-load of commuters use about four acres of parking space” - Robert Caro, in “The Power Broker” 1974.

were in evidence notably Green Inverness and the Core Path Network team. Derek Mullins of Sustrans was also there and Rapsons brought along one of their new Jet buses. Various familiar faces appeared throughout the day. It was good to see the Provost and later Cllr. Hamish Wood.

HCC’s team had divied up the day into time slots but Chairman Dick Langridge became so attached to Bernie Church’s kindly loaned camping stool that he stayed longer than planned. In fact, it was such a pleasant family like occasion most of us hung around. One of the highlights was getting a ride in one of the Edinburgh Pedicab rickshaws. These cabs, which can carry 3 people, are ridden by superhuman young men and women. The gearing is pretty complex and gives about 45 options. Our two drivers were from the continent - French I think. Getting towed around in one of these contraptions gives an idea of the public transport of another age. A very pleasant day helped by better weather than most days this year.

Apart from swanning around did we do anything useful? Yes we did. Aply assisted by Christie Kail and his volunteer helper, 3 year old Ben, all our remaining leaflets were distributed in a targeted fashion. We printed a further 200 and handed out a number of these. A few cycle maps were sold. Rebecca passed on information about starting BUGs to a couple of

people working for Crofters Commission and Forestry Commission and Ged could give pointers to a lady enquiring about mature folk returning to cycling after a long gap. We spoke to many individuals and I think we engaged more people with the work of HCC than at any event I have attended. We also gave occasional assistance to the tireless Andrew Capes of Hitrans in distributing and collecting questionnaires.

A very pleasant day and good company --- One thing was missing --
An event like that needed a food stall or two to complete the
good experience. Perhaps next time?

G. C.

GUIDE TO CYCLING TO WORK

Green Books has published a low-cost beginner's guide to cycling to work, authored by Rory McMullan. It starts with a strong polemic as to why people should think of cycling to work, and then gives a variety of advice on buying a bike, starting out, cycle maintenance and making work places cycle-friendly.

The advice is generally good so far as it goes, but sometimes is overly brief or lacking in some of the detail that novices often need. This is particularly so in the chapter on riding in traffic, which at 6 pages is one of the shortest in the book and one of the few with no references to more information. To gain the skills and confidence to ride in traffic - a key hurdle for people wanting to cycle - most people will need more guidance and advice than is present here. The author also seems to accept the establishment views on safety with regard to hi-vis, helmets and facilities such as cycle lanes, at a time when these views are increasingly being challenged.

Overall the booklet is a good advocate and starting reference for people thinking about cycling to work, but not in itself a sufficient guide to what they will need to know.

Cycling to Work: A beginner's Guide, Rory McMullan. Green Books,
£4.95 ISBN 978 1 900322 12 6

(Source: CCN News)

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN

This Local Plan will last for the next five years and follows on from the Cairngorms National Park Plan approved last March. It supersedes local authority plans in Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Perth and Kinross for the parts of their areas which fall within the Park boundary.

The first stage of the consultation finished on 28th September 2007. A modified plan will go out for further consultation by March 2008, to be followed by a Public Inquiry in July with further representation in October/November and final adoption in November 2008.

Cycling is only mentioned on one page of this document, when quoting the National Park Plan to 'Provide more cycling opportunities through provision of off-road facilities, removal of unnecessary barriers and by developing specific marketing initiatives' and 'improve availability and use of functional walking and cycling routes, especially near schools and work places'.

There is also mention of sustainable transport, green transport plans and 'reducing the impact of travel' yet the general tone of the document is all about development with plans for a huge number of new houses. A submission on behalf of HCC has requested that:

- any public transport service in receipt of public funds should make provision for cycle carriage
- there should be provision of cycle routes beside busy roads, particularly the A95 Aviemore to Grantown road
- where developments include provision for parking this should include secure cycle storage

Included in the development plans is a new settlement, eventually with up to 1500 homes, at An Camus Mor which is on the east bank of the Spey opposite Aviemore. This includes a direct pedestrian link to Aviemore. Clearly this should be for cyclists as well as pedestrians and we have pointed this out.

There will also be problems with increased traffic on the route from An Camus Mor to Aviemore, much of which is on NCN 7.

RL

DINGWALL TO INVERGORDON CYCLE ROUTE PROJECT - KILDARY EXTENSION. (PROGRESS REVIEW)

Provision should be greatly improved when the link to the East of Alness across the A9 is in place This will help some travel-to-work journeys, but is not a solution. Unfortunately, this part of the project, which it had been hoped to complete this year, cannot now be included in the current funding package because of extra time and expense required on the Evanton-Struie Road section. A roadside pavement to bypass a cottage has proved time consuming and costly. There is also feeling in the Planning Department that only one route between Alness and Invergordon should be funded. One of the original hopes for the Alness to Invergordon section was that it would run alongside the shore road. Members of the Invergordon and the Kilmuir and Logie Easter Communities have asked for advice on how to achieve a cycle path between Alness, Invergordon, Barbaraville and Kildary, like the one to the west of Alness .

One stimulus for this request has been the appearance of up to 50 cyclists from the Cruise Ship “Aida”. The ship calls at Invergordon up to 8 times a year with cycles and a cycling guide on board. These visitors cycle to Alness, and to Kildary to see Balnagowan Castle. This is a great example of Green Tourism, but the roads are not safe for 50 bicycles.

Other reasons behind the request are for:

- Travel to work in Alness and Invergordon. The potential is high with Call Centres, Fish Factories, Invergordon Distillery etc.
- Travel to School: Barbaraville to Invergordon and Barbaraville to Milton.
- Social/shopping/leisure, between all the towns and villages.

- Tourism. Cruise liners. There is a high potential. A bike hire business in Invergordon, at the pier, would do good business if the infrastructure were in place.
- Green Tourism in E Ross and the Black Isle. The Coastal Route is the preferred one.
- The B817 between Alness, Invergordon, Barbaraville, Milton and Kildary is busy, fast and dangerous for cyclists.
- The added routes would allow a loop from NCN1 (winter route - also The North Sea Cycle Route) as a regional route, bringing business to the towns and villages. Far too many ‘end-to-enders’ cycle up the A9, causing a hazard to themselves and other road users. Slower cyclists could enjoy the Coastal Route.
- Good cycling provision in the Easter Ross towns will enhance their credentials of sustainability and set an example.
- Invergordon folk who wish to cycle feel ‘trapped’ at present, having no really safe route out of the town.

The Shore Route has already been surveyed to some extent by THC, and it is believed some land was bought. There will have to be further negotiations in the vicinity of Rosskeen. Luckily, retrospective funding was obtained from Sustrans for the route already completed. Albyn Housing have been completing the link through Alness Academy.

THC has been asked to submit a bid to Sustrans for these routes, in two phases:

1. The completion of the Alness to Invergordon route by the shore road.
2. An Invergordon to Kildary route which will connect to the minor road leading to the Scotsburn Road and Tain, and to the Fearn Peninsula and Nigg Ferry.

JDSC

A835 TORE - MARYBURGH CYCLE PATH UPDATE

On August 10th the Ross-shire Journal reported ‘two weeks ago a cyclist travelling on the A835 near the Maryburgh roundabout was the victim of a “hit and run” accident when he was knocked of his bike and left lying on the road as the car driver sped off’.

In response to this latest incident I contacted Murray Innes (Halcrow) to find out what was happening re-construction of the cycle path. He responded saying that the tender documents were substantially complete. The main issue holding the tender process back relates to the damage caused to the railway parapet near the Maryburgh roundabout. Halcrow have been in discussion with Scotland Transerv/Transport Scotland to investigate the possibility of replacing the existing parapet with a higher parapet of 1.4m i.e. to comply with ‘Cycling by Design’. The replacement parapet will be programmed as soon as possible but the works require a lengthy lead in time i.e 20 weeks due to the need for railway possession.

I recently spoke to Neil Wands (Transport Scotland) and he confirmed that this cycle path was high on the list. Work should commence in the New Year with completion by the end of March 2008i.e. by the end of the financial year.

Transport Scotland is committed to delivering the scheme!

M B

FOR SALE HALFORD' HIGHLIFT CAR BIKE RACK

3 BIKE CAPACITY ALMOST UNUSED COST £99.99 WILL SELL £30.00

DETAILS FROM GED CHURCH 01463 831306

Area HCC representatives:

Easter Ross: Ron Stewart (See p.10)

Badenoch and Strathspey: Dick Langridge (See p.10)

Isle of Skye: Jim Towers 3, Carbost Mor, Carbost, Isle of Skye IV47 8ST
fijit@fish.co.uk

Lochaber: Neil Parrish Nevis Cycles, Spean Bridge PH34 4EP

Sutherland: Steve Carroll Creag Charrach, Rockfield Village Portmahomack, IV20 1RF
biker_carroll@hotmail.com

TRAVEL, OBESITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A report by the Institute for European Environmental Policy and Adrian Davis Associates highlights the role of car use in the twin crises of rising obesity and increasing CO₂ emissions.

By returning to the walking patterns of 30 years ago, when car ownership was less common, (i.e. by walking 1 hour or more per week), 15% of car emissions could be saved and an average weight gain of 2lb 11oz per year prevented.

More physical activity, through walking to work, to the shops and escorting children to school, could be an effective part of national programmes to fight climate change and obesity. The costs of such programmes are likely to be dwarfed by those that will be incurred by the National Health Service and society at large through inactivity, ill-health and premature death as a consequence of obesity (estimated at £8.2 billion per year.)

(Source: CCN News)

HCC MEETING

The next meeting of the HCC is planned for Thursday 29th November 2007 at 6p.m. at The Spectrum Centre, Farraline Park, Inverness.

LETTERS - OPINIONS - ACTION - PARTICIPATION

Chairman: **Dick Langridge** 6, Rowan Park, Carrbridge, PH23 3BE 01479 841633
langridge@cali.co.uk

Secretary: **Peter Reynolds** 15, Mackay Square, Dingwall, IV15 9PN
peter@peterreynoldsbooks.co.uk

Membership: **Ron Stewart**, The Anchorage, Barbaraville, Invergordon, IV18 0NA
01862 842753 ra.stewart01@btinternet.com

Newsletter: **Mary Langridge** 6, Rowan Park, Carrbridge PH23 3BE
01479 841633

Website organiser: **Jon Shepherd**

langridge@cali.co.uk
jon@barneybus.org.uk

DUTCH CYCLING UP

The distance that the Dutch cover on their bicycles every day has increased by nearly 10% in the past five years, according to the country's Central Bureau for statistics. Every man, woman and child in the Netherlands cycled an average of 1 mile per person per day in 2006 - more than 8.7 billion miles in all, the agency said.

Bureau spokesman Michiel Vergeer said the agency had gathered the data from surveys across the country, but he didn't have a clear picture of what caused the increase. Two possibilities were 'nice weather and more interests in recreational biking', he said.

However the Dutch Cycling Union (ENFB) thinks it's more tied to increasing traffic congestion and the difficulty of finding parking places in city centres. 'What you see is that it's in the cities and busiest areas that the use of bikes has increased the most,' said spokesperson Miriam van Bree. She said that cities were increasingly promoting bicycle use as a way of meeting pollution and energy-use reduction targets.

Other factors also may be affecting bike usage. In 2002, the Transportation Ministry introduced a tax deduction of up to \$950 for bikes purchased for use in commuting to work. Also in wealthier neighbourhoods, the 'bakfiets' (a goods bike that can carry loads up to 175lb) is becoming a status symbol, selling for up to \$2,700.

Cycle sales in the Netherlands rose by 9% in 2006 and 2007 looks even better.

(Source: CCN News)

Abbreviations Used in Newsletter

AT	Active Travel	NCN	National Cycle Network
ATAG	Active Travel Advisory Group	SCF	Scottish Cycle Forum
BUG	Bicycle Users Group	LA	Local Authority
CO	Cycling Officer	SC	Scottish Executive
CTC	Cycling Tourist Club	TEC	Transport, Environment Services
HCF	Highland Cycle Forum	THC	The Highland Council
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	RTS	Regional Transport Strategy
INTRANS	Inverness and Nairn Transport Forum		

HCC TO THE RESCUE **(A TALE OF TWO TANDEMS)**

Last Autumn Roger Humphry, our previous secretary, received an e-mail from Canada requesting assistance from a cyclist planning a tandem tour of the Western Highlands and Islands in 2007. Roger, about to move house, explained that HCC is a campaigning organisation but passed on the request to others in the Campaign. Knowing how useful local knowledge can be we volunteered to help. Pat had lots of questions about route, accommodation etc. He was coming with his 18 year-old daughter, Theresa, and she wanted the chance of being a tourist in Edinburgh for a day or two at the end of their tour. Pat had discovered the problem of conveying a tandem there by public transport that we are familiar with. A one-way car hire was exorbitant. We offered to hire a big vehicle at shared cost. It would encourage us to visit friends in the Edinburgh area.

In the middle of July we took the train from Carrbridge to Inverness and there picked up a minibus. Dick was dismayed that it had no gangway to slot the tandem into but the instruction booklet explained how to remove the back row of seats. That would give ample space. We had to return home to leave the seat at the house but we made the rendezvous in Fort Augustus with minutes to spare. It is not difficult recognising an unknown father and daughter when they are standing next to a tandem.

While on the way back, on the quiet side, we were surprised to see another tandem not far short of Whitebridge. This one was being pushed along the road by a father and son. The Canadians had met the second pair earlier in the day. The walkers thought they had a broken axle. What was sure was that they could not ride their tandem yet had 11 miles to go to their booked B&B in Fort Augustus. Having a sizeable vehicle and the afternoon ahead of us we could offer transport to the second tandem and riders. They were delighted to be dropped at the car park in Fort Augustus. What was more we could give them the name of HCC member and cycle shop owner, Neil Parrish, in Spean Bridge.

Over the next week or two we learned, via Vancouver, that Edward and his father had reached their journey's aim, Land's End. We also had contact from Neil. He had driven to Fort Augustus to help them get their tandem back on the road; a tricky job as the machine verged on antique and had had a complicated history. We also were satisfied with the experience for, after dropping Pat and Theresa and their tandem boxed for the flight home, at the Edinburgh Youth Hostel, we visited friends in West Linton whom we had not met as a family for over 18 years.

ML