



BULLETIN - SPRING 2010, ISSUE 8

www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk

Welcome...

Welcome to the first Aberdeen Cycle Forum newsletter of 2010. ACF has been continuing its mission to improve cycle facilities and the safety of cyclists in Aberdeen. ACF acts as a 'consultative body' so has the opportunity to comment on or object to some of the changes in the road infrastructure, before they take place. For more information on consultations please see our website.

WEB-LINX

We can't fit everything in the newsletter, some web addresses are long and fiddly to type, so our solution is WEB-LINX. Where you see "WEB-LINX" in the text simply visit the ACF website, click the WEB-LINX button in the menu and enter the number to learn more.

News

ABERDEEN CYCLING ON THE UP

Latest statistics from the Scottish Government add more proof that cycling to work is on the increase in Aberdeen. Figures for 2007/08 show that 3.5% of journeys to work were by bike, this is up from 2% in 2005/06. Aberdeen has the third highest figure in Scotland - behind Edinburgh (6%) and Moray (5.4%). The average for the whole of Scotland was 2%. This is really encouraging and shows the same trend we have been finding from our own cycle counts. The next count is in May (4th/5th), please get in contact if you would like to help. [WEB-LINX 52]

Cycling was also in fashion at Offshore Europe last year, as part of the 'Energy' theme for the show there were guest appearances by both Sir Chris Hoy and Victoria Pendleton. It is a great pity that this was not supported by

the organisers with better bike parking and a decent cycle map! [WEB-LINX 53]

Remember now spring has arrived, the more cyclists that people see, the more they will be encouraged to think about cycling themselves. The best advert for cycling is....YOU!

NEW SIGNS HIGHLIGHT CYCLIST SAFETY



Aberdeen City Council has recently invested in a number of Variable Message Signs (VMS) at 8 locations in Aberdeen, these are designed to highlight traffic congestion and roadworks round the city. At times when there are no such problems (yes they do occasionally exist) the signs show a road safety messages randomly selected from a list.

At one of our regular meetings with Grampian Police and the City Council to discuss cycle safety matters we suggested the addition of two new messages to the list and these have been adopted with the council's support:

BE ALERT FOR CYCLISTS

GIVE CYCLISTS ROOM WHEN OVERTAKING

These should now appear randomly in times of no traffic issues, so most motorists at some time or another should see them.

[WEB_LINX 54]

HOLES HOLES HOLES...

..And how to get them filled

The recent bad weather has taken it's toll on the local roads and cycle paths. Cyclists are particularly vulnerable to potholes, so why not help everyone and Report It! [WEB_LINX 55]

So don't delay - do it NOW - Just visit the ACF website, Pothole Tool to learn how.



Before and After

WESTHILL CYCLE ROUTE

The final stage of this work is going ahead, with funding via NESTRANS. This should see the current cycle path upgraded from Westhill to Kingswells, with better side junction crossings, however the much need toucan crossing at the Kingswells roundabout has not materialised. The plans do include a link to the Langstracht. Reports suggest an increasing use of this cycle route, so this final stage will be welcome.

If you are benefiting from this cycle route or if you are unhappy with it, then write to your local councillor (and copy ACF). They need to know this spending is worthwhile and that there are potential votes in supporting cycle investment!

To find your local councillor [WEB-LINX 63]

BERRYDEN CORRIDOR

The council has approved a major road building project for dual carriageway along the Berryden corridor from Great Northern Road to the Denburn. Urban dual carriageways are well past their sell by date but not, unfortunately, in Aberdeen. While most cities are trying to reduce the traffic coming into city centres, Aberdeen is willing to spend huge amounts of money encouraging even more cars.

The plans have no bus priority measures and cyclists are to be shunted onto the pavement on the east side. This shared use pavement will involve cyclists crossing seven side junctions along the corridor making progress tortuous, and riskier than having a good quality on-road facility. We know the Berryden corridor isn't great for cycling at the moment but a modern approach would have come up with a range of measures to encourage sustainable and responsible transport choices rather than to maximise traffic flows. ACF will continue to press for better cycle facilities as the design detail is worked up but it is trying to make the best of a bad job.

If you cycle this corridor and want to get involved, then get in touch.

CYCLE PARKING UPDATE - JUST FOR U

ACF worked hard to try to get the developers of Union Square, Hammerson, to put more bike parking in or near the Square at the front of the centre, and made our position clear at a "consultation" (having sat through their promotional film!). Hammerson were unwilling to move from their position of 5 stands in front of the centre (and therefore the

station), and that's what we have ended up with.

Hammerson continually referred us to the stands in the multi-storey car park on College Street, but we felt these were inconvenient for both the station and the shopping centre.



Limited cycle parking in front the of the development.

The situation at the bus-centre was much better; to our surprise quite a good number of covered stands appeared which we didn't remember hearing about prior to them going in.

We are in contact with First trying to get stands put in the railway station itself now that the refurbishment is complete....there is a faint glimmer hope. Watch this space.



Covered cycle parking at the rear of the development.

COMMUNICATION - INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.... twit

There are approximately 560 cyclists registered with the ACF e-News service. In addition to keeping you all informed this proved very useful to mobilise a mass response following last years terrible piece of journalism in the Press & Journal [WEB-LINX:56].

Always keen to use the latest technology we are now on Twitter, follow us at twitter.com/aberdeenCF.

Although personally he sees himself as too old for it, our web master is considering putting ACF on Facebook, let us know if this works for you web@aberdeencycleforum.org.uk

WEBMASTER POSITION

The ACF Website is one of our biggest assets - but after 5 years our current webmaster is now struggling to find the time to keep it maintained. We are looking for a DEPUTY WEBMASTER to help out. There's no salary but you get the satisfaction and experience of working on one of the biggest cycling related web sites in NE Scotland.

The technical bit - the site runs on Linux server it is hand coded in PHP and MySQL, not windows or some fancy content management system! So if you have these skills please get in contact, enquiries to web@aberdeencycleforum.org.uk

ABERDEEN CYCLE TRAINERS LAUNCHED

Aberdeen now has a cycle training company, offering cycle instruction at all levels, from complete beginners to more advanced city

cycling skills. All trainers are accredited instructors with Cycling Scotland. They can do one to one or workplace based sessions.

Contact info@aberdeencycletrainers.co.uk {WEB-LINX 57}

CYCLING ON THE SPEYSIDE WAY

At the end of November (just before winter set in) we went to Grantown-on-Spey and decided to try cycling to Aviemore along the off-road route (part of the Speyside way) a distance of approximately 18 miles. We joined the route in the centre of Grantown which led past the golf course and through forest down towards the river. Back on road across the bridge and crossing over towards the entrance to the Estate where we picked up the fencepost way markers back onto the off-road route.

The first section was grassy but reasonably level and quickly turned into old railway line but with lots of gates across the route. The fields on either side gave rise to spectacular views across the flood plain. There are several information signs along the route giving details of wildlife and surrounding area. A few miles later the route arrives in Nethybridge going into a narrower and more hilly forest section eventually leading to Boat of Garten (I would recommend a mountain bike or hybrid for these sections of the route and caution is required on the narrow, slick wooden bridges).

The signage is limited in Boat of Garten but when you find it, the route then meanders across a reasonably level moor until it goes through a couple of ups and downs on the outskirts of Aviemore.

Some building work had blocked off the route as it entered the housing area and we would have lost the way here if we didn't know where it went a bit further on, we re-joined it on the other side of the housing. The route then mirrors the path of the railway and the underpass takes you straight to car and bicycle parking in the centre of Aviemore. The journey (at a sedate pace) took around 3 hours.

Having had lunch we realised that if we were to get back before it got too dark then we would have to use an alternative route. Fortunately we were prepared with bright clothing and lights so we returned the 12 miles to Grantown on the road in just over an hour.

Did I say earlier that this was just before winter set in? The next morning we woke up to 3cm of snow on the ground!

ON YOUR BIKE!

Summer is here, if you are looking for some encouragement to get out there are a few local organisations running rides:

"Try Cycling 2010"(CTC Grampian [WEB-LINX 60] and ACF) - every Sunday 10:00 short rides for those who have been out of the saddle for a while and are looking to regain some confidence. More details and maps of the meeting points can be found at [WEB-LINX 59]

"Ride Thursday" (beCyCle) - fortnightly Thursday Night Ride that just restarted after a winter break. It is open to anyone and dates are announced on the beCyCle website. The last outing was an "alleycat", an urban version of team orienteering on bikes, great fun! Link on the ACF website [WEB-LINX 58]

Come and Meet Us

ACF have been invited to take a stall at the following events:

- Aberdeen Highland Games, Hazlehead Park, Sunday 20th June.

We will be there with leaflets, cycle maps and posters. Please drop by to say hello and give us your comments on the good and bad things about cycling in Aberdeen. Help us target the important areas for future improvements.



ACF stall at an earlier event.

Other dates for your Diary.

- 4-5 May - Cycle Count
- 16 May - Bon Accord Bike Ride
- 7 June - Westhill Bike Ride
- 13 June - Great Inverurie Bike Ride
- 19 June - Bike Week 2010

And Finally...

Let us know what you think, we are always pleased to hear from our readers.

I'm delighted to see that there are an increasing number of cyclists in Aberdeen and that this not just a general impression, it is borne out by the official statistics. The more cyclists there are out there the safer it becomes for everyone, so keep up the good work!

As we know, editorial comment can be a very dangerous thing [WEB-LINX 56] and it is very easy to be contraversial, so I hope you will forgive my little hobbyhorse next!

Please acknowledge other cyclists as you pass even if its just a nod and a smile! With your help, Aberdeen can become known for friendly cyclists as well as being cycle friendly.

Cycle Safely.

Ed.

About ACF

Aberdeen Cycle Forum (ACF) aim to encourage cycling of all types within Aberdeen, including; The promotion of cycling as part of a sustainable transport strategy for Aberdeen and to encourage the city council and other relevant agencies do the same. Campaigning for a safer cycling environment and improved cycle facilities in Aberdeen. Anyone who shares these aims is welcome to join in.

ACF NEEDS YOU

If you have views on issues like this, then why not get involved, It's free and you can give as little or as much as you want. Not sure what's involved, then why not drop in to one of our monthly meetings and say hello - Usually the last Tuesday of the month 19:30hrs in the Townhouse, check the website.

THE SMALL PRINT

Editor: Fiona Fraser Articles by: Derek Williams, Carl Gerrard, Dave Cheseldine, Neil Fraser.

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