



conference newsletter

Velo-city 2001

3

spring 2001

CONFERENCE ON WHEELS

Health and holidays spark highest ever interest

A record number of proposals from prospective speakers at this year's staging of the world's biggest cycle planning conference demonstrates cycling's growing relevance to community-based issues such as health and tourism.

With less than nine months to go before Scotland hosts the twelfth Velo-city cycle planning conference, organisers have received nearly 300 suggestions for conference papers from 41 countries. Breaking all previous records, the response demonstrates the interest that the pre-conference agenda has created by turning the spotlight towards subjects such as encouraging more children to ride bikes and car-free housing development.

The final conference programme will be announced in March, and Velo-city 2001 organisers have already begun deciding which suggestions for conference papers should now become fully-fledged presentations to be made to the 500-plus delegates expected to attend from around the world. While most of Scotland was recovering from its New Year celebrations, an international programme committee met to decide the basic shape of the conference programme. They were assisted in that task by Tom Goodefroij, the programme director of the most recent Velo-city conference – Velo Mondial, held in Amsterdam last year.

"This conference agenda really moves on

the debates about cycling," said Olly Hatch, director of the Velo-city series of conferences. "By choosing these conference themes the conference organisers in Scotland have made this a Velo-city that will definitely be at the cutting edge."

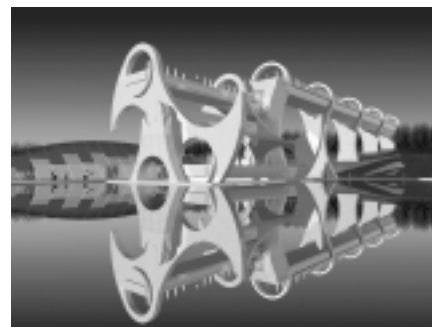
The conference themes are: tourism and economy; children and mobility; health and well being; environment and land use; and, sustainable transport and planning. The conference, which will feature 80 plenary, sub-plenary and workshop sessions, received over 100 abstracts from within the UK, and nearly 200 from countries as diverse as Australia, Brazil, Germany, the USA and Zimbabwe.

"We had one abstract about bike use by children in rural Thailand," says Ian Maxwell, a member of the international programme committee. "Meanwhile, we learned of girls in Christchurch, in New Zealand, being deterred from cycling to school for modesty reasons – because it is compulsory to wear the kilt as part of their school uniform.

"The tourism papers will examine the success of international, national and local cycling routes in Europe and the Americas, quantifying both the economic benefits and usage figures. The section of the conference devoted to transport, planning, environment and land use will include papers on benchmarking, national cycle strategies, city case studies and how best to allocate road space to cycle and bus lanes."

Water, road and rail

Transport of the imagination for transfer



Velo-city delegates will have the opportunity to sample two rides between Edinburgh and Glasgow during the conference. On the Sunday before the conference, delegates can join *Pedal for Scotland*, Scotland's biggest mass-participation ride, timed this year to allow thousands of ordinary cyclists to be involved with Velo-city. And on the middle day of the conference, there will be an organised ride along the canal tow paths that link the two cities.

The mid-week ride takes delegates along the banks of the historic Forth and Clyde and Union Canals – both products of eighteenth century civil engineering. And en-route they will see one of the most spectacular pieces of civil engineering of the twenty-first century. The £78 million Falkirk Wheel (pictured) will link the two canals, replacing a rise of locks that were closed in the 1930s. It is envisaged as a working piece of art, a celebration of the age and a monument to the future, as well as an effective means of transporting boats. Delegates who would prefer can also travel between venues by rail.

ErI's Pearls



Little more than thirty years ago, Christmas Day was a working day in Scotland, with the turning of the New Year the focus of the country's most vigorous celebrations. The New Year has always, for me, been a magical moment, when faith in the future is restored and resolutions are made to make this year better than last. In Velo-city terms, making this year better than last was always going to be a tall order, given the outstanding success of Velo Mondial in Amsterdam.

But even with the high of the festive celebrations now behind us, there is no dampening the sense of excitement now attaching itself to Velo-city 2001. This conference is beginning to catch fire. Imaginations are being captured.

How else to describe the record number of abstracts of possible conference papers being sent by prospective speakers? How else to describe the record number of countries – a staggering 41 – that will be represented on the speaker's podium?

I agree with my colleague Olly Hatch, who is director of the Velo-city series: Velo-city 2001's emphasis on the likes of health and children's issues has given this conference a cutting edge that everyone in cycle planning is desperate to be a part of. No-one wants to miss Velo-city 2001. I'd like to think the Scots' famed hospitality is part of the reason. But there is no question the role of the conference preliminary agenda in attracting papers.

In September, I had the great pleasure to attend the recent Pro Bike/Pro Walk conference and exhibition in Philadelphia, USA. The warmth of the response back then convinced me that Velo-city 2001 was going to attract a big and interesting audience. The USA will be represented at Velo-city 2001, as will, of course, the home nations of the UK. They will be joined by people from Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Eire, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Poland, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Netherlands, Philippines, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

I hope you can join us.

WHO'S COMING

Major speakers for the wo

Scottish Executive minister

Sarah Boyack

Minister for Transport in Scotland



The Scottish Executive minister spearheading what has been hailed as 'a transport revolution for Scotland' is to be one of the main speakers at Velo-city 2001.

Radical measures to cut congestion in city centres and provide better choices in public transport have been recently announced by Sarah Boyack, minister for transport at the Scottish Parliament, who has recently steered a Transport (Scotland) Bill all the way to the statute book.

Among other things, the new legislation allows local authorities to charge car drivers for entering a town or city centre and impose speed limits of as low as 10mph to make residential areas safer for children. The new legislation also aims to encourage increased collaboration between local authorities to ensure coherent, region-wide transport services plus an improvement in the reliability of bus services.

A lecturer in town planning before entering politics, Boyack is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and was formerly the Scottish co-ordinator of the Socialist Environmental Resource Association. Boyack is a member of the Labour Party and represents the Edinburgh Central constituency.



Transport professional

David Begg

Chair of the UK Commission for Integrated Transport

Having inspired big changes to the transport system in the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, the UK's highest profile transport expert, will be addressing an audience in Glasgow, on how cycling can fit into an integrated transport policy.

Professor David Begg, was convenor of the Transportation Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council between 1994 and 1999, during which time a radical pro-cycling policy was introduced. He is now chair of the Commission for Integrated Transport, set up by the UK government. With the aim of providing independent, practical and constructive advice to make integrated transport a reality, the Commission has already produced a number of reports – visit www.cfit.gov.uk for more details.

A director of the Centre for Transport Policy at the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Begg has recently been appointed chair of the National Transport Advisory Group, and is a non-executive director for the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority, Transport for London and British Railways Board. He also advised the government during the preparation of the Integrated Transport White Paper.

GOING TO VELO-CITY 2001?

World's premier cycle planning conference



International regional leader
Hep Monatzeder
Deputy mayor of Munich

A mayor of a city with an enviable track record in promoting bicycle use will tell delegates to Velo-city 2001, that his work will never be done in trying to convince the general public that the bicycle is a tool for daily living. Hep Monatzeder, deputy mayor of the German city of Munich, has overseen a massive increase in bicycle use in the Bavarian capital, with over 13 per cent of all traffic now taken up by bikes. But it hasn't stopped Monatzeder seeking to convert even more people to cycling with the launch of a major publicity campaign, starting in March.

Munich has a population of 1.3 million people and its cycle infrastructure includes 700km of dedicated cycle route and parking for 22,000 bikes. Now, over half of all journeys within the city are undertaken either on foot, by public transport or by bike. Between 1990 and 1999, some 50 million DM has been spent on improving bike infrastructure.

A new Transport Development Plan for Bike Traffic aims at increasing the proportion of journeys undertaken by bike to between 15 and 20 per cent by providing further improvements in infrastructure, increasing public relations and paying more attention to inter-linking bike routes between neighbouring communities.

European Commission **Margot Wallström**

Commissioner for the Environment

The European Union's Environment Commissioner demonstrated her faith in real transport alternatives last year when she rode her bike to work on Car Free Day. In 2001 she will take this commitment further, hopefully, addressing Velo-city 2001 on the role that pan-European bodies can play in cycle promotion.

Margot Wallström has been the European Union's Environment Commissioner since 1999. Before that she was a Social Democratic Party member of the Swedish Parliament. She was government minister for Culture between 1994-1997 and for Social Affairs between 1996 and 1998.

Interaction between interest and advocacy groups and the European Commission has been one of the themes of Wallström's period of office. 'We will never reach our environmental objectives on, for example, climate change if we don't get industry on board,' she says. "But the participation of other interest groups is just as important."

Speaking about Car Free Day, Wallström said: "Citizens, especially in Italy and France have picked up on this initiative and are now saying there should be a Car Free Day every week. Politicians cannot disregard it."



UK Government Minister *Senior member of the government*

The United Kingdom government is currently committed to investing more in transport than has been spent in this area for a generation. In November 2000, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott announced an £80 million package to be spent over ten years, with the objective of transforming public and private transport in Britain. The detailed plan for how this will be achieved should be approved just months before Velo-city 2001.

In 1995 the British government committed itself to ambitious cycle promotion targets – to double cycle use by 2002 and to double it again in the following decade. Although the profile of cycling has not always matched this commitment since then, progress towards the targets has been steady. Velo-city 2001 will provide delegates with the opportunity to see at first hand the challenges of cycle promotion in a country where bicycle use once slipped far below the European average and where most cities experience serious traffic problems. It will also be a chance to learn from senior government politicians how they see their commitments to greater cycle use fitting into the newly established 'ten-year plan'.

Senior UK ministerial representation is expected at Velo-city 2001.



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Link-up Velo-city 2001 steering group profile

The European Cyclists' Federation

The European Cyclists' Federation is the parent body of the Velo-city conference series and is the umbrella organisation of national cycling organisations around Europe. Founded in 1983, it now has 54 members from 31 countries.

The ECF is pledged to ensure that bicycle use achieves its fullest potential so as to bring about sustainable mobility and public well-being. To achieve these aims, the ECF seeks to change attitudes, policies and budget allocations at European level. It does this by organising the exchange of information and expertise on bicycle related transport policies and strategies.

As well as representing cycling organisations to European institutions and co-ordinating the work of the Velo-city series, the ECF runs distinct campaigns, such as the promotion of European car-free day and its current initiative to stimulate sustainable tourism.

The campaign for sustainable tourism seeks to persuade the European Commission to adopt a sustainable tourism strategy to deal with the exponential growth of tourism-related congestion and pollution. Among its recommendations are: charging lower VAT on accommodation charges where

the stay exceeds a week; raising landing and take-off charges for air flights of under 800 km; co-ordinating holiday times across Europe and; harmonising taxes on second homes.

Car free days have proved to be a popular and well-supported means to connect ordinary people with a Europe-wide campaign. All European cities are suffering from the over use of cars, with the resulting pollution and dangerous roads. Car free days take advantage of the dynamic process of traffic management – when there are fewer cars on the road, cycling is a more enjoyable and effective means of transport. This allows first-time cyclists to experience their journey into town in safety and gives others the chance to really enjoy their commute.

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Diary

March Programme and invitations to register

1 July Close of advanced discount registration

15 September Close of registrations

16 September Pedal for Scotland mass-start Glasgow-Edinburgh ride for charity



17-21 September 2001 Velo-city international cycling conference in Edinburgh and Glasgow. See you there!

Conference Partners

City of Edinburgh Council; Glasgow City Council; The Scottish Executive; GoBike!; Spokes; Scottish Cycling Development Project; Cyclists' Touring Club; Sustrans; European Cyclists' Federation.

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Professional partners



JC Decaux has committed itself to the promotion of cycling and is in the final stages of becoming a principal sponsor of Velo-city 2001.

"There is a growing awareness among the general public and local authorities that the bike is probably the quickest means of getting around town," begins Pierre Jeanjean, managing director of JC Decaux UK Ltd. "We are in the business of providing practical solutions to urban environments and the bike is, as everyone knows, also an effective means of cutting traffic congestion and improving air quality."

Contributing sponsors include: Babbie Group, Maclay Civil Engineering, Colas Ltd, Tarmac, The Greater Glasgow Health Board, Lothian Health Board, and Scottish Natural Heritage. The Royal Bank of Scotland and Sustrans are sponsoring the conference outreach programme.

For more information on how you can sponsor the Velo-city 2001 conference or exhibit at an accompanying trade show, contact Vicki Grant at the conference secretariat, c/o Meeting Makers.
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Velo-city 2001 Mailing List Fax-back Form

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