

BIKE CARRIAGE ON TRAINS TO NORTH BERWICK

- Information for Spokes East Lothian members and for other concerned members, May 2010

ScotRail are introducing new Class 380 trains on the North Berwick line in April 2011. Details about these trains can be found at www.scotrail.co.uk/newtrains

Important issues for cyclists:

- In order to meet disability legislation and maximise the number of seats on the new North Berwick trains, the provision of dedicated cycle spaces is to be slashed from 8 to 2.
- This is said to be because of the need to maximise the number of seats for commuters, yet the number of “good” seats is actually increasing from 253 to 277, because the 40 unpopular and under-used centre-of-three seats are being eliminated.
- The *ScotRail* norm for a 4-carriage train would be 8 bike spaces.
- In addition to the 2 dedicated bike spaces, one bike will be allowed in each vestibule, under certain conditions [see below].
- If this will affect you it is important to write now to complain and ask for a high level intervention to require Transport Scotland and ScotRail to match the ScotRail norm.

The new four-carriage trains will have one designated cycle zone (consisting of five tip-up seats), with space for only two bikes. In addition, this single cycle zone will be shared with passengers, buggies and possibly excess luggage.

Not only is this well below the level of provision on the existing North Berwick Class 322s [see picture at end of this document] but it will be the lowest dedicated-space provision on any ScotRail train, other than ex-Strathclyde trains where vestibule bike carriage has always been the norm.

In recent years Scotrail has been one of the UK's best rail operators for encouraging bike/rail integration, with a whole range of innovations (including increased on-train bike space on many routes) and has won the UK Association of Train Operating Companies award for this [see below]. Are we now to see that trend beginning to reverse?

ScotRail has said that the provision of 8 cycle spaces on CI 322s was unusually generous, but this is not born out by the table below, with 2 cycle spaces per carriage being the *ScotRail* average, at which rate a CI 380 should have 8 spaces!

Train Class	Number of dedicated Cycle Spaces per Train	Average Number of Dedicated Cycle Spaces per Carriage
322 (existing North Berwick type)	8	2
156 (as used on Shotts line)	6	3
370 (as used Edinburgh-Glasgow)	6 on 3-coach trains, 12 on 6-coach trains	2
158 (refurbished) (as used to Dunblane)	4	2
158 (un-refurbished)	2	1
380 (new North Berwick type)	2*	0.5

**ScotRail* also proposes permitting one bike to be carried in each vestibule of the CI 380 carriages at the discretion of the train staff, making up to a further eight bikes per train, providing the train is not too busy. If the train becomes busy en-route further cycles may be refused, even if the limit has not been reached.

Although well intentioned (and *ScotRail* have stated that staff will be briefed that there will always be a presumption in favour of accepting cycles up to the maximum permitted number) the vestibule provision is a compromise response to inadequate designed-in cycle capacity.

We are concerned that:

- this policy makes it highly likely that at times of greatest demand for cycle carriage (whether in the commuting peak or at summer weekends) there will be potential for difficulties / conflict between cyclists and non-cyclists. The current designated 8 spaces means that this is rarely an issue.
- difficulties will be faced by families travelling with bikes, as is very common on the North Berwick route. They will not be able to stay together, being distributed along the train's vestibules, with the likelihood of children being separated from their parents.

***ScotRail* has said that it would not be fair, or best use of public sector funding to replicate the dedicated cycle space provision on the new trains, as it would reduce the number of seats available.**

The current CI 322 trains have 293 seats, whereas the understandable need to find space for wheelchairs and a disabled toilet, means that the new CI 380 trains will have 277 seats (plus another five if cycles are not in the tip-up seat area).

However, these overall seating capacities overlook the very important improvement that in the new trains the seats are in a more spacious 2+2 layout, whilst the older trains had a 2+3 layout.

ScotRail admit that that 2+3 seating is unpopular and that the centre seats often remained unoccupied, even on busy trains with passengers preferring to stand. There are 40 of these unattractive centre seats on a CI 322, so the new trains will actually have 24 more attractive seats, even with two cycles on board.

It is therefore quite likely that if a flexible space zone was provided in each of the four carriages that the number of good seats would still exceed that on the existing trains.

Clearly there must be a fair balance between the needs of different train user groups.

ScotRail has said to us that:

The use of available space on our trains is necessarily a compromise between the needs of different passenger groups, i.e. cyclists, non-cyclists, passengers with and without luggage, customers in wheelchairs or parents with prams/buggies. One of our priorities has been to maximise the seating capacity whilst still making adequate provision for those other passenger groups and also fulfilling our obligations to disabled customers.

Each two-cycle space reduces seating capacity by 6 seats when either or both spaces are in use. Each non-paying cycle therefore displaces at least three fare paying passengers from seats. To provide the same level of secured cycle provision as currently exists on the Class 322s would reduce the number of seats available for passengers by more than 100 (over the entire C380 fleet). We do not believe this is fair, or best use of public sector funding.

...we cannot justify continuing to provide a dedicated compound for storing bikes free of charge and, at the same time, ask more fare-paying customers to stand.

Spokes does not consider that an equitable balance has been struck:

- Why is seat-count maximisation the best use of public sector funding, if it discourages legitimate Leisure Traveller use of our train service? Scotland's publicly owned train service provides services to both Leisure Travellers and Commuters and there must be a fairly assessed equality of provision. To accord lesser access rights to Leisure Travellers denies equality of access and is also bad business, as their fare revenue is often discretionary.
- We have already addressed above how the new trains already give an improvement to Commuter Traveller seating.
- The preoccupation with the concept of *non-paying cycles displacing fare paying passengers* misses the point that unoccupied fixed seating is inflexible; is of no value for buggies or extra luggage storage; or for cycle use – all of which are accompanied by fare paying passengers.
- Well loaded off-peak trains are often very messily cluttered because of a lack of folding seat flexibility.

Accordingly, we seek the provision of a flexible cycle-usable space in each carriage so that the needs of Commuters and Leisure Travellers are more equitably balanced.

A *Spokes* representative attended a *Scotrail* Cycle Forum on 28 April 2010, where the replacement of the North Berwick trains was discussed. The response from *ScotRail* to concerns expressed was that the new trains were already designed and in the process of being built, so the provision would/could not change.

As *Transport Scotland*, which is an agency of the Scottish Government, has sourced and financed these trains for *ScotRail*, lobbying should therefore start with The *Scottish Government's* Transport Minister and *Transport Scotland* as well as *ScotRail*.

Scottish Government Policy

There is a bigger picture here which the *Scottish Government*, *Transport Scotland* and *ScotRail* are ignoring. The *Scottish Government* states that on its website that it is committed to increasing levels of walking & cycling as transport modes and as leisure activities. Its Transport Policy states:

"Scotland's current Transport Policy includes a commitment to "*quadruple cycle use from 1996 levels by 2012*" and "*increase the proportion of short journeys made on foot and on bikes to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, reduce congestion and contribute to a healthier Scotland thus contributing to the sustainability golden rule to enhance the environment and reduce emissions*".

In addition the National Transport Strategy (adopted in December 2006 but still in force) states in para 164, "*We aim to further increase funding for cycling and walking overall and will place more emphasis on the promotion of them as sustainable forms of transport ... focusing on ...and the carriage of bicycles on public transport.*"

Slashing the cycle provision on the new trains flies in the face of the *Scottish Government's* own policy.

ScotRail ATOC Award

ScotRail won first prize award in 2006 from the *Association of Train Operating Companies* for the design of the refurbished North Berwick trains including 8 designated cycle spaces.

The judges said this was a very impressive project that has delivered tangible results. It showed First ScotRail's sheer determination to do the very best for all its customers, while consulting widely, and clearly demonstrates what can be done if the will is there.

It would be helpful to point out this accolade and encourage them to ensure that it continues to apply.

Suggested action for Spokes members

Spokes feels that this issue should be dealt with at a higher level than just ScotRail and that the most effective lobbying will be via your MSP to Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change at the *Scottish Government*.

We suggest this approach because letters addressed by individuals to the Minister are apparently dealt with only by civil servants, but when he receives a letter from an MSP he sees and personally signs his response to the MSP. This is why we suggest you write to your MSP and ask him or her to raise it with Stewart Stevenson. It would be helpful if you then copied your letter your "list" MSPs, Transport Scotland, ScotRail, your local councillors and also East Lothian councillors Barry Turner (East Lothian Council Transport Convener and its rep on the Regional Transport authority, SESTRAN) and Paul McLennan (council leader and former transport convener). Contact details are at the end.

Please express your concerns in your own words and say how you or your family will be affected. Spokes's key priorities are listed below:

1. Provision of more flexible designated cycle usable zones to match the existing ScotRail norm by replicating the existing cycle zone design in other carriages within each set, because...

a) The CI 380 cycle space provision of **2 spaces in a 4 carriage set** is well below the *ScotRail* norm:

- 6 spaces on a CI 370 in a 3 carriage set
- 6 spaces on a CI 156 in a 2 carriage set
- 4 spaces on a CI 158 in a 2 carriage set (2 spaces until refurbished)

On this basis a CI 380 4 car set should have been designed with 8 cycle spaces!

b) The internal layout design does not equitably accord equality of access by Commuter and Leisure Travellers. The new trains are very significantly better for peak-time commuters, with more good seats, but are very significantly worse for cyclists, with potential for conflict between train crew, passengers and cyclists if cycles are in vestibules at peak times.

c) Maximising the number of peak seats is jeopardising the significant off-peak revenue that the cycle spaces generate from optional journeys, which will be lost if taking a bike is a hassle. More flexible spaces would be the answer, especially in a 4-carriage set.

d) It will be much harder for families to travel with bikes.

e) Reducing the provision is in breach of the *Scottish Government's* own Transport Policy.

2. Clear priority use for bikes in the designated spaces.

3. Clarity about entitlement to park cycles in vestibules, to reduce friction and potential discord between train crew, other passengers and cyclists at busy times.

Other reasons for continued adequate bike carriage

- The introduction of the 8 dedicated cycle spaces on this line has been a significant factor in increasing cycle use both for commuting and leisure, thereby reducing car use.
- It is greatly valued by customers in East Lothian and the wider Lothian area.
- It has enabled many commuting journeys to be made by train+bike that would otherwise have needed to be made by car.

Thank you for your help in taking action on this issue.

Ewan Jeffrey, Spokes bike/rail representative Email: ewanATnavyblue.org.uk
Nicola McNeill, East Lothian Spokes member Email: nicolaATlyars.demon.co.uk

CONTACT DETAILS FOR EMAILS...

1. Your MSP:

The names and e-mail addresses of all your MSPs can be found by following this link:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/membersPages/MSPAddressPostcodeFinder.htm>

or at:

<http://www.writetothem.com/>

Send your letter to your constituency MSP (Iain Gray if you live in East Lothian, Iain.Gray.msp@scottish.parliament.uk) but remember to copy it to your *list MSPs* as well.

Note that Iain Gray has already written to Transport Scotland about the issue. Further contact with him would highlight the degree of concern and encourage him to take the matter further and higher.

2. Your local Councillors:

You can find your own councillors at:

<http://www.writetothem.com/>

Also copy to...

Cllr Paul McLennan, Council leader, and former transport convener and chair of the council's Cycle Forum. His address is.. pmclennan@eastlothian.gov.uk.

Cllr Barry Turner, who is East Lothian's Transport Convener, Cycle Forum chair, and the council's representative on the regional transport authority, Sustran. His address is.. btturner@eastlothian.gov.uk.

3. Transport Scotland:

David Middleton, Chief Executive
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF

This is the only email address published for *Transport Scotland*, so best to put "For the attention of David Middleton" in the Subject Line;

info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

4. ScotRail :

ScotRail Customer Relations
PO BOX 7030, Fort William, PH33 6WX
Email: scotrailcustomer.relations@firstgroup.com

Updated

19.6.10 – East Lothian contact details; picture added at end

Bike space on existing class 322 trains



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