RPC MIDLANDS

BIKE—RAIL PROJECT

APRIL 2002

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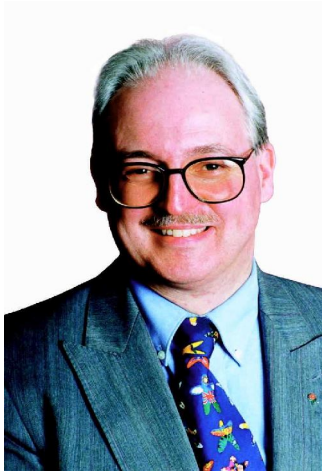
INDEX

Introduction

Executive Summary



Travelling by Cycle

(1) Transport Choice

The way in which we choose to travel has an impact on our environment, our society, our individual health, our economy and even on world climate. Increasingly, people are making these connections and questioning the reliance of our transport system on the private car.

- The health impacts of traffic pollution cost £11.1bn each year. (Environmental Transport Association).
- On average, passenger rail produces less than half the carbon dioxide emissions of road-based travel (The Strategic Plan, SRA 2002).
- Globally we need to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2050 if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change. (Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution).
- 70% of the poorest 20% of households in Britain don't own a car (Office of National Statistics: Family Spending 1999-2000), so our continued reliance on the car makes life difficult for people on low incomes.

The UK has the most extensive traffic congestion in Europe according to the Commission for Integrated Transport and the CBI estimate that traffic delays cost the country around £20 billion a year. Building new roads will not solve the problem, Friends of the Earth research found that the impact on journey times of the Government's new roads will be tiny (about a second per mile).

Did you know that the average speed of a cycle in central London is 5.4mph, and that of a car 3.4mph (Transport for London *Transport Statistics for London* 2001 p. 17). Is this where our Midlands cities might be heading?

(2) Cycling and Rail

Of all the journeys made in England:

- Ø 2% are made by rail (including London Underground)
- Ø 2% are made by cycle

(Source: Governments Ten Year Transport Plan).

The Governments Ten Year Transport Plan sets the following targets:

- by 2010, to triple the number of **cycling** trips compared with a 2000 base
- to increase **rail** use (measured in passenger kilometres) from 2000 levels by 50% by 2010,

The Plan says that:

> "Improving links with other forms of transport - through … better facilities for cyclists and pedestrians - will also take priority"

Today, the numbers of journeys being made by cycle and by rail respectively are increasing, yet the number of journeys that combine these two types of transport is unrecorded.

(3) Government Policy

The Governments Integrated Transport White Paper 1998 asks all rail operators to report on how they will meet the objectives of the **Cycle Mark Code of Practice** developed by CTC, Sustrans and the Cyclists' Public Affairs Group.

These **objectives** are:

1. To improve customer satisfaction
2. To increase the number of customers arriving at stations by cycle
3. To increase the number of cycles carried on trains
4. To provide a competitive alternative to the private car

(4) The practice

In practice, each rail operator decides how it will provide for its cycling passengers at stations and on board trains. The resulting provision varies enormously in quality and quantity between operators and even between the services of the same operator. Provision does not have to comply with any standards and new rolling stock often has less cycle space than the stock it replaces. All of these differences make journey planning difficult for passengers with cycles. A journey involving the services of more than one operator can be especially difficult and sometimes impossible.
For example:

1. A family of four can travel together (using their Family Railcard) on a high speed Midland Mainline train but they cannot continue their journey on a Central Trains service because of Centrals limit of two bike spaces per train.
2. A blind or partially sighted cyclist could travel with a friend and their tandem on an old style Virgin Cross-country train, but if the service was formed of the new Voyager rolling stock, then the cycle space provided is currently 6 inches too short for a tandem.
3. There is confusion about which trains require a cycle reservation and which don't. For example Silverlink carry cycles free of charge and no reservation is needed between Birmingham New Street and Coventry, whereas Virgin require a reservation costing £3.
4. If a passenger has a cycle reservation and due to a failed connection misses the train for which the reservation is valid, then the cycle reservation is not transferrable and the passenger may be unable to continue their journey. E.g. at busy periods, including bank holidays, cycle spaces are often fully booked.
5. A passenger may board the train for which they have a cycle reservation only to discover that the cycle space is already occupied by either another cycle or by suitcases and other luggage. Possession of a cycle reservation does not guarantee cycle carriage, carriage being at the discretion of the conductor.
6. Some operators have refused to sell APEX tickets to cyclists in case they cannot get their cycle onto the train. The result is that cyclists have been deterred from travelling by train.

7. The national rail enquiry service provides unreliable information about cycle carriage provision and as a result a passenger arrives at a station and finds that they are unable to travel with their cycle e. g. the train in question required a cycle reservation and they were not informed of this or there was a limit of two cycle spaces and the party consists of three people. If the journey involves a series of connections then to miss one of these can jeopardise the whole trip.
8. If a substitute bus or coach is operated whilst engineering works are taking place then it is the policy of most train operators *not* to carry cycles on substitute buses, Anglia Railways are one exception to this rule. (N.B. Many bus and coach services in Britain carry cycles and the CTC has a listing of these).

In summary, a potential rail traveller with a cycle is faced with what can only be described as an assault course of mis-information, obstacles and restrictions which conspire to deny journey reliability. Unfortunately too, cyclists are sometimes met with negative attitudes and this reduces customer confidence. The fact that so many people do actually manage to take their cycle by train surely indicates the strength of demand and the inherent logic of the bike and train combination. A survey undertaken by the CTC in 1998 provides an indication of the suppressed demand for cycle carriage on trains. 52% of cyclists indicated that they would like to take their cycle by train for U.K. holidays alone.

The carriage of cycles by car is now so widespread that it is easy to forget that cycle racks for cars have only been around for approximately 15 years – coinciding with increasing restrictions on cycle carriage by train. But many cyclists do not have access to a car and their whole lifestyle is planned around the ability to take a cycle by train. Passengers with cycles are literally being turned away from trains by the railways.

(5) Regulatory Approach

There are no actual requirements for a train operator to provide for its cycling passengers.

But the Secretary of State for Transport sets out Objectives, Instructions and Guidance to the Franchising Director (now to the Chief Executive of the SRA) indicating what he is expected to negotiate through the franchising process.

The latest guidance issued 29/9/99 includes (paragraph 31) :

> "promote the use of bicycles by seeking the provision of reasonable facilities on board new rolling stock and at stations".

The SRA in their Strategic Plan 2002

> "invites all potential franchisees to propose integration measures, both with other public transport modes, and with cycling and walking too".

This represents a piecemeal approach to the issue and is likely to result in an increasingly fragmented and inaccessible network for cycling passengers.
To implement the objectives of the Integrated Transport Policy in a consistent and meaningful way a national approach is needed. The SRA is best-placed to take a lead on this in co-operation with the CTC and others. A policy, strategy and set of standards is needed which bring together existing good practice and address the problem areas too. The new standards should be made a requirement and implemented across the network within a defined time period.

- Ø 1996 saw the publication of the Government's National Cycling Strategy (NCS) promoting cycle use and the integration of cycling with public transport
- Ø 1998 saw the publication of the Integrated Transport Policy which endorsed the NCS and which put a massive injection of money into the railways.
- Ø Today we have both the policy framework and the money to go with it to provide for better cycling **and rail integration. We now need some action.**

(6) The Door to Door Journey by Cycle and Rail

(i) Access to stations

The rail journey is only one part of the overall 'door to door' journey and the way in which people travel to and from stations is an important issue. Many railway stations cannot physically accommodate more car parking space and ways must be found of accommodating the growth in rail travel without at the same time increasing car congestion, pollution and safety concerns at stations. Bus services can take time to organise and many people are actually reluctant to use two forms of public transport together for fear of delays and missed connections.

Travelling short distance by motor vehicle can actually take longer than travelling by bike when time spent in traffic jams and time spent car parking is taken into account. On a bike, you know how long your journey will take, and more and more people now recognise cycling as a reliable means of station access. A typical distance travelled by bike might take three times as long to walk - plus it is easier to carry luggage on a bike! Cycling can be cost-effective if you 'cost-in' the time spent making your journey.

Many Local Authority 'Local Transport Plans' seek to encourage a switch from car use to travel by walking, cycling and public transport to stations. Unfortunately some station refurbishment schemes have actually made cycle access less convenient and more hazardous. The national Safe Routes to Stations project and initiatives by local authorities recognise that safe and convenient access to stations for cyclists is needed in order to encourage more people to cycle to stations.

As far as we know, no data exists to show the length of the average journey to a train station. But according to the DTLR 69% of all journeys made in Britain are under 5 miles long and 43% of all trips are under 2 miles long. (DTLR *Focus on Personal Travel: 2001 Edition* 2001 *p.16).*

Cycling is an excellent means of short-distance transport. The average length of a cycle journey is 2.4 miles. (DTLR Personal Travel Factsheet 5 – January 2001). Many people associate car use with long journeys but The National Travel Survey for Great Britain 1997 – 9 shows that cars were used for 18% of all trips under 1 mile and for

62% of all trips between 1 and 2 miles. Many of these trips could to be made by cycle instead. In fact the average length of a journey in Britain is only 6.6 miles (National Travel Survey).

(ii) At the Station

Once at the station cyclists' needs are in common with those of wheelchair users and many pedestrians too and include the provision of lifts and ramps between platforms and clear signposting of these facilities. Wheel gullies alongside steps can be helpful to allow a cycle to be wheeled up and down stairs.

A bike needs little space for parking: 8 –12 bikes can be parked in the space needed to park one car. The standard type of cycle parking stand is the Sheffield Stand – an upside down 'U' shaped stand. Stands must be spaced the correct distance apart from each other and from any walls to allow two bikes to be parked at each stand (one either side). Location is critical - it must be very convenient and preferably located undercover, in a well-lit and supervised area. The total time needed to park a bike should not increase the total cycle journey time significantly as this would make the facility less attractive than walking, or even driving. Retracing steps over more than 20 metres is seen to be inconvenient and bikes will be parked elsewhere.

Cycle lockers offer a higher degree of security against theft and vandalism than cycle parking stands and are a useful addition to cycle parking stands. The whole bike including bags and accessories can be wheeled into a bike locker and left. They are the equivalent of long stay car parking and are welcomed by commuters who leave their bikes unattended during the day or overnight.

(iii) Carriage of Cycles By Train

There is a long tradition of carrying cycles by rail in Britain:

- Cycles have always been carried in the 'guards van' along with other items of baggage. And when this space proved insufficient entire trains "Cyclists Specials" carried passengers with cycles to favourite cycling destinations in Britain in the 1950's.

- To mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 British Rail carried bikes free of charge. As a result, 40,000 cycle tickets were issued in the first four months of the scheme, compared with 10,000 for the whole of the previous year.
- The Harris Report 1985 (unpublished government report) found that cycle carriage restrictions were losing British Rail more than £10 million per annum in potential revenue.

A cycle is a quick and easy item of luggage to load onto a train, provided that the passenger can identify the correct area of the train to place the cycle and this area is designed appropriately. A typical cycle measures 1.8m long x 0.6 wide x 1.0 high. A typical tandem cycle measures 2.6m long x 0.6m wide x 1.0m high. (There are more than 7,000 tandems in use in Britain; families rely on them for transporting young children and they are the only type of cycle that can be used by blind people).
A simple design of cycle space that is easy to use works best. And it is important that the size of the space is big enough; the space on some trains to too short or too narrow for cycles! Leant against the side of a carriage, two or three cycles can be placed alongside each other and some trains place a shelf above this space for other luggage. In general passengers find it difficult to lift their bike on to wall hooks and a study by German Railways found that the same number of bikes could be stowed horizontally as vertically – and that horizontal provision is also cheaper.

People carry cycles by train for both commuter and leisure journeys. This method of transport is especially important to people who do not have access to a car and the ability to carry a cycle can be central to the lifestyle of a non-car owning family.

With the opening of more and more cycle routes in Britain, including the National Cycle Network there is a demand for rail travel to enable cycle tourism. This demand comes from U.K. residents and also from overseas visitors to Britain. Cycle tourism in the UK is valued at £635 million per year. (Sustrans, 1999). Cycling is good for the rural economy. A visiting cyclist spends an average of £25 per day on locally provided food and services, compared to car-borne visitor's £7.30, this is because car users bring what they'll need with them, whereas cyclists can't. Encouraging access to the countryside by train helps to relieve traffic pressure on our rural roads and on car

parking. Sustainable tourism and especially cycle tourism may play an increasingly important role in our rural economies in the future.

(7) **The Potential**

Cycle + Train is a sustainable transport combination which offers a practical 'door to door' alternative to the car. It can make a significant contribution to the Government's key objective of reducing car dependency and it's related aims of improving:- the environment (reducing vehicle emissions and road traffic congestion), social inclusion, health, accessibility, integrated transport.

- It is estimated that one in three adults has a bicycle. (Mintel 1995). More than 2 million bikes were sold in 1999 and cycle industry sources forecast that the figure will rise to more than 3.75M by 2012. (European Bicycle Manufacturers Association).
- The DETR and the Countryside Commission commissioned a Bike*rail* Report in 1998 "Making the Connections". This found that 60% of the UK population live within a 15 minute cycle ride of a railway station yet *less than 1%* of rail passengers arrive at British train stations by cycle. Compare this to figures for overseas: Germany 15%, Denmark 35%, Holland 35%.
- In Britain around only 40% of railway stations provide provision for the storage of cycles (Source: Glenda Jackson Under Secretary of State for Transport in response to a parliamentary question 29/6/99)
- Netherlands Railways provide cycle storage at all their stations and are currently investing 460 million guilders (around £140 million) in supplying 18,000 new cycle storage racks and cages to their stations.
- All German Inter Regional trains have between 8 - 30 bike spaces, their S-Bahn services are designed with entire carriages of tip-up seats which allow cycles to be stowed against these using the straps provided.
- Both German Railways and Swiss Railways have expanded their cycle carrying capacity to meet the demand for access to cycle routes. Both enjoy increased revenue as a result and Swiss Rail even employ a full-time cycling officer to market cycle carriage on the railways.
- Both Swiss Rail and German Rail provide comprehensive information nationally about how cycling and train travel can be combined. This information is even provided in English on their respective websites and through German Rail's national Bicycle Telephone Hotline which can also be accessed from outside of Germany - useful for visitors/tourists from overseas.

(8) **The Benefits of Cycling**

Regular cyclists typically enjoy a fitness level equivalent to being ten years younger. (CTC *Bikes Not Fumes* 1991) and the British Medical Association found that the fitness benefits of cycling outweigh risks of fatal accident by twenty to one. Yet in general, our lifestyle has become increasingly sedentary, so much so that 60 per cent of men and 70 per cent of women are so physically inactive that they risk coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke or obesity. (Transport 2000).

Cyclists make a fit and healthy work force – staff who cycle are more productive and take fewer days off. You are more likely to arrive at work (or anywhere else) on time because you won't be delayed by traffic jams. If one third of all short car journeys were made by bike, national heart disease rates would fall by between 5% and 10%. (Sharp, I *On Your Bike* 1990).

CYCLING GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

CTC

The CTC is the largest independent cycling organisation in Britain. Founded in 1878 the CTC works to promote cycling and to protect the interests of cyclists.

A national council governs the CTCs work. This comprises elected representatives from each of the regions, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Our Godalming headquarters implements policies ranging from road safety and cycle facility design, to bikes on trains.

Cycling and public transport is an important issue to the CTC and the reduction in bike space onboard trains is of particular concern. It is no longer possible for a family of four to travel together with their cycles across much of Britain. This is despite a National Cycling Strategy endorsed by the Governments Integrated Transport Policy which recommends that all trains should be capable of carrying at least 6 bikes per train. Provision for cyclists is getting worse, not better; the CTC believes that a piecemeal approach to improving provision will not work and that national minimum standards are needed. We look forward to working with the SRA, industry and partners to develop a quality standard to be rolled out across the network as soon as possible.

PUSHBIKES

Push Bikes is the cycle campaign group for the Birmingham area and lobbies planners, transport providers and decision makers to improve facilities for cyclists. We also promote the benefits of cycling to the general public and organise regular leisure rides. Push Bikes has over 300 members in Birmingham and neighbouring areas, including Solihull and Sandwell.

WOLVES ON WHEELS

Wolves on Wheels was set up during summer 1999 with a mission to campaign for the rights of cyclists and for high quality cycling provision in the Millennium City of Wolverhampton. The group proclaims that people - especially children - should have the right to use cycles for safe, independent travel to and from their intended destination. **Wolves on Wheels** is affiliated to the Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) and includes Representatives of the CTC Right to Ride Network and Sustrans.

LEICESTER SPOKES

Leicester Spokes is a friendly cycling group for cyclists in and around Leicester. We run a series of free and easy rides during the year where new cyclists can ride in a group while we show you the best bits of the countryside. Our ride leaders make sure nobody gets left behind and there's always a cafe or pub stop on the way. The rides are usually a mixed group and it's ok to walk up the hills.

Members also enjoy social events which can be anything from film shows and bike maintenance classes to curry nights and skittles. We also have weekend and longer tours both in the UK and abroad, and are keen to help new or returning cyclists to enjoy their bike to the full in good company.

We also take part in campaign activities and meetings with the council to discuss the design of cycling facilities.

CYCLING IN SANDWELL

Cycling in Sandwell is a growing Local Agenda 21 partnership made up of some 440 people and organisations who want to help with getting more people out and about on their bikes in and around Sandwell. It has been in existence since 1997 and is working to keep people informed about what's on offer to all types of cyclist and is actively involved in putting together plans for safer cycling routes and better facilities. In

relation to rail travel it should be noted that one of the priorities contained in the Cycling in Sandwell Strategy (1999) states that "cycling must be integrated with other means of transport, particularly public transport".

JOURNEYS UNDERTAKEN

In order to gain an understanding of the problems faced by cyclists wishing to use train services, a variety of work and leisure journeys were undertaken by volunteers from a number of cycling groups, on behalf of the Project group. The distribution of journeys was follows:

From West Midlands:		
Work Journey	20	
Leisure Journey	7	
Total		27
From East Midlands:		
Work Journey	4	
Leisure Journey	4	
Total		8
From Other areas:		
Work Journey	2	
Leisure Journey	1	
Total		3
Overall Total of Journeys		38

These journeys were undertaken between the period 11 February 2002 and 9 March 2002 and no advance warning was given to the train operating companies involved. The survey form used was designed in cop-operation with CTC and representatives from local cycling groups. An example of the survey form is shown at Annex B.

The results of the surveys are outlined in the subsequent pages.

Section One

Pre-travel information—the journey to/from station

The questions in this section ask about the information that cyclists need in order to plan and actually undertake their journeys. Starting with a basic question, "Was there information available in advance of the journey about cycle carriage and facilities at the station" and then going on to ask about cycle reservations and the use of connecting services. The questionnaire also asked how cyclists arrived at the station and how cycle friendly the access was. Finally, the volunteers were asked to suggest improvements to any part of the journey.

Clear, accurate and timely information is the key to making a satisfactory journey. The volunteers found that, on the whole this was the case when they undertook their particular journey.

The overwhelming majority found that information concerning cycle carriage or facilities at stations was available in advance of their journey. "*The internet is a good source of information when planning journeys in advance"* noted one volunteer but that "*long distance journeys are now so complicated that they become impossible unless you plan a year in advance".* Another commented approvingly in regard to the on-board information leaflets carried on the new Virgin Trains Voyager stock. However, the train companies must ensure that this information is easy to find. A slight majority found the information easy to obtain with only one volunteer finding it difficult. Worryingly, having found the information, three volunteers found it to be incorrect – a small number but representing nearly one in ten of the journeys made. Labeling the location of cycle storage space on the outside of the train would allow cyclists to wait at the right spot on the platform and not inconvenience passengers attempting to board the train by pushing their cycle along the platform to board to the right spot.

Cycle reservations were not needed on eight of the journeys undertaken. Of the journeys themselves, the majority did not involve interconnecting services and used the trains of only one train operating company. Of the volunteers who reserved spaces the majority found the service to be good. Not all cycles need reservations.

The use of folding bikes avoids the need to make reservations and pay booking fees as well as saving cycle storage space on trains. "*Obviously using a folding bike on this occasion incurred no additional cost to the ticket."*

Two thirds of the volunteers cycled to the station and access to stations was considered to be good or fair by two thirds of those who responded, although one commented that the access from his town centre was *"absolutely hopeless and extremely dangerous".* Pleasingly, three quarters of the volunteers noted that their route to the station included designated cycle lanes, routes or other facilities though not all cycle routes connected directly to the station. One volunteer commented that as the approach roads are busy the station forecourt can be mayhem in the evening peak with pickers up, college and commuter traffic all jostling for limited space. Less welcome was the fact that upon arriving only half found convenient place to leave their bike whilst purchasing a ticket. "*'Butterfly' wall brackets at the booking window would be useful in this respect".*

Section Two

Station facilities and standards – outward and return

The questions in this section asked about the facilities provided for cyclists at stations. The positioning, ease of use and quality of the provision was examined and their preference for the type of cycle parking provision questioned. Again, the volunteers were asked for suggestions that might be made to improve station access and/or facilities.

Facilities at both outward and destination stations were examined. About two dozen or so stations were used in the survey, ranging from major termini to smaller unstaffed stations. Cycle stands were present at the majority, followed by cycle lockers and cycle clamps in fewer locations. Only one station had no facilities at all but again only one had supervised cycle parking.

In the majority of cases facilities tended to be in a well-lit area and covered by CCTV. A smaller number of the volunteers considered the locations to be convenient and

accessible or placed under weatherproof accommodation. Whilst the overall quality and condition of the facilities provided recorded only an average mark, only one noted any facilities that were so damaged to be unfit for purpose.

The volunteers expressed a clear preference for the use of overnight cycle lockers or supervised cycle storage. In the few stations where these facilities were available a charge was levied in the majority of cases and the volunteers found that a complex or time consuming administrative process was in place. One volunteer notes *"…lockers oversubscribed and intense demand…a waiting list of at least six months…"*, another adds *"…On the odd occasion any station staff have been able to advise me, I get the simple response that there is an extensive waiting list for the lockers –incidentally I have never seen them being used…."*

Opinion was equally divided between those volunteers who found access between the station entrance and platforms easy or difficult. Stairs and escalators were used at half of the stations and nearly as many ramps. Volunteers questioned why there was not more extensive use of wheel runs incorporated into stairways as in Holland. Few stations had lifts and no encounters with ticket barriers were reported.

Section Three

The on-train facilities and experience.

In this section the focus changes to facilities used on the train. Were cycle spaces available on the trains? Was their location clearly identified (with sufficient space) and easy to find? In subjective terms were the cycle storage/spaces well designed and easy to use? Was the overall provision of a good, fair or poor standard?

As stated earlier, information is the key to a stress free journey therefore it is disappointing that only one third of the volunteers found that cycle spaces were signed either outside or inside the train. To their relief however, three times as many volunteers reported that the spaces were nevertheless easy to find. Whether this

represents persistence or experience is open to question. Although the majority of these spaces were not dedicated for cycle use only (sharing with parcels, pushchairs, wheelchairs and luggage) only three cyclists reported that other users already occupied the spaces. A strong majority of the volunteers considered that the space allocated for their cycle was adequate (two responding negatively) but half of those who managed to stow their cycle had to remove their baggage to fit it into the space. Overall, more than two thirds of the volunteers stated the provision of space as good or fair with only two considering it to be poor. One volunteer questioned whether cyclists had been involved in the design of the space considering that it reflected *"..more an attitude of accomodating (cycles) grudgingly"* and requested that providing *"eyelets and hook elastics to help bikes not fall over would have been welcome"*.

A similar proportion considered the ease of boarding the train to be good or fair (a slight majority favoring good) but leaving a substantial minority only rating this key aspect as poor. The main criticism expressed concerned narrow vestibules necessitating a severe right turn when entering the train.

Section Four

Overall comments on the "door to door" journey

This section details how the volunteers perceived the "user friendliness" of the journey. As such it asked questions dealing with what are called soft issues. Were staff helpful and welcoming? Were attitudes to the cyclist perceived to be any different to the volunteer when making a non-cycling journey? Overall, did the volunteer feel encouraged to use the train again or deterred from repeating the experience? Finally, what was their opinion of the train operating companies' promotion of bike rail journeys?

It is only right to give credit where it is due and, pleasingly, all the volunteers considered train operating company staff they encountered during their journey to be helpful and welcoming. A small minority of the volunteers, however, considered that the staff's attitudes to them as passengers differed depending whether or not they were accompanied by cycles, although one volunteer reported considerable staff

interest in the folding nature of his cycle. No damage to any cycle was recorded by volunteers during the exercise but some reported problems encountered on their previous journeys where bikes had been pushed together thereby damaging the spokes.

The volunteers were asked to put themselves in the position of someone who is not a regular traveler and describe the ease of making the different stages of their journey. Of course, the volunteers are regular travellers well used to the vagaries of the systems in place and whose tolerance levels may be higher than the average or would be bike-rail user. Overall, just over half considered the experience to be poor, with only one rating the experience as good. This is disappointing, as unanimously the volunteers are aware of others who might combine cycling with rail travel if the experience was helped by the railways. A general comment was that, as cyclists tend to board last, they end up standing when seats are at a premium.

Finally, the volunteers were asked to rate the train operating companies' promotion of cycling and rail travel. Given their experience over the course of the project the overall verdict of just over half the participants was poor with no one prepared to rate the promotion as good. The volunteers considered that there is a pent up demand amongst passengers for bike rail journeys. Train operating companies could tap into it but there needs to be a large improvement in the provision for taking bikes on trains and facilities at stations, if it is to be delivered. A clear message was that an inconsistent approach between TOC's leads to confusion amongst people wishing to make Bike-rail journeys.

One volunteer, commenting on the stresses and inconvenience of making such journeys, asked the rhetorical question; why bother? *Partly through informed choice (I choose not own a car) and partly because this gives me precious time to exercise, relax and read whilst not adding to the daily waste, inefficiency, stress and carnage out there on the roads!.*

Findings

A number of issues emerge from the journeys undertaken by the volunteer's for this project. Some are aspirational and can only be delivered in the long term; some are sensible and practical short- term issues that can be delivered quickly and some solutions will benefit all passengers. Most require the industry and the passengers to act together to feed in and deliver measures that will improve the bike-rail experience to produce a truly "joined up railway". This is, we believe, in the train operating companies own economic self interest –all of the volunteers have identified friends, colleagues and family that would make increased use of the rail network were such facilities to be offered.

The comparative cost involved in ensuring that every station, whether large or small has well thought out cycle provision is minimal. If bike-rail usage is to quadruple over the next ten years then the provision of these facilities is not optional but becomes essential.

On Trains

- Siding doors on new rolling stock are a vast improvement on slam door stock. Larger vestibules make access/egress much easier. Maneuvering is difficult when boarding/alighting from some classes of train.
- Cycling organisations should be regularly consulted in the design of rolling stock.
- Reservation fees discourage the use of bike-rail opportunities.
- Lack of identification of bike storage areas on exterior of train carriages can make access awkward.
- In some designs with flip top seats bicycle stowage inconveniences cyclists as the space is not always long enough for cycles.
- Overall Cycle storage space is inadequate on some services and maneuvering is difficult when boarding/alighting from some classes of train.

On Stations

- Not all stations that need them have passenger-operated lifts.
- Short notice re-platforming of trains inconveniences cyclists (amongst others) who have to move quickly to other platforms whilst heavily laden.
- Lack of secure long stay storage at stations discourages usage.
- Wheel runs should be incorporated into stairways wherever possible.
- Some stations, in contrast to some others, offers good quality accessibility and therefore a critical mass of cyclists adds to a sense of belonging and safety.
- Differing platform levels cause problems for cyclists (amongst others)
- Train operating companies could be pro-active in letting space free or at a reduced rate to bike parks and related retail to encourage usage. Models exist elsewhere.
- Lifts should be wide enough for trikes and long enough for tandems.
- Local authorities should ensure cycle routes should start at station forecourts.

Information

- TOC Internet sites should carry clearly sign posted information on the carriage of cycles.
- The lack of an operator's identity on some information screens causes cyclists problems as operators have different cycle carriage policies.
- Lack of awareness of another operator's cycle carriage policy amongst platform staff belonging to different train operating companies.
- Unable to book cycles on certain services over twelve hours before departure (i.e. 18.00 on day prior to day of departure.)
- Good practice exists elsewhere and should be shared– Trains on the Californian "Caltrain" service carry up to 50 cycles free of charge.
- Inconsistent approaches between TOC's leads to confusion amongst people wishing to use Bike-rail journeys.

There are a number of station specific issues that have been identified during completion of the questionnaire. Inadequate provision, siting or maintenance of facilities has been identified at a number of stations and the Midlands RPC will be following up these points with the train operating companies, station facilities owners, Railtrack and relevant local authorities as part of its ongoing work.

ANNEX B

SUMMARY OF JOURNEYS UNDERTAKEN

Date	From	Station Facilities Owner	To	Service Used (Train Operating Company)	Purpose
11/02/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Nottingham	Central Trains	Work
11/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Oxford	Virgin Trains	Work
12/02/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Beeston	Midland Mainline	Work
12/02/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Sutton Coldfield	Central Trains	Work
12/02/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	London Euston	Virgin Trains	Work
13/02/02	Redditch	Central Trains	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Leisure
13/02/02	Oxford	Thames Trains	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Work
14/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Work
14/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Coventry	Virgin Trains	Work
15/02/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Bristol Temple Meads	Virgin Trains	Leisure
15/02/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Syston	Central Trains	Leisure/Other
15/02/02	Rugby	Virgin Trains	(Via Liverpool St.) Thorpe Bay, Southend	Virgin Trains & London Underground	Work
16/02/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Nottingham	Central Trains	Leisure
18/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Oxford	Virgin Trains	Work
19/02/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Kidderminster	Central Trains	Work
20/02/02	Stoke	Virgin Trains	Sandwell & Dudley (via Wolverhampton)	Virgin Trains & Central Trains	Work
20/02/02	Oxford	Thames Trains	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Work
21/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Work
21/02/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Nottingham	Central Trains (outward)	Leisure

				Midland Mainline (Return)	
22/02/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Work
22/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Work
23/02/02	Birmingham Moor St	Central Trains	Shirley	Central Trains	Leisure
25/02/02	Nottingham	Central Trains	Lincoln	Central Trains	Work
25/02/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Oxford	Virgin Trains	Work
25/02/02	Chester Rd.	Central Trains	Telford Central	Central Trains	Work
26/02/02	Stoke	Central Trains	Sandwell & Dudley (via Wolverhampton)	Virgin Trains Central Trains	Work
27/02/02	Rugby	Virgin Trains	Leamington Soa	Silverlink	Work
27/02/02	Oxford	Thames Trains	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Work
28/02/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Work
28/02/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Darlington	Virgin Trains	Leisure
01/03/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Birmingham New Street	Central Trains	Work
01/03/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Wolverhampton	Central Trains	Work
01/03/02	Rugby	Virgin Trains	Long Buckby	Silverlink	Leisure
02/03/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Newtown (Powys)	Wales & Borders	Leisure
02/03/02	Birmingham New Street	Railtrack	Worcester Foregate St.	Central Trains	Leisure
02/03/02	Leicester	Midland Mainline	Matlock	Midland Mainline	Leisure
0903/02	Wolverhampton	Virgin Trains	Stafford	Virgin Trains	Leisure

Annex E

Commitments made by the Government and Government agencies to improving the integration of cycling and public transport

Where to find out about these:

1. The Government's National Cycling Strategy published in 1996 and endorsed by the Integrated Transport White Paper. (See Section 3.8 pages 13-14 and the Action PLan on page 41).
www.detr.gov.uk/itwp/index.htm

2. The Government's Integrated Transport White Paper "A New Deal for Transport Better for Everyone" published in July 1998 represents the Government's policy for transport. (Specific references to cycling and public transport can be found in the section titled "Physical Interchange" pages 47 - 53).

3. The Governments' Ten year Transport Plan "2010" published in July 2000 provides an investment plan for delivering the Integrated Transport White Paper. (Specific references to cycling and public transport can be found on pages 46 "railways" and for cycling see page 63 " local transport"
www.localtransport.detr.gov.uk/ncs/ncs

4. Guidance issued by the DETR to local highway authorities on Full Local Transport Plans was publiched in March 2000. This highlights the role played by Local Transport Plans as essential building blocks to an integrated transport policy. www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/fulltp/index (includes Paragraphs 122, 193 Travel to Stations, Annexe D section 12 Public Transport Interchange)

5. "Building a Better Railway: The strategic Rail Authority Outlines New Approach To Franchise Contracts" (press release 22 march 2000). "Building a Better Railway: Franchise Replacement - An Outline Guide (press release 25 May 2000). These documents can be obtained from the SRA: 55 Victoria Street, London SW1 0EU Tel: 020 7654 6000 www.sra.gov.uk