



CYCLING AND LEISURE AND TOURISM

Cycling generally falls into two categories:

Utility cycling - defined as journeying for a purpose upon completion of the journey; and
Leisure/tourist cycling - defined as a trip that is undertaken for the purpose of the journey itself and in this sense is not a form of transport. (Ryan, 2000; Gardner, 1998).

This briefing looks at the role and potential of cycling leisure and tourism.

Cycle tourism:

There are three main types of cycle tourism:

- 'Cycling holidays' in which cycling is the main purpose of the holiday;
 - 'Holiday cycling' in which cycling is undertaken as an extra pursuit whilst on holiday; and
 - 'Cycling day visits' which involve "trips to places outside a person's usual place of residence" (Sustrans, 1999).
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- Cycle tourism is developing rapidly across Europe and becoming "one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry" (National Cycling Strategy). It has the potential to become a key growth market and generate significant economic and financial reward. A key element in this growth is the European Cyclists Federation (ECF) and European Commission's 'EuroVelo' trans-European cycle route network scheme (Sustrans, 1999).
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- "Cycling holidays now account for 2-4% of total holiday trips in some European countries and this is predicted to increase two or three fold within the next decade to 6-12% of all European holidays". Holiday cycling is even more popular. In Ireland, 7% of visitors are estimated to cycle whilst on holiday. In Germany this figure is almost 25% (Sustrans, 1999).
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- EuroVelo estimate that the European cycle tourism market could generate up to 21.5 billion Euros by 2020 (EuroVelo, 1999). Experience so far has indicated a high level of success. In its first year, the Swiss national cycle network brought in tourist revenues exceeding 70 million Euros, ten times the initial 6.3 million Euros invested in the network (EuroVelo, 1999).
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- Cycle tourists represent a growing and valuable tourist market for local economies. They generate local trade, support local businesses, services and attractions and promote development of cycle hire and holiday operations. (Sustrans, 1999). In rural areas especially, they could play a major role and cycle routes could become "key economic lifelines" for isolated villages and towns (EuroVelo, 1999). The C2C route in northern England created a new annual tourism market of approximately £2 million (€2.8 million) in a rural area of unemployment (Insall, 1999).



- Furthermore, cycle tourism is a sustainable form of tourism which has minimal adverse impact on environment and host communities.
- The development of cycle tourism and leisure cycling also offers a wide range of potential benefits for the individual (Sustrans, 1999). For the individual, leisure cycling is a cheap, sociable, relaxing and attractive pastime (National Cycling Strategy) which can enhance personal health, fitness and well-being (Sustrans, 1999).

Converting Leisure Cyclists to Utility Cyclists:

- “Leisure cycling has an important role to play in preserving the cycling habit” and in doing so, might encourage or initiate cycling for other trip purposes, e.g. utility cycling (Gardner, 1998). The most important contribution it can make is increasing enjoyment of cycling (Gardner, 1998).
- Marketing and promotional strategies should seek to try and extend the relaxing nature of leisure cycling to urban utility journeys and encourage people to move from leisure to utility cycling, perhaps by giving priority to leisure routes that could also serve as commuter routes (Ryan, 2000).
- Given that traffic is the main barrier to more utility cycling by leisure cyclists, this will require initiatives aimed at minimising leisure cyclists’ fear of traffic or providing stress-free cycling routes.

Reaping the Potential of Cycle Tourism and Leisure Cycling:

- Cycling day visits offer the greatest growth potential out of all the types of cycling tourism activities. Holiday cycling also has greater potential as a market.
- Marketing strategies are likely to play a major role in determining how successfully these potential economic rewards are reaped and determining the extent of the growth of the cycle tourism industry.
- Sustrans (1999) describes several key requirements for the development and promotion of a cycling tourism product. They are:
 - provision of safe, attractive, legible and strategic cycle routes and infrastructure;
 - provision of maps and information;
 - improved cycle carriage and access, secure and well located parking;
 - targeted marketing of cycle routes and holidays; and
 - the “development of a more cyclist-friendly culture within the tourism industry.
- The provision of infrastructure is vital to the encouragement of cycling in all forms, both utility and leisure based. In Germany, where cycling infrastructure is more advanced and there are almost 200 long-distance cycle routes, cycling is the fastest growing leisure pursuit and up to 25% of the population cycle while on holiday (compared to 3% in UK) (Sustrans, 1999). The development of such cycle routes is key to increasing cycle tourism.



- There is clearly the scope for the promotion of both utility and leisure cycling and cycle planning must recognise this (Ryan, 2000).

Other Relevant Briefings:

Cycling and Promotion

References:

EuroVelo news. Summer 1999. Issue 2. at

<http://www.eurovelo.org/pdf/EuroVeloNews2.pdf> [Accessed on 08/04/2003].

Gardner, G. (1998) "*Transport Implications of leisure cycling*", TRL Report 347, TRL Limited, Crowthorne, UK.

Insall, P. (1999) *EuroVelo – Getting Europe Cycling*. Velo-City 1999, Proceedings of the 11th International Bicycle Planning Conference: Graz, Austria; Maribor, Slovenia, April 13-16, pp.278-282.

National Cycling Strategy, found at:

URL: http://www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk/html/body_cycle_tourism.html [Accessed on 08/04/03].

Ryan, P.S. (2000) "*Prioritising Cycle Route Development in Urban Areas*", Prepared for the New Zealand Cycling Symposium 2000 – 'Making Cycling Viable'.

Sustrans. (1999) "*Cycle Tourism*", Bristol, UK. Found at

URL: http://www.cycletourism.com/9896DC_ff28.pdf [Accessed on 08/04/03].