

# SPOKES

Newsletter of the  
Galway Cycling Campaign  
Christmas Special 2007



## THIS ISSUE:

- Cycling and the Bali Roadmap
- Love your bike for life, not just for Christmas
- The Wooden, the Blender, the Atomic and the Comic: two-wheel wonders world-wide

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*Please distribute this newsletter as widely as possible.*

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## WHAT THE PLANET WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS

The UN Climate Conference concluded in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia on December 15<sup>th</sup> with an agreement to negotiate, by 2009, a new pact that will replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. EU and US delegates debated right up to the final hours of the two-week conference over a European proposal to set ambitious targets for cutting the emissions of industrial nations by 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described

the agreed 'Bali Roadmap' as "the beginning, not the end". The upcoming two years of talks could determine for years to come how effectively the world will be able to cut emissions of the greenhouse gases blamed for global warming.

### Bikes versus jets

Over 10,000 delegates (including a large contingent of emissions trading lobbyists and a selection of Hollywood celebrities) from nearly 190 countries attended the conference. The large number of additional

private charter flights exceeded the carrying capacity of Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport and additional parking space had to be found for them elsewhere. To help offset the (conservatively estimated) 47,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide created by the 12-day event, 120 buses and 200 bicycles were laid on.

Initially 700 bicycles were planned, "but some parties cancelled their delivery", according to the Jakarta Post. Perhaps some people were being naughty.

## Strong bike lobby at UN climate conference

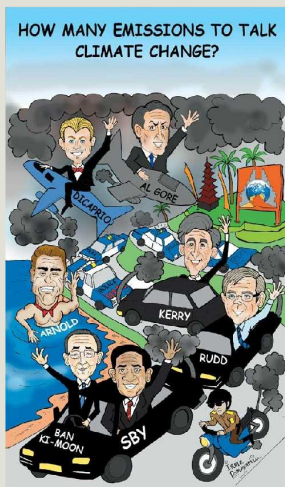
The Global Alliance for Ecomobility was launched in Bali on December 10<sup>th</sup>. A cross-sectoral partnership between business interests, governmental agencies, cyclists' federations and policy think-tanks, the Alliance says it aims to promote integrated and sustainable transport. Car manufacturers are also represented, by the FIA Foundation.



Environment Minister John Gormley leaving his hotel on the 1km trip to the international conference centre in Nusa Dua, Bali.

Two hundred free bikes were provided to encourage sustainable transport use amongst delegates at the UN climate change conference. With 10,000 delegates present that represents a ratio of fifty people to each bike. The Minister was therefore lucky to get one. Perhaps those elbows, well sharpened during the last General Election campaign, may have come in handy again.

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thegreenparty/2100172743>



<http://www.thejakartapost.com/climate>

The United Nations, together with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, invited the bicycle industry to participate in the new Global Alliance for EcoMobility, which was launched at the UN Climate Conference in Bali on December 10th.

The proposal was also discussed at the 2007 Eurobike Trade Show in August where bike industry leaders were briefed on "the vision, goals and actions of this all important lobby platform that will have the status to partner with organisations like the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization" for the promotion of bike use. The initiative is reportedly part of a UN strategy to partner with relevant industry sectors to

facilitate transformation to a Low Carbon Society, as well as an attempt to convince politicians at different levels about the significance of bicycle use when it comes to lowering CO2 emissions.

According to their website ([www.ecomobility.org](http://www.ecomobility.org)) the Global Alliance for EcoMobility is a cross-sectoral partnership for the integrated promotion of walking, cycling, "wheeling" and "passenging" (use of public transport).

According to Hans van Vliet, Corporate Communications Director of Shimano Europe, "riding a bicycle is the perfect solution for micro mobility in the developed world, and it also contributes to the space we need in congested cities. Seeing the bicycle as a potential option in the

low carbon society debate should not be a discussion point, it is simply a fact."

Other bike business partners in the Alliance include major manufacturers Giant, Trek and the Accell Group (whose brands include Batavus, Koga-Miyata and Lapierre), bicycle industry trade associations, cyclist representative bodies (European Cyclists' Federation, Bicycle Federation of Australia, League of American Bicyclists) and transport policy institutes.

One potentially controversial partner is the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, a car industry lobby group that has been accused of promoting its commercial interests ahead of sustainable transport initiatives and effective road safety policies.

## Links to Bali news snippets and other stuff

**Bike industry lobby platform launched**

<http://www.bike-eu.com/news/2603/bike-industry-lobby-platform-launched.html>

**What was the biggest lobbying group in Bali?**

<http://www.wdm.org.uk/news/biggestngoinali06122007.html>

**More than 10,000 jet into Bali for global warming conference**

[http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/national/342281\\_bali05.html](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/national/342281_bali05.html)

**Shortage of parking for private jets in Ngurah Rai International Airport**

<http://www.balidiscovery.com/messages/message.asp?id=4112&Text=Apron%20Area>

**Warming effect calculator**

<http://www.chooseclimate.org/flying/mf.html>

**Global road safety and the contribution of big business**

<http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/323/7314/648>

## How I Learned to Stop Motoring and Love the Bike

At this time of year, if you're not already in the habit of cycling, you're unlikely to start and I'm unlikely to change your mind. Having said that, I have been surprised by the number of cyclists on Galway's streets this winter. And if you're reading this, there's a fair chance you're among them, or that you hop on a bike at least occasionally.

I stopped regular driving years ago, when my car was vandalised beyond worthwhile reparation. Though this event caused me some temporary difficulties, it was a blessing in disguise. When I drove to work, other drivers' behaviour stressed me out constantly. I became self-righteous and impatient, vocalising my frustration to anyone unlucky enough to share the car with me, though I stopped short of phoning Joe Duffy. I also became lazy: driving was the default mode of movement about town. Sure, it was handy for spins to family and friends outside Galway, not to mention the endlessly fascinating backroads and landscapes of the rural West, but I began to use the car more and more unnecessarily. "It's so much more convenient," I would say to myself, ignoring the monumental inconvenience of trying to park in town, or trying to get from one corner of Galway to another at rush hour, which is all day some days. It's no wonder cars' interiors are being designed (and advertised) like plush hotels – people spend so much time in them now, they need to be persuaded that the alternatives are shoddy by comparison. Status anxiety is also easily exploited in this land of lucre and deep insecurity. The perception that if you cycle you mustn't be able to afford a car is as

widespread as it is absurd. Thus arise mutually exclusive zones of smugness.

Yet for all the heavily marketed appeal of an automobile, the bicycle will never go out of fashion. Indeed, its high-street currency may be at an all-time high: folding bikes are increasingly popular with city commuters, while the famous Parisian fashion house Chanel launch a designer bike as part of their spring/summer 2008 range. Though the price tag puts the Chanel bicycle beyond the reach of most mere mortals, affordability is not a problem for anyone looking to cycle.

**When I was a driver I became self-righteous and impatient, complaining to anyone unlucky enough to share the car with me, though I stopped short of phoning Joe Duffy.**

Unlike motorised forms of personal transport, cycling remains truly egalitarian. It does not distinguish between the haves and have-nots, between those who rode the back of the Celtic Tiger and those who fell under its feet, or have yet to gain a foothold in Ireland's coasting economy. Just about anyone can pick up a bicycle (decent second-hand or no-frills new) for less than the cost of running a car for a month.

The advantages of cycling over driving are well known, such as the benefits to mental and physical health and fitness, low to zero environmental impact, the ease of parking (poor facilities notwithstanding), negligible costs, nimble manoeuvrability, the triviality of

traffic jams, and the joy of freewheeling downhill. Less publicised is the fact that when you cycle, your journey takes on a real physical quality. You are immersed in the world around you, its sounds and smells, its myriad wonders. You can stop to get a better look at something that catches your eye, or turn around on a whim to go in another direction. You feel the wind and sun (if there is any) in your face and hair (if you have any). Even the rain can be refreshing if you're wearing the right gear, and you deeply appreciate warm dry clothes and shelter upon your return home. Cycling in Irish weather grounds you like camping and hiking do – it makes you feel you've been outdoors in a way driving never can.

Driving is a very different experience, taking place in a bulky cocoon that isolates you from your fellow road users. Because of the speed and mechanical power involved, you have to concentrate all the time. The slightest lapse could cost you or someone else dearly. You can't really look around and take in the scenery, apart from occasional stolen glances, so you don't get the same sense of local geography – this is particularly unfortunate in the countryside. Driving is about reaching B from A, so you put the foot down and get it over with. You listen to the radio, a CD or a fellow passenger to stave off tension and boredom, since one drive is all but identical to the next. Motoring can be passably enjoyable, especially when you don't have to contend with busy traffic, but in this country it's rarely what you'd consider fun.

Civil infrastructure and urban design in Ireland over the last couple of decades have been carried out in the glut of fossil fuel abundance and a buoyant national economy. At least one of these factors is nearing the end of its lifetime, and the suburban sprawl that sucked up so much misallocated energy may not seem so sensible, attractive or even habitable in a few short decades. That this sprawl, generally modelled on post-war American construction, is inherently unsustainable has largely escaped the attention of recent generations, who grew up in a land of relative plenty and have come to accept affluence as the norm. But there are many different kinds of wealth, and monetary is among the least of them. Believe me, bicycles will only get busier.

© 2007 Stan Carey



Amount of space required to transport the same number of people by car, bus and bicycle.

Original source: Press Office, City of Münster, Germany. <http://www.galwaycycling.org/node/81>

## Me & My Bike

### Pat Gormley

#### Occupation

Proprietor of Designer Swap Shop, Bridge Mills, Galway.

#### Bicycle

Gekko Folding Bike. Bought in Mountain Trail Bike Shop for €290.

#### Why this bike?

It pops into the boot of my car or behind the back seat, and it also fits neatly behind a rail in my shop during the day.

#### Why cycle?

I save on parking costs and I avoid parking tickets and the clampers.

#### Typical commute

I park the car in Salthill and cycle to work. It takes me 15-20 minutes on this bike (the small wheels give me a good workout).

#### Advantages

Exercise and fresh air, plus the satisfaction of sailing past those traffic hold-ups.

#### Disadvantages

None really. My running costs are effectively nil and I dress for the weather.

#### Observations about cycling in Galway

Some motorists drive too close to the kerb so that when they are stopped in traffic they allow no space for cyclists between car and kerb.

#### Advice to would-be cyclists

Go for it!



Review of Gekko folding bike

<http://www.pedalpushersonline.com/?CID=1102>

Folding bikes on Wikipedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folding\\_bicycle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folding_bicycle)

### Rwanda

The bicycle is a symbol of progress for Rwanda, yet very few can afford one, so they make them out of wood. These wooden bikes allow the growers to haul large loads of coffee cherries to the finishing stations quickly in order to get a premium price.



The bicycle is the perfect tool for this transport because of its low maintenance and relative affordability. Although these home-made workhorses help tremendously in hauling heavy loads, they are a bit unwieldy. Enter the Coffee Bike Project.

[www.woodenbikecoffee.com](http://www.woodenbikecoffee.com)

### Kenya



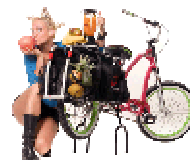
Peter Kahugu of Banana Hill just outside Nairobi makes a living using his bicycle. He has modified his bike with a belt, a set of tensioning pulleys and a grinding stone to make it a knife-sharpening machine. By kicking the bike up onto its stand and engaging a gearing system, he is able to use "leg-horsepower" to drive a grinding wheel and sharpen knives while "on the move".

<http://www.afrigadget.com/2007/06/21/the-knife-sharpening-bicycle>

## WORKING BIKES AROUND THE WORLD

### USA

Although Ireland is desperately trying catch up, the USA remains one of the most energy-hungry and car-dependent nations on the planet. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the USA is also home to some of the world's most dedicated, inventive and indeed eccentric bike lovers. Many of them live in California, naturally. That's where the Berkeley Innovators Guild hang out. BIG are the people who invented the Bike Blender.



[www.bikeblender.com](http://www.bikeblender.com)

### Holland

Bikes don't have to be all work or all play. The Cobi-7 is both. Handcrafted in Germany to exacting specifications (including a Porsche steering wheel), the Conference Bike has been used as an entertaining and inspiring facility for workplace team-building, church and school functions, sports training, health promotion for disabled and older people, and campaigning for world peace.



[www.conferencebike.com](http://www.conferencebike.com)

## Baiku— cycling in seventeen syllables

575. No, not the Yeti bike or the Shimano pedals. Five-seven-five, the three-line seventeen-syllable poetic tradition of Japanese origin. For aficionados, the brevity and strict discipline of the art-form is the purest poetry.

Some Westerners, it seems, have other ideas. Like performance poet John Cooper Clarke, who wrote "To convey ones mood/In seventeen syllables/Is very diffic."

Or like the anonymous cyclist who gave us the immortal "Riding in downpour/Bicycle has no mudguards/Who needs a bidet." (Translated from the American by the Spokes Editor)

Here's a selection of bicycle haikus (or baikus, perhaps?).

*Downhill bicycling  
Forty, fifty miles per hour  
Should have fixed brakes*  
~Jonathan Neske

*Eight years old, just learned,  
Moulton mini, single speed,  
Ten miles, with proud mum*  
~Andy Scaife

*Riding in the dark  
A car, I swerve, he misses  
Why do I have lights?*  
~Tim Hall

*Critically massed cars  
Beep their silly horns at me  
Think I'm in the way*  
~Sharon W

*My bike folds in half  
But it didn't come that way  
Thank you White Van Man*  
~S Taylor

*Dark winter cyclist,  
No lights! Skulking in gutter!  
Is your life that bad?*  
~Giolla Decair

*Wheels spinning around  
Flying past automobiles  
The bike is freedom*  
~ Nicole McMorrow

*A turn of the crank  
Is all that you need to start  
A revolution*  
~Scarlett Parker

From

[www.bikereader.com/contributors/etc/haiku/BRhaiku.html](http://www.bikereader.com/contributors/etc/haiku/BRhaiku.html)



Christmas is a good time to start a velourtion

## Is it about a bicycle? Sergeant Pluck's Atomic Theory

From Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*

'The County Council is the culprit,' he said at last.

I said nothing, knowing that he would blame the County Council at greater length if I waited till he had the blame thought out properly. It was not long till he turned in my direction to talk to me again. His face was grave.

'Did you ever discover or hear tell of the Atomic Theory?' he inquired.

'No,' I answered.

He leaned his mouth confidentially over to my ear.

'Would it surprise you to be told,' he said darkly, 'that the Atomic Theory is at work in this parish?'

'It would indeed.'

'It is doing untold destruction,' he continued. 'The half of the people are suffering from it, it is worse than the smallpox.'

I thought it better to say something.

'Would it be advisable,' I said, 'that it should be taken in hand by the Dispensary Doctor or by the National Teachers or do you think it is a matter for the head of the family?'

'The lock, stock and barrel of it all,' said the Sergeant, 'is the County Council.'

He walked on looking worried and preoccupied as if what he was examining in his head was unpleasant in a very intricate way.

'The Atomic Theory,' I sallied, 'is a thing that is not clear to me at all.'

'Michael Gilhaney,' said the Sergeant, 'is an example of a man that is nearly banjaxed from the principle of the Atomic Theory. Would it astonish you to hear that he is nearly half a bicycle?'

'It would surprise me unconditionally,' I said.

'Michael Gilhaney,' said the Sergeant, 'is nearly sixty

years of age by plain computation and if he is itself, he has spent no less than thirty-five years riding his bicycle over the rocky roadsteads and up and down the hills and into the deep ditches when the road goes astray in the strain of winter. He is always going to a particular destination or other on his bicycle at every hour of the day or coming back from there at every other hour. If it wasn't that his bicycle was stolen every Monday he would be sure to be more than half-way now.'

'Half-way to where?'

'Half-way to being a bicycle himself,' said the Sergeant.

'Your talk,' I said, 'is surely the handiwork of wisdom because not one word of it do I understand.'

'Did you never study Atomics when you were a lad?' asked the Sergeant, giving me a look of great inquiry and surprise.

'No,' I answered.

'The gross and net result of it is that people who spent most of their natural lives riding iron bicycles over the rocky roadsteads of this parish get their personalities mixed up with the personalities of their bicycle as a result of the interchanging of the atoms of each of them and you would be surprised at the number of people in these parts who nearly are half people and half bicycles.'

I let go a gasp of astonishment that made a sound in the air like a bad puncture.



*I thought of that while riding my bicycle.*

Albert Einstein, referring to his theory of Special Relativity.

Longer excerpt here:

<http://homepages.nyu.edu/~dpa218/atomic.htm>

The Third Policeman on Wikipedia:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Third\\_Policeman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Third_Policeman)

## Rear View



### Cycle Safety Tips

Always use hand signals when turning at intersections. There's nothing motorists pay more attention to than hand signals from bicyclists.

Leaving your bike out in the ice and cold all winter may cause serious damage. But it makes a nice subject for the cover illustration of a short-fiction quarterly.

Always wear a helmet. If this makes you uncomfortable, think of the helmet as a crown and yourself as King Dorko.

Placing your feet firmly on the pedals of the bike will help reduce the "Wheee" sound emitted from your mouth while going downhill.

Insist on a bicycle made of solid matter. Liquid and vapor bikes are a passing fancy; argon frames are particularly shoddy.

Visibility is crucial when biking. Ride with a lit flare in each hand.

Every 3-4 weeks, lightly oil the chain. Then dip it in flour and fry it for a real tasty treat.

As soon as you buy a bike, talk to your friends about how great Shimano crank sets and STX hubs are.

Does your city have safe bike paths? If not, consider bitching about it to your local government for the next 40 years.

Bike safety can never be stressed enough. If you doubt this, try stressing it as much as you possibly can. It won't be enough, guaranteed.

[www.theonion.com/content/node/38324](http://www.theonion.com/content/node/38324)



### Fancy a PhD in Cycleology?

Are you puzzled by the bicycle? No, neither am I. But apparently scientists have been perplexed by this mysterious machine for a century and a half, says the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands.

According to lead researcher Arend Schwab "bicycle manufacturers have never been able to say precisely how a bicycle work. They have always had to refine their designs purely through

experimentation."

Well, excuse me for being a smarty-pants, but this is patently absurd. The bicycle works like this: the rider sits on the saddle, holding the handlebars lightly but firmly, places a foot on each pedal, and uses these to transfer muscle power, through the chain and sprockets, to the rear wheel.

The resulting forward motion generates a gyroscopic effect in

the wheels which stabilises the assembly and stops the whole thing falling over.

Blimey. Give me a PhD.

~Russ Swan, LaboratoryTalk  
<http://www.laboratorytalk.com/blog/?p=78>

Delft researchers unravel the working of the bicycle  
<http://www.tudelft.nl/live/pagina.jsp?id=9eabd542-8382-4835-a820-a46393346948&lang=en>



### More links to entertaining & interesting websites

Amazing display of virtuoso bike acrobatics in a Wuerzberg sports hall 2001

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8867862777896510907>

Handy bike maintenance chart

<http://bicycleswest.com/page.cfm?PageID=136>

Monty Python: The Cycling Tour (Parts 1 & 2, subtitles in French)

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3035019191503920641&q=monty+python+cycling+tour&total=7&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=5>

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1623583477053052297&q=monty+python+cycling+tour&total=7&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=4>

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1623583477053052297&q=monty+python+cycling+tour&total=7&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=4>

Online bicycle quizzes

<http://www.tylerbicycleclub.com/BicycleHistoryQuiz.html>

<http://www.expertrating.com/quizzes/The-Bike-Quiz.asp>

<http://www.bicyclinglife.com/SafetySkills/SafetyQuiz.htm>

<http://www.labreform.org/education/BikeQuiz.pdf>



Cool 5-minute video promoting Velo-City 2009 in Brussels. Turn the SOUND UP!

<http://www.velo-city2009.com>