An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

THE SUMMER 2015 ISSUE

AN TAISCE



THE NETWORK EFFECT

JOINED UP THINKING ON TRANSPORT

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The National Trust for Ireland

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FROM THE EDITOR



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Whilst recent growth in Ireland's Gross National Product may not have trickled down much, few could fail to notice the increased congestion in our cities and towns. It is an over whelming feature of Irish life so its seemed timely to focus on these issues in this year's magazine.

Ian Lumley's uncompromising article on the pervasive influence of our car culture sets out the range of issues, whilst other articles focus on specifically rural impacts. Solutions are also proposed: Integrated Transport Networks could - with a bit of co-operation between providers and smart technology - make public transport a viable option; Cycling is already returning to our streets as an alternative to the car.

All the money spent on massive motorways in recent decades has certainly reduced travelling times to Dublin from some places around the country, but once in the urban areas car drivers are frequently brought to a stand still again and photos from celebrity planner Jan Gehl look at just what an improvement can be made when cars are not prioritized.

The Green Schools Travel Programme is making an important difference but what happened to all the great ambitions set out in "Smarter Travel, a Sustainable Transport Future?" This is clearly a political decision.

Finally, it's a bit of a segway from transport policy to river runs or bog roads, but I'm sure you can see the link and what better way to express the broad range of issues brought into An Taisce's mission. Hopefully some of it will inspire you to get involved.

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THE LONG AND WINDING (BOG) ROAD

Understanding our bog lands is critical to protecting and preserving Ireland's rich history.



AUTHOR
Dr. Andrew Jackson, Natural Environment Officer and Solicitor

Occasionally a case comes along which highlights all at once the breadth of An Taisce's remit and the interconnectedness of much of the work that we do, from planning through built and cultural heritage to nature conservation. One such case is Mayne bog near Lough Derravaragh in Co. Westmeath.

I first visited Mayne bog back in 2009 with Friends of the Irish Environment (FIE) and several An Taisce regulars. Back then we were not aware that Mayne bog was the site of an archaeological discovery of European significance.

FIE's immediate investigations - following a tip-off - revealed that a company called Westland was operating in Mayne bog without planning permission, EIA or an Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control licence. Progress has since been made in these areas, though Westland continues to fight the planning aspects tooth and nail, including via the Four Courts.

"WE'RE HARVESTING PEAT BASED ON IT BEING A CROP"

This is not exactly unexpected. Westland is the company which, in 2008, claimed to UK journalists on a field trip to Ireland that "People in England are unique in complaining about peat in Europe...This land has no value because it's too low-lying for agriculture. Friends of the Earth is entitled to its opinion but it's different in England than here. We're harvesting peat based on it being a crop."

Some crop: a raised bog takes up to 10,000 years to form and can be harvested once.

A "RARE AND EXCEPTIONAL" BOG ROAD

It recently emerged that Westland and the government have known for almost a decade about a significant archaeological discovery in Mayne bog: a bog road or 'togher', which has sadly gone unprotected.

The togher appears to have come to modern notice only in 2005 when part of its length was bisected by a drainage ditch sunk by Westland. It was thereafter reported to the government by way of an email from an unidentified individual in November 2005.

In September 2006 Archaeological Development Services Ltd (ADS) were contracted by the Department of Environment to undertake a "small scale excavation" of part of the togher. This was designed to determine the composition, form and extent of the structure and to obtain a date for its construction.

ADS's report noted that Westland had sunk fifty drains and that the togher was visible in the faces of 43 of these drains. It noted that the trackway was then between 0.7m and 0.4m below the field surface. Upon excavation it was found that the section of the togher was substantially complete with lines of planks secured with hardwood pegs on top of brushwood.

The report noted that the togher extended for 657m in the bog. The trackway appeared to continue at both ends and it appeared to be a regional trackway which latterly linked in with earthworks and ringforts in the area. ADS noted that the togher is a substantial plank structure which is "rare

(Photo Above) In Ireland we are still excavating vast quantities of peat for electricity generation, for home heating and for the horticultural industry despite the enormous environmental costs, which are externalised. Many other countries now promote peat free compost for both private and commercial use, and in March 2015, of three "Best buy" composts recommended by "Which?" magazine, two were peat free. *(©BOGFOR Research projects)*

and exceptional". Carbon 14 dating placed the togher between 1200 and 800 BC - substantially older than the roadway partially preserved at Corlea, Co. Longford.

ADS recommended that the site be fully excavated and that any such excavation would investigate whether the togher continued on the western side of the Inny River. However, since then no further investigation has occurred and instead Westland's peat harvesting has led to the togher being badly affected every year.

THE ROAD'S EUROPEAN SIGNIFICANCE

Since learning of the togher, a team within An Taisce, led by Dr. Mark Clinton and Aidan Walsh, and with internal and external legal backing, have written repeatedly to Minister Heather Humphreys over the past months urging that the togher be designated as a national monument and preserved as a matter of urgency. So far this has not happened.

In a report accompanying one such recent submission, Professor John Waddell, Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at National University of Ireland Galway, wrote that, "It is quite extraordinary that this discovery has not been the subject of comprehensive survey and more extensive excavation. It is a scandal that its destruction through industrial peat cutting continues unchecked [...] Given the European significance of discoveries like this, the inaction of the Department is as depressing as it is inexplicable."

The National Museum has since notified us of the discovery of significant artefacts in the vicinity of the togher, including a bronze sword, two bronze spearheads and a spearbutt. Commenting on these discoveries, Professor Waddell states, "The discovery in 2008 of several bronze artefacts near the Mayne trackway is highly significant. Two bronze spear-heads may date to about 1000 BC, a bronze sword is of a well-known type with a leaf-shaped blade of roughly similar date in the later Bronze Age. A bronze mount for a wooden spear shaft is a most unusual find and probably dates to the Iron Age around 300 BC. These four finds imply ceremonial deposition of weaponry in the vicinity of the trackway over a prolonged prehistoric time span and invite comparisons with some exceptional discoveries in Britain at sites like Flag Fen and Fiskerton. Since such bronze finds near bog trackways are quite unusual in Ireland —no bronze objects were associated with the Corlea trackway (now preserved in a Heritage Centre) for instance. Archaeological prediction is inevitably uncertain, but the Mayne finds raise the intriguing possibility that more extensive archaeological excavation here could be very rewarding indeed."

Given that the protective layer of peat is now entirely gone, it is anticipated that this year's harvesting by Westland will result in the complete destruction of this 3,000 year old road, unless preventative steps are urgently taken.

We are informed that a government archaeologist recently met with an archaeological consultancy engaged by Westland "with a view to discussing and agreeing an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy relating to the discoveries in Mayne Bog." However, even if such a strategy were to be agreed and implemented, this would not be an answer as to why the site is or is not designated as a national monument.

Other such discoveries in Europe – e.g. Corlea (Ireland), Wittemoor (Germany), and Flag Fen (UK) - have resulted in the creation of dedicated visitor centres, yet the fate of Mayne bog's togher hangs in the balance. Minister Humphreys must act very soon - and decisively - to preserve this rare find. We will be doing our utmost to ensure this happens.



The potential for the discovery of further objects, particularly of a non-metal nature, in apparent association with the Mayne bog trackway is very real. Because of the acidity and the anaerobic environment, objects of metal, wood, leather and fabric can survive for thousands of years in bogs in good condition." The spearhead found at the Mayne Bog is now in the care of the National Museum of Ireland.



Excavation of a portion of the trackway in Mayne Bog, showing the upper surface of this ancient togher from the North. A drain for peat extraction has chopped out a chunk of the togher at this point. *(Photo: Archaeological Development Service.)*

It is anticapted that this year's harvesting by Westland will result in the complete destruction of this 3,000 year old road.

Ireland's rivers are natural transport corridors...

Ireland's rivers are natural transport corridors and require greater protection and more effective management.



AUTHOR
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WHAT WE DO

> **Water is the third theme of the Green-Schools programme and is sponsored by Irish Water. The aim of the Water theme is to support schools in introducing and implementing a sustainable water programme and raising awareness of and engagement in related issues. See the website: www.greenschoolsireland.org/themes/water.196.html**

> **Our advocacy work on Ireland's Peatlands is protecting Ireland's rivers. Find out more about this on the website: antaisce.org/issues/Irelands-peatlands**

Irish rivers are a vital resource and an integral part of our landscape and culture. They are the basis of famous folklore stories, such as the great warrior Fionn Mac Cumhaill and the mythical "Salmon of Knowledge" that was caught on the River Boyne. In the past many of our rivers have facilitated the transportation of goods, and were an important source of food (e.g. salmon and eels). Today our rivers comprise a unique renewable resource providing us with drinking water, fisheries, energy and an outlet for our wastes. They drain our countryside and urban areas and are a centre point for a range of recreational activities. They are highways which transport water, sediments and nutrients, and are pathways through which wildlife can migrate. Our major towns and cities are invariably located on rivers, highlighting the historical and functional importance of waterways. River corridors provide ecological commuting routes through these urban areas allowing the wilder areas of our countryside to be connected thus facilitating the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. The ecological services that rivers provide uniquely meet the requirement of Articles 3 and 10 of the EU Habitats Directive. Irish rivers have a number of significant pressures however, resulting from physical, chemical and biological sources.

THE PRESSURE ON IRISH RIVERS

Drainage and channelisation works have been a key physical impact. The major catchment-wide arterial drainage schemes of the 20th century greatly increased water conveyance in affected rivers, but also resulted in unimaginable ecological destruction. The aesthetic and recreational value of these rivers was also severely compromised. Many of these schemes have also been counterproductive and have simply transferred the problem of flooding further downstream. The predicted economic benefits of these schemes were also rarely realised. In an attempt to repair some of the physical damage to our rivers a programme of instream enhancement commenced recently. However, to date these works are almost exclusively focused on enhancing rivers for salmonids, and improving angling, and are having their own significant environmental and ecological impacts.

Although the major catchment-wide arterial drainage schemes are over, there are a large number of more localised schemes being progressed. Recent ones in Kilkenny, Ennis and Clonmel affected Natura 2000 Rivers. It was claimed at the time that these schemes would avoid all instream works to protect these designated areas, however this did not happen. River walls built within these towns required major temporary instream works and resulted in the loss of most of the juvenile lamprey habitats within the works areas. A scheme planned for



The River Unshin, Co Sligo. This river is a designated SAC and is one of the most pristine rivers left in Ireland. (Photo: *William O'Connor*).



River Fergus, Ennis, Co Clare. This river is a designated SAC but was devastated both physically and ecologically by recent flood schemes which involved constructing new river walls through the town. This is the only section of the river where migratory lampreys occur, and all their nursery habitats were removed from this area of the river despite a commitment to undertake no instream works. *(Photo: William O'Connor)*

Bandon in Co. Cork will require extensive lowering of several kilometres of river corridor and the construction of river walls and bank armouring. Again this scheme will hit lampreys the hardest, and the River Bandon is thought to hold the best river lamprey population in Ireland.

Water quality remains a significant pressure on Irish rivers, with almost 50% of Irish rivers failing to meet Good Ecological Status in the last national survey.

Issues resulting from diffuse pollution sources are an increasing problem, even as point discharge pressures are brought under control. The intensification of agricultural activities has profoundly affected our rivers. Although the protection of our rivers has largely been driven by EU Directives, most notably the Water Framework (WFD) and Habitat Directives, it is also EU supports for agriculture in areas which would be otherwise uneconomic that has had been one of the greatest drivers of the deterioration of Irish rivers.



Sea lampreys Petromyzon marinus. Lamprey species are poor swimmers and cannot jump so are very vulnerable to barriers to migration placed in rivers. They are also the species affected most by river works such as dredging as they have an extended larval stage which burrows into river sediments. (Photo: *William O'Connor*)

THE IMPACT OF MODIFICATIONS MADE TO PROVIDE SERVICES

Our rivers have long been source of energy from small watermills to the ESB's major hydroelectric developments. Very few of our rivers have not been affected by the weirs, diversions and other modifications required to harness the power of running water. Dams and weirs have also been used to impound water to facilitate abstraction for drinking water and industry, for ornamental reasons, to count migrating fish and measure flows. Dams and weirs interrupt the river continuum, interfering with the transport of bed material and the movements of fish and other wildlife. Some species are affected more than others by these barriers. Lamprey species are particularly vulnerable, with two of the three species which occur in Ireland even unable to get pass the crump weirs that are put into rivers to count

The major arterial drainage schemes of the 20th century greatly increased water conveyance but resulted in unimaginable ecological destruction.

salmonids and measure flows, for example. Hydroelectricity may be a renewable energy source, but it has not proven to be a sustainable one in Ireland. On rivers such as the Shannon, Erne and Lee which have hydroelectric schemes, salmon runs are only around 5% of the historical levels on these rivers.

The introduction and spread of non-native invasive species is a major threat to the ecological integrity of Irish rivers. This includes the spread of plant species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, within our river corridors, along with aquatic invaders such as the Asian clam and zebra mussel. The arrival of others appears almost inevitable.

However, climate change is perhaps the greatest threat facing our watercourses. Increasing extremes of floods and drought conditions are harmful to rivers, with floods washing out ova of fish at spawning times and droughts reducing the area of habitat which can be used by aquatic life. A warmer climate could also favour non-native species.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR RESTORATION

Ireland's rivers have many problems and face a challenging future. Climate change and non-native species are perhaps the most serious emerging threats, however mismanagement is also a key issue. According to 'A Celebration of Salmon Rivers', published by the North Atlantic Salmon Fund in 2007, "the salmon is no longer an image associated with the Boyne, nor is wisdom a quality to be associated with the management of this natural resource". It is clear that this comment applies to most rivers in Ireland, even though the information and technology required to manage our rivers sustainably is available. We could, for example, easily restore significant salmon runs to the River Shannon with some effective management. We should be looking at back-to-nature flood schemes and restoring floodplains and wetlands, rather than walling and dredging our rivers. We should be enhancing and restoring our rivers for all wildlife, and not blanket filling them with gravel and rocks to favour just salmonids and angling interests. We should be removing barriers from rivers and providing fish passes and eel passes on all weirs that are still required. We need to keep livestock, housing and other developments back from our rivers and their riparian zones. All payments to landowners should be used to incentivise environmental and ecological improvements.

Our rivers are an intricate part of our natural heritage and an important renewable resource. We need to protect and restore these vital natural commuting and transport networks and manage them sustainably.



The freshwater pearl mussel Margaritifera margaritifera. This sensitive species is a key biological indicator for the habitat quality of river ecosystems. Irish populations are on the verge of extinction. *(Photo: William O'Connor)*



River Clare, Co Galway. This river has never recovered physically or ecologically from the Corrib-Clare arterial drainage scheme (1954-1964). There are plans to deepen and widen this river again following widespread flooding of the town of Claregalway in 2009. Instead of trying to get water to drain into rivers and flow to sea as quickly as possible, we should be restoring floodplains and wetlands with back-to-nature flood schemes. *(Photo: William O'Connor)*

GET INVOLVED

> **Organise a National Spring Clean along your local river. This popular anti-litter initiative is run every April. It encourages all members of the community to participate and take responsibility for their immediate environment. By participating in clean-ups, groups are making a positive contribution to their community.**

See the website: nationalspringclean.org

Here's a Curious Thing





AUTHOR
John Gibbons
Specialist writer on environment and climate-related issues

Ireland's annual expenditure on fossil fuels is unsustainable in economic and environmental terms. Our over reliance on these imported fuels make us exceptionally vulnerable to shifting circumstances.

Here's a curious thing. Ireland spends a little shy of €7 billion a year importing fossil fuels. These provide some 90% of our total energy needs. This makes Ireland one of the most energy-insecure countries in the developed world.

We depend on little more than the kindness of strangers to provide the fuels upon which our light, heat, agriculture and transportation depends. This unpromising position of dependence and vulnerability is in fact a great deal worse than first impressions might suggest.

Consider this: according to the best available scientific estimates, no more than 20% of the world's known fossil fuel reserves can be burned – ever – if we are to have even a sporting chance of staying below the 2°C guardrail. This stark limit is set by physics and is strictly non-negotiable.

The 2°C 'limit' already looks suspiciously high, yet given that we have already added 0.8°C above pre-industrial levels to the global average surface temperature, with up to another 0.7°C already committed but not yet delivered thanks to lags in the climate system, that leaves humanity the narrowest of margins (another 0.5°C at most) before breaching the 2°C 'red line'. Beyond that point, any further human interventions in attempting to rein in the climate system look largely irrelevant.

Prof Paul Ekins of University College, London was part of a group who conducted detailed research into the vast ongoing investment being made both by governments and private companies into energy exploration. "In 2013, fossil fuel companies spent some $670bn on exploring for new oil and gas resources. One might ask why they are doing this when there is more in the ground than we can afford to burn".

The message has clearly not reached the Irish government, which continues to plough ahead with the monumental folly of destroying some of Europe's last remaining boglands and burning them to

WHAT WE DO

> **An Taisce has been granted leave by the High Court to bring a judicial review regarding the peat-and-biomass power station at Edenderry in County Offaly. The plant burns up to 1.2 million tonnes of peat a year. An Taisce's case is that, contrary to EU law, the environmental effects of extracting the peat fuel to be burned at Edenderry were not assessed before granting planning permission to allow the plant burn peat from 2015 to 2023, or at any point previously.**



St Marys Park underwater after the River Shannon burst its banks during Storm Darwin in February 2014. *(Photo: Sean Curtin)*

produce some of the world's dirtiest energy. Not alone is it filthy, peat burning is hopelessly uneconomic.

To add insult to ecological injury, the Irish taxpayer subsidises this environmental vandalism via what are known as Public Service Obligations (PSOs) paid to prop up our loss-making peat plants. These PSOs run into many tens of millions of euros annually. 'Those whom the Gods would destroy, first they make mad". The phrase, attributed to the ancient Greek dramatist, Euripides, seems just about right when Ireland's modest but telling contribution to the global fossil fuel inferno is considered.

> **No more than 20% of the world's known fossil fuel reserves can be burned – EVER – if we are to have even a sporting chance of staying below the 2ºC guardrail.**



Getting involved in Divestment Day in Dublin February 2015 *(Photo: Peter Verga)*

While the media has long been complicit in fiddling while the world burns, Britain's Guardian newspaper has since early 2015 broken ranks and put climate change where it belongs – all over the front pages. And not just one or twice, but day after day, week after week.

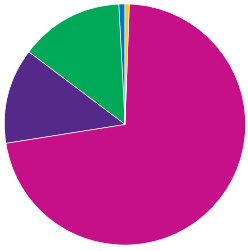
While the Guardian has long been the only major media outlet to pay anything more than passing attention to the rolling global calamity of climate change, Editor Alan Rusbridger has come to realise that even these efforts are still entirely inadequate in the face of climate reality.

In a recent front page editorial, Rusbridger explained the many technical reasons that make climate change so difficult to keep in the headlines. He describes his major regret after 20 years

GET INVOLVED

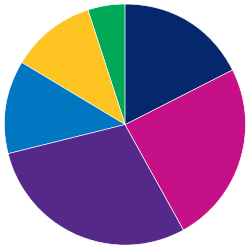
> Divestment is the opposite of an investment – it simply means taking money out of pension and other investment funds that are unethical or morally ambiguous. Fossil fuel investments are a risk for both investors and the planet, so An Taisce has joined with others to call on institutions to divest from these companies. You too can have an impact by simply writing to your pension or investment fund manager asking them to clarify whether your funds are directly linked to fossil fuel interests. If so, you can ask them to identify alternative, ethically sound investment funds.

EU GHG EMISSIONS FROM TRANSPORT BY MODE



- Railways (0.6%)
- Road Transport (71.9%)
- Total Civil Aviation (12.8%)
- Total Navigation (13.9%)
- Other (0.8%)

EU GHG EMISSIONS BY SECTOR



- Industry (17.7%)
- Transport (24.3%)
- Energy Industries (29.2%)
- Residential and Commercial (12.5%)
- Agriculture (11.3%)
- Other (5.0%)

Europe's long-term goal established 4 years ago is to reduce transport emissions by 60% by 2050. We know that to meet this goal we have to intensify our efforts after 2020. All transport modes need to contribute. Road transport is still the most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU – about one-fifth of the total. These emissions slightly fell in 2012, they are still some 20% higher than in 1990. Global shipping today accounts for 4% of the EU's total emissions and these emissions are expected to more than double by 2050 if we don't take action to reduce them. We also need to reduce aviation emissions. They now account for about 3% of our total emissions, but they are growing fast. Since 2012, aviation emissions are included in the EU Emissions Trading System but only domestic flights, not international flights where most of the emissions arise..



The impact of climate change is already with us, with rapid erosion around our coastlines. A path used for time immemorial along the cliffs outside of Wicklow town has been damaged in parts and despite efforts by local people to maintain the path and get support from the council the path has recently been closed on the insistence of the insurance company.

of editing the Guardian being that "we had not done justice to this huge, overshadowing, overwhelming issue of how climate change will probably, within the lifetime of our children, cause untold havoc and stress to our species".

Continued failure to act has only one possible outcome: "if we do nothing, what is almost certain to occur is a future incompatible with any reasonable characterisation of an organised, equitable and civilised global community". Put plainly, Rusbridger is outlining a future of chaos, political and social collapse, near-anarchy, famines and economic ruin. We are still awaiting a similar engagement from the Irish media with this starkest of realities, but to date, none whatever has been forthcoming.

The best current scientific estimates are that humanity can emit at most an additional 565 billion tonnes of CO_2 this century while still having a 50-50 chance of keeping global temperatures from tipping into the disaster zone. However, the 'proven reserves' today on the books of the world's fossil energy producers run to almost 2,800 billion tonnes, or some five times greater than what can ever be burned.

The global energy industry recognises the existential threat public awareness of the above facts pose to its trillion dollar business model, hence in the US alone, over a billion dollars is spent annually by energy companies in funding think tanks, advertising and phony front groups to try to fool the public into believing there is a public groundswell of support for this planet-destroying enterprise.



An Taisce is one of the many organisations that support the coalition of Stop Climate Chaos. Check out stopclimatechaos.org for news and events.

GET INVOLVED

> An Taisce's Climate Change Committee was formed at the beginning of 2014 and has been active in campaigning since then. An Taisce members interested in joining are always welcome. In the interest of gender balance, the committee especially welcomes female applicants. Email: climatechair@antaisce.org

FACTS ON Aviation & EMISSIONS

The IPCC estimates that aviation will be responsible for

3%

of anthropogenic climate change by 2050

(IPCC Special report. Aviation and Global Atmosphere. Summary for Policymakers)

NEARLY 25 MILLION



passengers passed through Irish airports in 2013. Down from the peak in 2008 but rising again and 3 times the numbers in 1990.

(CSO Aviation Statistics 2013)



85%

of the World population and 15% of Irish adults have never flown.

(Source: Guardian Newspaper)

Ferry passengers between Ireland and the UK fell by

23%

from 3.7 million to 2 million in the past decade



(source. Statistica.com)

The Kyoto Protocol only requires countries to account for emissions from domestic flights. Although 60% of aviation emissions arise from international flights, these are not counted.

60%

Ireland burns

630ltr

of jet fuel per day for every 1000 people. Finland uses 380. World average 113 litres.

(source. indexmundi.com)

Nearly

9M

passengers travelled between Ireland and the UK by air in 2013

(source S.E.I.A Energy in Transport. 2014 Report)

Airfreight through Ireland has tripled in the past two decades.



(S.E.I.A. Energy in Transport. 2014 Report)



There is no tax on jet fuel and Ireland is the only North European country without a travel tax

With thanks to Andy O'Loghlin, a member from Clare who helped put these facts together. Search also Aviation on the An Taisce website for letters and submissions.



(©Irish independent)

LIBERATION FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE CAR

Considered planning descisions are required to alter the mindset that keeps us chained to the car.



AUTHOR
Ian Lumley
Heritage Officer

The car instead of being a conveyance of convenience has become our master dictating spatial mobility and land use patterns. It generates massive negative impacts in resource consumption and emissions as well as unhealthy lifestyles and obesity with all their social costs. It has molded the Irish collective psyche, with the main RTE radio evening current affairs programme being called "Drivetime". Morning and evening radio is interspaced with announcements by the motor industry "Automobile Association", which has a financial interest in increasing the number of private car owners on its books, and promoting road building.

Congestion is back to boom time levels with all the frustration, costs and health issues that come with that – and that's without mentioning climate changing carbon emissions!



THE CONGESTION AND EMISSIONS SPIRAL

In the five decades that the current planning system has been in place urban and rural development has been deliberately car based. Most startling is the continuing pattern of roadfront "one off" houses outside town and village speed limits unrelated to any site or land based need, distant from place of employment of most residents, and turning the countryside into a scattered suburban sprawl, rendering rural roads unattractive for walking and cycling.

2015 saw congestion increasing on 2008 boom time levels. In February 2015 the news of a 20% increase in traffic on tolled road points was treated as good news by both the National Roads Authority (NRA) and the AA, on the basis that it reflected economic growth. Both organisation of course had an agenda of more national motorway building and will use Dublin congestion to argue for an "outer orbital" beyond the M50.

Traffic generation and congestion increases climate emission impact, increases costs to business, slows down public transport and service vehicle movement, conflicts with cycling and causes local air pollution in particle emissions, particularly from diesel vehicles.

Transport greenhouse gas emissions rose by 2.1 % in 2013 over the previous year's levels following a course that will way overshoot EU 2020 targets. The increase in road freight, failure to improve the emission standard of buses, and higher ratio of diesel cars over petrol has also renewed concern on air particulate PM10 emissions. Joggers and cyclists on winter evenings are particularly vulnerable.

While switching to renewable night time charged electric batteries from renewable power would partly address the multiple emission problem for cars at least, the resource

consumption and spatial impact of the private car remains irrevocably problematic. The western model of car ownership and associated land use impact simply cannot continue in the growing cities of Asia and the developing world, if planetary boundaries of extraction, consumption and climate emissions are to be contained.

PLANNING FAILURES

The last two years have seen a significant level of planning applications for new employment around the main Irish urban centers, almost all car based like the Kerry Group research centre outside Naas near the M7 with 780 free surface parking spaces. The designation of Limerick as " Ireland's Smarter Travel Demonstration City" is a sham, where the continuing decisions by the now unified Limerick City and County Council, do not address the adopted targets to reduce car dependence. The case of the major school project over 1km outside Croom in Co Limerick shows that Department of Education and Skills location and catchment area standards are not being applied nationally in new build site selection.

Galway is seeing current controversy over the route selection of a revived Outer By Pass following the abandonment of the previous scheme after legal action. The local sustainable travel group Cosain has published a map showing the extent of the urban area devoted to surface parking under the title " Galway A City Consecrated to the Car " The answer is a switch from car dependenceto eliminate the need for the by pass.

GOVERNMENT ABANDONMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

In 2009 the Department of Transport published " Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A new Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020" the forward stated "if we continue current trends in transport and travel we will all suffer individually and economy and society as a whole will suffer. Congestion will increase, making it more difficult and stressful to make even the shortest journey"

Smarter Travel contained clear targets to stabilise the total kilometres travelled by the national car fleet at 2009 levels, and reduce car based workplace travel form 65 % to 45%, by 2020. It set out 49 specific actions including biennial reports on progress starting in 2010. The parallel National Cycling Framework Strategy adopted a target of 10% of all journeys being by bicycle by 2020.

By 20I4 a Department of Transport Tourism and Sport working group published "Investing in our Transport Future – A strategic framework for investment in land transport " which disregarded Smarter Travel. It gave only tokenistic reference to climate emissions, was uncritical on impact on car and commercial traffic growth, and disparaging to the capacity of the railways.

This abandonment of Smarter Travel is compounded in the published "Statement of Strategy" for the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport for 2015-2017. It fails to make even token reference to the Smarter Travel policy and provided no strategy to address climate emission targets or congestion. What happened to change the approach?

THE ROLE OF AN BORD PLEANALA

An Bord Pleanala is failing to address climate science and shows a lack of understanding of sustainable land use and transport in its decision making and has already lost two





Traffic along the quays seriously diminishes this central space. (*Fountain Rescue Group*)



It's not only the cities that suffer from congestion. As more houses are built outside the town boundaries people have little choice but to bring their cars into town. (*WexfordHub.com*)



Permission to extend Kildare Shopping Centre, strangely known as Kildare Village will only encourage more car based retail which is further undermining town centres. *(Photo: Jimmy Fullam)*

significant Judicial Reviews in the High Court last year, namely, Kelly v. An Bord Pleanala and O'Grianna v. An Bord Pleanala. There is systemic failure by the Board to fully address direct and indirect effects of a project. In 2014 An Bord Pleanála gave consent for Kildare County Council's application to add two lanes to 15 km of the M7 between the Newbridge and Naas interchanges. The decision failed to address and mitigate the impact of induced traffic from the wider catchment of the M7 and M9 from the surrounding counties and the downstream impact on the Red Cow interchange on to the M50. The Board attached a meaningless condition on monitoring.

Another example relates to a Board decision in 2005 to grant permission for extra lanes on the M50 without demand management control. It attached a condition that a study on " Demand Management Measures " be published, but bizarrely providing no obligation that any such measures be implemented. In 2014 an NRA report determined that 12% of the route was exceeding "safe operating capacity" in the busiest lanes at peak times. A range of actions was recommended including extended tolling which was rejected by the current and previous transport ministers last year. All that is being proposed for "consideration" by the NRA at present is variable speed limit guidance through electronic flow modelling. The fundamental requirement to curtail demand, and in particular to switch car journeys to bus and rail, is being ignored

The urban edge Tesco's in Naas and Tullamore, both permitted by the Board, show the damage that car based peripheral development has on urban centres yet the Board has also permitted extentions to Kildare Village and Liffey Valley and the permission for 10,200 car spaces at Dubin Airport will encourage even more car based travel feeding into the M7, undermining the modal share with rail and bus.

> **The environment is not a "point of view". A stable climate and bio diverse eco system is the necessary support of human social and economic structures.**

The designation of Limerick as Ireland's Smarter Travel Demonstration City is a sham. Decisions by the Council do not address the adopted targets to reduce car dependence.



MOVING BEYOND A CAR BASED SOCIETY

Germany is emerging with constructive responses by a younger generation including the new concept of "car peak." They are embracing living in an urban or village area with walkable access to shops, services where

public transport eliminates the need for individual car ownership. Clubs or flexible hire schemes are growing for those wanting occasional car use. Ireland must also rethink its relationship with the car. The abandonment of further wastage in over scaled motorways like the M17 Gort Tuam is a priority, with the entire focus of transport investment put into public transport and cycling enhancement and recommitment to the 2009 Smarter Travel targets.

The current review of the National Spatial Strategy, which will be on a statutory basis, needs to set out a positive vision with legally enforceable planning guidance for walkable urban and rural communities and a significant shift from car dependency to cycling and public transport. Free urban edge parking must be curtailed with a charging regime to incentivize modal shift against car use. Tourism needs to be become much less car based, with a national integrated network of walking and cycling recreational greenways.

Public transport investment and cycling enhancement measures will take some time to have impact. There is a range of immediate and cost effective measures, which need to be achieved as an emergency measure. These include provision of 'Park & Ride'; promotion of workplace travel plans including car sharing where public transport or cycling are less viable options; promotion of school travel plans to significantly reduce car based travel. Above all the public realm needs to made safer and more attractive for walking and including extension of 20kph or 30kph zones.

An Taisce with its established role in school travel, and overview on spatial planning and development nationally, can play a key and constructive part in this.

> **Tourism needs to be become much less car based, with a national integrated network of walking and cycling recreational greenways.**



Big roads attract traffic. An Bord Pleanála's consent to add two lanes to the M7 between Newbridge and Naas didn't take account of induced traffic from the surrounding counties. This will put pressure on the Red Cow interchange and the M50.



Many more park and ride schemes are needed, not only in for LUAS passengers in Dublin but all around the country where they can play an important role in integrated transport schemes.



(*Mapdata c. 2015 googleimagery c.2015 digitalGlobe, Landsat.*)

A CITY CONSECRATED TO CARS

As controversy over the N6 Galway City Transport Project continues, pedestrian campaign group Cosain (The Community Road Safety Action & Information Network) has produced a map that illustrates the huge extent to which land area within the city boundary has been allocated to private cars.

The map highlights 1775 car-parking areas in Galway City and its suburbs. These include public Pay & Display or free parking zones, city centre commercial parking facilities (totalling 2634 spaces), as well as parking areas around shopping centres, business parks, hotels, apartments and some housing estates. The map does not include most private driveways and the numerous free on-street parking locations, nor the illegal parking.

The more parking spaces you provide, the more cars will come to fill them. It is like feeding pigeons. This is especially true of free parking. Unfortunately, free parking is not really free at societal level, because there are major opportunity costs in terms of land availability and transportation options. Everyone but the motorist pays for free parking.

It is clear that any serious, coherent and rational attempt to solve the twin problems of car dependence and traffic congestion in Galway City must include a detailed examination of parking availability, especially free parking. A sustainable approach will require interventions to manage transport demand rather than increase the supply of space for yet more cars.

The Evolution of Green-Schools Travel

Engendering school children with the skills to cycle to school will grow their independence and promote a safer, healthier lifestyle that will benefit them and their environment long into the future.



AUTHOR
Jane Hackett, National Green Schools Travel Manager

In the not too distant past travelling to school wasn't a big issue. Children simply did what their parents and grandparents had done which was to walk or cycle to school. There was no division between urban or rural children or between boys and girls, there was less concern about road safety and most children were fit and healthy.
In truth there was no need for a programme like Green-Schools Travel.

However something fundamentally changed in just one generation and the ramifications of this change can be seen in every small village, town and city throughout the country. The change can be seen all around us and has impacted upon us as a nation is so many ways – our health is affected, our cities are congested, our environment is more polluted and our children are less independent and free. These changes have been accepted to some degree as the price of a modern Ireland however if the status quo isn't challenged then we face a grim future of inflated health costs, gridlocked cities and a population of citizens who see no alternative but the car.

BIG CHANGES

When I finished school in the early 1990's there were over five hundred bike spaces in the all girls secondary school I attended. When I visited my old school a number of years ago all five hundred spaces had been removed in the intervening years. This is indicative of the changes that have occurred in all schools around the country, where once there were walkers and cyclists now there are cars outside the school gate. The statistics show how this change has occurred;

- 50% of primary school children walked to school in 1981 compared to 25% in 2011.
- 61% of children between the ages of 5-12yrs travel to school by car.
- Between 1981 and 2011 the number of girls cycling to secondary school fell by 97%.[1]
- By age 15 almost 90% of girls and 70% of boys do not achieve the recommended level of physical activity. [2]

The reasons for these changes are outlined in numerous research documents and can be summarised as; urban and rural sprawl, increased family incomes, changes in employment patterns, a greater choice in terms of school location and changes in perception with respect to safety. These changes have resulted in a car based culture and an acceptance that the car can and should be used for short journeys such as the school run. Ultimately habits have been formed which are very difficult to change and therefore the Green-Schools Travel programme was developed to help reverse these trends.

SEVEN YEARS LATER

The Green-Schools Travel programme has been operating at a national level since 2008, it started as a pilot project funded by the then Dublin Transport Office and was then rolled out nationwide as funding became



St. Brigid's National School, Limerick. Cycle on Wednesday, part of An Taisce's National Walk to School Week last May.



Salesian Infant School, Limerick



Raising awareness of smarter travel. Scoil Mhuire, Killorglin, County Kerry.



Time out on a quiet road.

available by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. In the years since the programme has rapidly expanded and has reached over 1,500 schools nationwide. Green-Schools Travel focuses on facilitating behaviour change and employs over 25 Travel Officers who work directly with schools to increase walking and cycling to schoolThey have faced enormous challenges not only with respect to behaviour and perception, but also due to the legacy of poor planning which has resulted in schools having no footpaths let alone cycle lanes or other key pieces of infrastructure. Therefore although there may be a desire to change there may be real limitations which reduce the ability of children to walk or cycle.

Even with these limitations Green-Schools Travel has been very successful and on average car journeys to participating schools reduced by almost 25% between 2009 and 2013. This means that more children are walking, cycling, scooting, carpooling and using the bus on the journey to school and are therefore helping to undo the habits created by their parents. The programme is also making great progress in terms of retrofitting and improving infrastructure around schools. As part of the programme Green-Schools Travel Officers undertake audits which assess pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along routes to schools. These audits are called walkability and cycleability audits and place the user, the child, at the centre of the process. Since 2013 Green-Schools has undertaken over five hundred audits of infrastructural provision around the country. The audits and their recommendations have then been submitted to Local Authorities for review. This approach appears to be working and numerous schools around the country have seen improvements – new footpaths, pedestrian crossings, signage and even cycle lanes.

Green-Schools Travel Officers are now experts in terms of behaviour change and smarter travel and as a result several staff officers are working on Smarter Travel and Active Travel projects including: Go Dungarvan, Limerick Smarter Travel, Westport Smarter Travel and Birr Active Travel Town. These projects have benefited from the lessons learned over the last seven years as well as enabling Green-Schools to develop other resources and actions which can be replicated within the wider programme.

However the real winners are the pupils, teachers and parents who have taken the idea of a smarter, safer, healthier future and overcome all of the obstacles along the way. There are thousands of families around the country who have changed their habits and have in turn changed the future for their children in a small but profound way. They have done all of this on a voluntary basis and have had fun along the way. This is the part that we must remember, change can be fun and isn't as hard as we think.

For further information visit: *www.greenschoolsireland.org*



Cycle training in Kilmoyley National School, County Kerry.

1. CSO 2011.
2. Department of Health and Children; The Irish Health Behaviour in School –Aged Children (HBSC) Study 2006.



AUTO DESTRUCT:
The Problems of Rural Sprawl and Car Dependency

We now live further apart then ever with far reaching consequences.



AUTHOR
Tomás Bradley



AUTHOR
Eoin Heaney

As a consequence of the ongoing fiscal austerity measures, key public services in rural areas are now considered uneconomic. In buoyant economic circumstances services in areas of low population density were heavily subsidised but now Post offices, Garda stations, and most recently bus routes are all on the table for cuts.

At the same time, direct costs for rural families are rising dramatically. A study by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice in 2010 found that the cost of a minimum essential standard of living for six household types in rural areas is significantly higher than that for their urban counterparts. The costs of transport and food are the two largest areas of difference. The deficiency of public transport and greater travel distances in rural areas necessitates the inclusion of cars for rural households – a cost which is being compounded by increasing transport fuel costs and motoring costs.

The blame for this is often laid at central government and its policy of cut-backs. However, this has only been a catalyst for a much larger change coming down the line - the fact that service provision in many parts of the country has been rendered practically unfeasible due to dispersed settlement patterns.

> The deficiency of public transport and greater travel distances in rural areas necessitates the inclusion of cars for rural households – a cost which is being compounded by increasing transport fuel costs and motoring costs.

The current state of rural Ireland is the living economic and social legacy of over twenty years of dispersed 'one-off' settlement policy, bad planning and poor enforcement. When nearly 450,000 'one off houses' have been built, the resultant car reliant sprawl becomes the norm and not an exception. This has a very real human cost. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) in their review of nationwide ambulance coverage and response times for 2014 referred directly to this phenomenon, stating that: "The long distances that crews need to travel to patients, coupled with the pattern of one-off housing in rural areas also makes the universal attainment of rapid response times difficult."

IRELAND'S NATIONAL ROAD NETWORK

Ireland has 91,000 kilometres of local roads representing 94% of the total length of all the country's roads and carrying around 60% of total traffic. Ireland's length of road network per head of population is considerably greater than the EU average and twice that of the Member State with the next highest road length.

Reviewing Ireland's road maintenance budget demonstrates that the more population dispersal that is permitted, the greater the amount of road spending that is required. Per capita spending on roads is much greater in rural areas. According to an evaluation in 2005 per capita spending in 2001 on roads in County Leitrim was €330



John Sepulvado

compared with around €50 in most urban counties. The 2010 road maintenance allocations for Donegal and Cork county councils were €25.8m and €42.4m respectively. Both of these councils also have amongst the highest number of scattered dwellings in the State.

CAR DEPENDENCY

Car ownership in Ireland has grown rapidly in the past decade and has increased people's reliance on the private car as their main mode of transport. Ireland is now one of the most car dependent societies in the world. A total of 1.14 million people, representing almost 70 per cent of commuters, either drove to work or were a passenger in a car in 2011.

At the same time, bus and cycle usage are decreasing and rail travel has only slightly increased in the past decade. The social, cultural, economic and environmental consequences of car dependency for Irish society are complex and wide ranging and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups such rural households. For example, one unseen consequence of car dependency is the creation of an 'obesogenic' environment with significant public health and cost implications. Inevitably, as dispersed rural housing increases, car dependency and journey length to work, education and social amenities also increases.

TRANSPORT EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In parallel with growing car dependency, the transport sector was the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland over the period 1990–2007 with transport emissions 127% higher in 2007 compared with 1990. Transport accounts for 21.8% of Ireland's emissions, second to agriculture at 30.5%. Ireland has a binding EU requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020. The planned growth in agriculture emissions means that other sectors will have to bear a greater emissions burden. Ireland faces considerable challenges in developing cost effective policies for the transport sector given the fact that a significant proportion of the population have no option but to use private cars and public transport is unviable.

With these issues in mind, An Taisce has taken a proactive approach and in the context of the upcoming review of the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, publishing five principles for sustainable rural settlement. We believe that if these were acknowledged and adopted at local and national government level, we would see the emergence of resilient, sustainable and thriving rural communities throughout the country.

Car ownership in Ireland has grown rapidly in the past decade and has increased people's reliance on the private car as their main mode of transport. Ireland is now one of the most car dependent societies in the world.



(John Sepulvado)



Bus Eireann is planning to leave up to 15 stop off points without a service, despite being the only State transport provider for much of rural Ireland. Many homes served by these routes are miles from a railway station and often rely on multiple connections to get to a large city.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- A strong network of thriving towns and villages is fundamental for rural development.
- Scattered housing in unserviced locations should be restricted and instead directed to rural towns and villages.
- Implement a 'Serviced Sites Initiative' in rural towns and villages as an alternative to scattered housing.
- Rural Ireland is a critical resource for a post-carbon world.
- Manage the economic, social and environmental legacy of scattered housing.

None of these principles are radical. In fact, they are all supported by numerous national planning policy documents, which continue to be widely ignored or selectively applied in practice. The evidence clearly shows that the highly dispersed settlement patterns that have been allowed to take hold are extremely costly. They have stored up significant social, economic and environmental problems that are to the long-term detriment of rural communities and the rural economy.

As a consequence of Ireland's car dependency, the country is 99% reliant on imported oil for transport resulting in c. €6 billion flowing out of the economy annually. The IMF (2011) has estimated that oil prices are likely to increase between 200% and 800% in the next decade and there will be significant price volatility. Oil price rises will disproportionately affect rural residents and the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice has estimated that high transport fuel prices already account for a significant share of the differential between urban and rural living costs.

There is a direct relationship between population dispersal and car dependency. For example, in 2006 Forfás notes that Irish people use their cars more intensively than in other EU countries, due to more distributed settlement patterns, longer commuting distances and weaknesses in the public transportation infrastructure. The average car in Ireland travels 24,000 km per annum. This is 70% higher than France and Germany and even 30% higher than the USA. It has been estimated that rural transport accounts for 80% of total vehicle kilometres travelled annually (Scott and Brereton, 2010).

An Taisce's Principle's for Sustainable Rural Settlement can be viewed in detail on our website. Search for 'rural settlement'.

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Congestion and the *quality of public life*



Jan Geh
(Photo: Henningsson)

The congestion in Irish cities is worsening by the day and seriously undermining the urban quality. In a talk to architects and planners in Dublin last Autumn, Jan Gehl's photos of how a place can be transformed when people are given priority over cars were inspiring. Whilst many people blame the weather in Ireland, Gehl commented that if you can get the Russians out of their cars in the middle of their winter then anything is possible. A few examples are given here. See also book reviews.



Melbourne before 2006

Melbourne after 2006

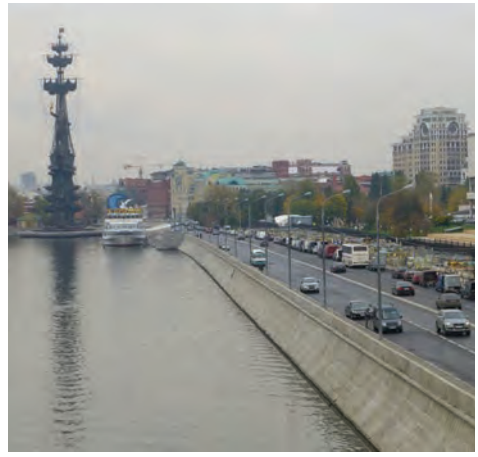


Tverskaya district in Moscow before pedestrianisation



Tverskaya after transformation





A main through road in Moscow prior to work



The urban planners design for the road



Finished results. *(Photo: Alexndra Coveleva)*

HOW DO OUR CITIES MEASURE UP TO PUBLIC LIFE?

The world's best cities invite people from all walks of life to meet and spend time together, find peaceful respite, or enjoy being "alone together". These cities offer a variety of mobility options, especially for walking and cycling, which allow citizens spontaneously to socialise with an acquaintance or visit a shop. Yet in most cities, streets in particular are a vastly undervalued public asset. Comprising typically between 20-30% of a city's land area, streets could be doing more than just allowing people and objects to move from A to B.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Ranking puts Melbourne top of the list while the Quality of Life survey published by Monocle puts Copenhagen in first place. Despite being at opposite ends of the planet, these cities share some significant traits. Both municipalities have Departments of Urban Life, assessing the vitality of public life based on people-centred metrics such as pedestrian time spent lingering in an area, and use of streets and spaces after dark. Both cities measure the vitality of public life as much as they measure vehicular traffic, congestion and economic growth.

Extracted from an article in the Economist Intelligence Unit December 5th 2014 by Jeff Risom's Partner, Managing Director US at Gehl Architects.

Opportunities to Grow Strong Everyday Cycling Cultures in Ireland

Damien Ó Tuama, National Cycling Coordinator for An Taisce and in partnership with Cyclist.ie – the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network, reflects on the opportunities that will need to be seized over the coming years.



AUTHOR
Damien Ó Tuama, National Cycling Coordinator for An Taisce and in partnership with Cyclist.ie

The National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF), published in April 2009 came hot on the heels of the Smarter Travel Plan 2009-2020 - the Framework Policy for Sustainable Transport. The NCPF contained the overarching vision and target that a "culture of cycling will have developed in Ireland to the extent that 10% of all trips will be by bike by 2020".

We are now past the half-way point in the implementation period of the NCPF with the most recent census telling us that the share of commuters cycling to work was 2.4% in 2011 as against 7.2% in 1986. While there is good data showing that cycling numbers in Dublin city centre have grown steadily over the last 5 years, anecdotal evidence suggests that everyday cycling outside of the main urban areas has, at best, flattened off or else is continuing to wane.

Are there any reasons to be hopeful that everyday cycling can make a serious come-back – or are we doomed to listen to Society of the Irish Motor Industry press release generated 'good news' media stories of increases in new vehicle sales, further swings to diesel-engined cars (now at over 70% of new car sales), and that approximately 25% of new cars are SUV's or 4x4s - most of which are non Euro NCAP [1] compliant for cyclist safety?

Here are some reasons to be hopeful.

1. Cycling advocacy has matured over the last 10 years. Cyclist.ie, with whom An Taisce has a strategic partnership, is the member for Ireland of the European Cyclists' Federation, which itself has grown into a much stronger body with a staff of almost 20 in its Brussels office. There is a more structured flow of ideas and support from our continental cycling colleagues than there ever has been previously, while within Ireland independent greenway groups are collaborating with the more traditional urban based cycling campaign groups.



Cyclists find the many new Greenways in Ireland ideal for family holidays - low carbon too!

***Cyclist.ie* - The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network is the umbrella body for cycling campaigning groups in Ireland. It was formed in 2008, bringing together the most active cycling advocacy groups on the island of Ireland so as to give everyday utility cycling (as opposed to competitive / sports cycling) a strong voice.**



Nearly a quarter of all retail spend comes from people who walk or cycle into Dublin city centre. Over half (56%) comes from people travelling by public transport. Car-based shoppers account for only €1 in every €5 spent in town. That's according to Millward Brown's Dublin City Centre Shopper Survey published February 2015



Cycling is becoming increasingly valued as a way to do business, carry goods and passengers. We'll be seeing more cargo bikes around in the next few years, just like years ago (or in many parts of the developing world)

2. The arrival of public bikes in Galway, Limerick and Cork – as well as the scheme in Dublin – means that many more people experience utility or transportation cycling and are reminded of the benefits of the bicycle. These includes not only those who live in the cities, but those commuting in from afar, by public transport or private car, and who then use the bikes to extend their reach at lunchtime for example.

3. Proposals to provide high quality strategic cycle routes such as the 'Quays Cycle Route' in Dublin have been boosted by the expansion of the capital's public bike scheme westward towards Heuston station and eastwards into the Docklands. There are more novice cyclists and adults returning to cycling than ever before which is putting pressure on the Council to provide for them. It is hoped that the arrival of the three new public bike schemes will create equivalent positive feedback effects.

4. While the phenomenon of almost every Local Authority wanting a bit of the 'greenway action' does not directly equate with, for example, getting more school girls back on bikes (one of the hardest to reach cohorts), it does appear to be helping senior figures in many Local Authorities see another of the benefits of promoting cycling: its ability to bring money into rural Ireland. EuroVelo, the network of long distance cycle routes connecting the whole European continent, has two routes planned to run through Ireland: EV1 which is the 'Atlantic Coast Route' running from North Cape in Norway to Sagres in Portugal via Donegal to Wexford; and EV2, the 'Capitals Route' running from Moscow to Galway via Dublin.



Photo: IrishCycle.com

Each of these developments has created a certain momentum behind the redevelopment of cycling cultures in Ireland. As advocates and campaigners, it is our job to seize these opportunities and ensure that any shifts in thinking, behaviour or policy can be advanced further. For more information on cycling advocacy in Ireland, contact Damien on damien.otuama@antaisce.org.

As car sales slump across Europe, bicycle sales are outpacing cars — a trend seen across much of the Continent. It seems Millennials aren't interested in buying cars. In Spain, for the first time since records began, more bicycles were bought than cars (780.000 vs. 700.000). The same is happening in Italy, Germany, Great Britain and pretty much every country but Belgium and Luxembourg. . Meanwhile in Ireland, CSO data tells us that approximately three times as many new bicycles are imported into Ireland each year than cars. For example in 2013, 227,426 bicycles were imported compared to 74,300 new cars.

The Network Effect

The Potential of an Integrated Transport Network



AUTHOR
James Leahy is a Chartered Civil Engineer and has an MSc in Sustainable Development (2008) from DIT, where he did a thesis comparing investment options for bus, bus rapid transit and light rail transit in Dublin. He respresents the environment on the Dublin City Council Transport Strategic Policy Committee and is also An Taisce's Honorary Secretary. Secretary@antaisce.org

GET INVOLVED

> An Taisce is forming a transport policy committee and would welcome volunteers or suggestions. We want to publicise well researched and presented alternative visions of how people can move around attracive places in Ireland. We are pulling together proactive proposals for transport here: www.antaisce.org/node/1018. Get in touch to secretary@antaisce.org

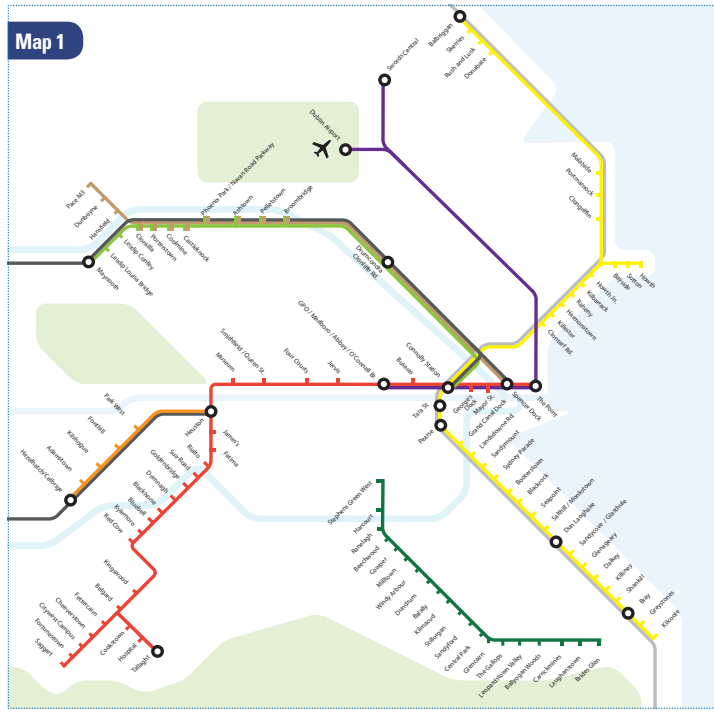
There is an established 'network effect' in transport. If a collection of transport services is integrated into a network, then the increase in patronage by adding an additional service is greater than the increase would be if the additional service was a standalone service. This is because the potential to make trips by transfering between services is increased, improving the attractiveness of the network in general. Once the network reaches a good level of coverage increasing numbers of people will choose to use the network and may choose not to own a private car. This in turn faciliates access to transport for all and the creation of dense mixed use urban areas.

In 2010 I advised a graphic design student from NCAD, Aris Venetikidis on his masters design project where he drew two visionary maps of what an integrated transport network in Dublin might look like. See www.aris.ie for the maps and more details. What has happened since then?

We have made great progress in recent years in delivering public transport. We have a National Transport Authority, the Leap Card, Real Time Passenger Information and new transport services. However, when discussing public transport there is still a tendency to think of construction projects rather than transport services; and there is a tendency to think of transport operators rather than focus on transport services as experienced by passengers. We end up discussing the creation of a DART network plus a Luas network plus a SwiftWay network plus a bus network; when what we need is a Dublin Transport Network.

On the other hand, we've made less progress in integrating the different services. The DART Underground is shelved. Orbital bus routes are as bad as ever. And transferring between different operators is confusing and costly. If you search on www.transportforireland.ie you'll find an integrated map of all frequent transport services in Dublin, but you'll struggle to find this map anywhere around the city. And the map gives up and doesn't try to show where the routes go in the City Centre as it's too complicated. It's been left to a private individual, Colin Broderick, www.cbroderick.me to publish the only clear comprehensive map.

You might say why does this matter, when you can



Existing high quality public transport services

©James Leahy

now go onto Google Maps on your smart-phone, search for an address, click the public transport icon and get clear, accurate information on all the options for getting from A to B using all available services. I argue that the schematic transport map of the city is important: so that citizens and visitors can understand the city and their place in it; and that this is turn is important so that we can imagine and discuss alternative future visions of the city.

AN TAISCE'S TRANSPORT MAPS

In recent public transport consulation submissions, which can be seen on our website An Taisce has been drawing schematic maps of the Government's proposals and An Taisce's alternatives.

The three maps shown here are

1. Existing high quality public transport services

2. The National Transport Authority's Draft Integrated Implementation Plan 2013-2018: Some interpretation was required by the author to guess possible arrangements for projects proposed by the National Transport Authority.

3. Number 2 plus the DART Underground project plus an express Bus Rapid Transit service in the Dublin Port Tunnel plus and An Taisce's proposals to run intercity trains from Islandbridge to the Airport: Trains from Cork would use the existing Phoenix Park Tunnel to Liffey junction, then go via a new tunnel under Glasnevin to the airport, overland to the Balbriggan Line, and on to Belfast. The advantage of these proposals are that they provide a long-term plan for Ireland's inter-city rail network, maximising existing rail and Port Tunnel infrastructure. The Airport and inter-city line stops in the city centre at interchanges at Liffey Junction and Islandbridge thereby connecting services across the entire city and country.

DUBLIN HAS CHOICES TO MAKE

Other arrangements could be drawn. The point is not so much the detail as the concept of an integrated network. The hope is to facilitate democractic engagement on transport. Developing transport strategies and policies is often presented as a technical choice between alternatives that can be modelled in a computer model of the city. If we feed in preferences from stakeholder consultation and run the model we'll get the most efficient answer. Politicians are happy to hide and pretend that the decision is a technical one, when in reality it is a deeply political choice between different alternative visions of the city.

Transport is vital for quality of live, which in turn is vital for competitiveness. Before investors in Dublin wanted out of town campuses. Now they are going for city centre locations and competing to attract employees. And these employees are comparing the quality of life in Dublin with Zurich or Copenhagen or Amsterdam. In the future it will not be enough to provide jobs in Dublin to keep Irish graduates living here. We will need sell the city as a place to live or people will leave for more attractive options.

An Taisce is developing its alternative vision of an attractive, liveable competitive city focused around a dense integrated network of passenger focused services across the Dublin urban area.



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The National Transport Authority's Draft Integrated Implementation Plan 2013-2018



©James Leahy

Number 2 plus the DART Underground project plus an express Bus Rapid Transit service in the Dublin Port Tunnel plus and An Taisce's proposals to run intercity trains from Islandbridge to the Airport

Key

- DART
- DART
- DART
- DART
- DART
- Luas Red
- Luas Green
- Swiftway Bus Rapid Transit 1
- Swiftway Bus Rapid Transit 2
- Swiftway Bus Rapid Transit 3
- Port Tunnel Express Bus Rapid Transit
- Commuter Rail
- Commuter Rail
- Intercity Rail: Belfast - Dublin Airport - Dublin - Limerick - Cork

NEWS VIEWS & REVIEWS



HELSINKI'S AMBITIOUS PLAN TO MAKE CAR OWNERSHIP POINTLESS IN TEN YEARS

The Finnish capital has announced plans to transform its existing public transport network in ten years by allowing people to buy mobility in real time, straight from their smartphones The app would function as both journey planner and universal payment platform, knitting everything from driverless cars and little buses to shared bikes and ferries into a single mesh of mobility. Imagine the popular Dublin bus app fused to a cycle hire service and a taxi app such as Hailo with only one payment required, and the whole thing run as a public utility!



STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE CYCLING AND WALKING ARE GROWING IN MANY TURKISH CITIES

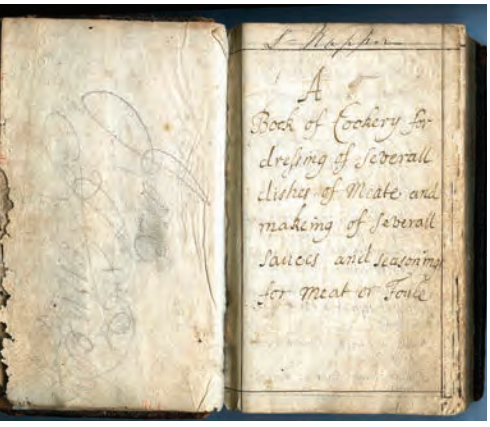
İzmir, Karşıyaka , home to more than 300.000 people, is promoting sustainable transport through pedestrianisation projects, safe bike lanes and bike-sharing systems, and integrating public transport systems. The bike-sharing system has 311 bicycles in 29 bike stations serving the city's 40 km of bike lanes and attracts 80,000 people.

Istanbul has also committed to expand its bike lane network to 1,000 km 620 miles) by 2023. "The Istanbul Historic Peninsula Pedestrianization Project" released by EMBARQ found an 80% approval rate from the students, residents, and local businesses in the Peninsula. The study also found an increased feeling of safety around local businesses, which is vital for local businesses as customers are more likely to longer and buy more.

Extracts from articles by Hande Küçükco kun on the excellent website: thecityfix.com.
Photo by Marko Anastasov/Flickr.



'Smarter Travel – A new Transport Policy for Ireland' adopted overarching targets on curtailing car use and set out 49 specific actions. No 49 was to provide biennial reports on progress of the policy to Government starting in 2010. After the appointment of Tom O'Mahony as Secretary General of the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport implementation of the policy was largely abandoned and no progress reports were carried out in 2010, 2012 and 2014.



BOOK REVIEW:
A BOOK OF COOKERY,
for dressing of several dishes of meat and making of several sauces and seasoning for meat or fowl
By Hannah Alexander
Edited by Deirdre Nuttall
Introduction by Jennifer Nutta

- Published by Evertype, County Meath, 2015
- 238 pages
- ISBN 978-1-78201-074-6

This three hundred year old recipe book is full of surprises. Not only for the vast array of ingredients that would not be out of place in a modern trendy food market, but also for the fascinating introduction. Jennifer Nuttall, a descendent of the author Hannah Alexsnder, has written about food culture in Ireland in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, including stories from Alexander's family who lived in Dublin and Wexford. Irish food is not all about potatoes, nor does it exclude the import of exotic fruit and spices bu we can see in these recipes just what can be doe with local produce. Highly recommended by the An Taisce Editor.
For background information please contact deirdre.nuttall@adverbage.com

10m

The transport industry directly employs more than 10 million people across Europe, accounting for 4.5% of total employment, and represents 4.6% of Gross Domestic Product. Manufacture of transport equipment provides an additional 1.7% GDP and 1.5% employment.

Source: Eurostat.



Car registrations increased by over 30 per cent last month, compared to January 2014. Figures from the Society of the Irish Motor Industry show that nearly 30,000 new cars were registered and it is predicted that there will be between 105,000 and 115,000 new car registrations this year. Commercial sales are also up significantly on last year with over 5,703 new commercial vehicles registered last month, an increase of approximately 57 per cent on the January last year.

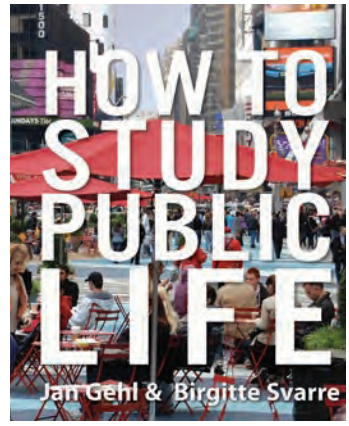


The municipal council in Rome's city centre recently voted to ban parking on the via Urbana in a move that will effectively pedestrianise the area. Every street has been turned into a car park. Renato Gargiulo, president of the Urbanamente association, has been campaigning for months to rid cars forever from Via Urbana, a beautiful cobbled street in Rome's Monti district. This is the first step in a broader campaign to change the way locals and tourists experience the city's tight, winding vicoli (lanes) – where pedestrians are forced to dart around honking cars and buzzing scooters.

@what_if_dublin is a new Twitter-based web platform, initiated by a collective of young architects, designers and urban researchers, which invites the Public to participate in a debate on the actual urban questions of their City.

Comissioned by the IAF and sponsored by St. Patricks Festival and Irish Design 2015 a selection of questions starting with "What if Dublin..." previously posted and discussed on twitter, were brought out into the physical world during the four days of St. Patrick's festival.





BOOK REVIEW:
HOW TO STUDY PUBLIC LIFE
Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre

- Published by Island Press, 2013
- 200 pages/Full color/57 illustrations
- ISBN-13: 978-1610914239

Jan Gehl is now a well established celebrity but he has many notable achievements in his repertoire and is very well worth reading. In this work, with Birgitte Svarre they are focused on measuring the effectiveness of projects to improve public life and use a five fold barometer as indicators – is a place lively, attractive, safe, sustainable, and healthy? In How to Study Public Life Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre provide a history of public-life study as well as methods and tools necessary to recapture city life as an important planning dimension. It is extremely practical with useful research notes. Most studies are from Gehl's practice, which now goes back over 50 years, but they are not limited to his work alone and include notes on time-lapse photography in New York City as well as newer studies that use GPS and computers to learn about the behavior of people in urban spaces.

An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

cyclist.ie the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network

ECF
EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION



An Taisce has teamed up with...

Cyclist.ie - the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network to employ a part-time National Cycling Coordinator, Damien Ó Tuama, thanks to funding provided by the Brussels-based charity the European Cycling Federation. Find out more at

www.antaisce.org/issues/cycling-development

or

www.cyclist.ie

To support this Cyclist.ie is offering An Taisce members **half price membership of Cyclist.ie** plus your regional group for

€10

To join up go to:

www.antaisce.org/offers

Regional Groups: As below plus Cycling in Kilkenny, Limerick Cycling, Sligo Cycles, Skerries Cycling Initiative, Dingle Greenways Group, Great Southern Trail, NI Greenways / CTC NI, Kerry Bicycle Festival.

DUBLIN CYCLING CAMPAIGN

MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Cork Cycling
A VOICE FOR CORK'S EVERYDAY CYCLISTS.

CLONAKILTY BICYCLE FESTIVAL
JUNE 4TH-8TH 2014
IS MAITH LIOM MO ROTHAR