

11th October 2001

Transport Minister Commends Bike-Rail Champions

Champions of the integration of bike and rail travel were recognised at a ceremony at Marylebone Station in London today, receiving awards from Transport Minister the Rt. Hon. John Spellar MP.

The award scheme, 'CycleMark', is being sponsored in 2001 by the Strategic Rail Authority. It recognises those who have made a special effort to promote the integration of cycling and rail travel, and is administered by the Bikerail consultancy.

Winners were selected by an independent, expert panel, chaired by railways expert and keen cyclist, Christian Wolmar. They were:

Best Operator - Anglia Railways
Best Individual - Grace Nichols, Sustrans Scotland
Best Station - March, Cambridgeshire (Central Trains)
Best Whole Journey Experience - Country Lanes tour operator

A number of other companies and individuals were commended for their efforts.

Presenting the awards, John Spellar said:

"Traditionally, the railways and bicycles have not been good bedfellows. I am pleased to say that this is changing. This is attributable not just to centrally co-ordinated schemes, but equally to the independent initiative of train companies, local authorities, interest groups and, not least, individuals. The Government's 10 Year Transport Plan lays out a strategy to achieve a major shift from car to public transport. Practical initiatives at railway stations for the use of bicycles are one of the ways in which this multi-modal travel can be achieved."

Chris Austin, SRA Executive Director for External Relations, said:

"Balancing the needs of a wide variety of user groups requires innovative ideas and determination. Today's winners have shown particular effort and initiative in meeting the needs of cyclists as passengers, who are increasing in number on the railways for leisure, business and commuting. With initiatives like CycleMark, and teamwork with cycling groups, the SRA is progressively achieving a major advance in provision of facilities for bike users."

Adrian Shooter - Managing Director of Chiltern Railways, the hosts at Marylebone - said:

"As a previous winner of the CycleMark Award, Chiltern Railways is delighted to host today's event. On behalf of all train operators, I can confirm that the industry recognises the importance of good facilities for cyclists on our trains and stations. Initiatives by Chiltern Railways include sturdy cycle racks; security patrolled cycle parks and a specially designed area for the secure transportation of cycles on our new Clubman trains."

CycleMark 2001 Awards

BEST INDIVIDUAL

Winner: Grace Nichol, Sustrans Scotland - Based in Edinburgh, Grace has put in a special effort to encourage bike-rail integration across Scotland, in particular focussing on facilities at smaller stations, and encouraging the sensible location of bike racks and improved staff training to assist cyclists.

Commended: Jonathan Denby, Corporate Affairs Director, Anglia Trains - Jonathan has gone beyond the call of duty in facilitating the needs of cyclists on Anglia's network. Nominated by a representative of the region's Rail Passenger Committee, he is widely recognised as someone who takes an extremely positive attitude to cyclists, acting as a strong advocate of bike-rail integration.

Commended: Kelsham Hannah, Station Agent, Llandrindod Station - Kelsham is highly knowledgeable on bike-rail arrangements in general, particular with regard to the nearby National Cycle Museum. He is frequently observed providing assistance to passengers with bikes.

BEST OPERATOR

Winner: Anglia Railways - The company has shown continued commitment to cyclists over a number of years. Its record began with modifying trains to carry bikes; offering cheaper bike fares on local lines; and launching the innovative cycle rescue scheme - a form of breakdown assistance for cyclists, free to cycle ticket holders. It has continued the momentum, becoming the first train company to work with the Rail Passengers Council to install cycle parking at all of its stations.

Commended: Cardiff Railways - Staff on Cardiff Railways have been consistently helpful to cyclists. The company has worked with the Brecon Beacons park authorities and other organisations to encourage cycle usage, and permits bikes to be carried on its services outside peak times at no additional charge.

BEST STATION

Winner: March, Cambridgeshire - This is a model station, which works in partnership with Central Trains, Railtrack, Cambridgeshire County Council and Sustrans. Well thought-out infrastructure improvements have been implemented, including a new link from the station to national cycle route No. 63 (March to Wisbech) and twenty new cycle stands adjacent to the platform and the station entrance. A new disabled ramp allows passengers to comfortably wheel their bikes into the station.

Commended: Bristol Temple Meads - A new dedicated cycle bridge has been erected at the station, and bike racks have been located conveniently next to the main platform. These measures have significantly enhanced facilities for cyclists.

BEST WHOLE JOURNEY EXPERIENCE

Winner: Country Lanes - This Hampshire-based tour operator has shown great enterprise in promoting cycling holidays in the New Forest, Cotswolds, and Lake District that integrate seamlessly with train services - as well as airlines. The staff have shown great business sense and a successful marketing strategy: an example to others of just what can be achieved in creating environmentally-friendly, profitable businesses

**For further details contact the Department for Transport Rail Press desk:
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