

Life in the Bus Lane

Summer 2003 Newsletter

GREAT NEWS FOR NORTH DEVON STUDENTS!

The "Life in the Bus Lane" project is to continue for another year! This means that students at North Devon College, and Bideford and Ilfracombe Sixth Forms will pay just **£125** for their transport in September 2003! This is the fourth year that students at these colleges have had their transport subsidised by the Rural Bus Challenge. Students in other parts of Devon will be paying £240 for their transport this year!

For £125 students can purchase a smartcard which will provide them with a "free" journey into college and a "free" journey home, half price travel after 6 pm on college days and half price travel all day at weekends and during college holidays. **As in previous years, students who apply and pay, or show proof of receipt of a means tested benefit, before 4 July 2003 will receive a smartcard by 1 August 2003. This will provide the extra bonus of half fare journeys throughout the summer on the local bus network within the project area. However, students who apply and pay after 15 August 2003 may not receive their smartcard in time for the beginning of term and may have to pay daily on the buses until their smartcard is received!**

TEMPORARY PERMITS WILL NOT BE ISSUED SO PLEASE APPLY EARLY!

Under 3 Mile Smartcards

Students living less than three miles from college can also purchase a smartcard. The cost is £125 for the year and is paid to "First". **There is no fee waiver for these cards.** However, these smartcards provide the same benefits as smartcards for students who live more than three miles away.



Connexions Card Merger

The "Life in the Bus Lane" project has been chosen to pilot transport on the Government's new Connexions card. The Connexions Card is being issued mainly to young people aged between 16 and 19, though some students up to 25 may qualify.

Young people who attend a college registered as a Connexions Card learning centre will be awarded points, which can be redeemed for a wide range of rewards. The Card can also be used to get on-the-spot discounts from local shops displaying the Connexions card logo.

Student details and photographs will be collected during the summer of 2003 and Connexions Cards issued.

Regular photo sessions will be held at North Devon College to enable any current students, who do not already have a Connexions Card, to obtain one. This is particularly important for students returning in September who will need a smartcard to travel by bus as the two smartcards will be merged during the autumn term.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND A SESSION TO HAVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AND OBTAIN A CONNEXIONS CARD BEFORE YOU LEAVE COLLEGE IN JULY.

Education Maintenance Awards

From September 2004 students in North Devon will return to paying the same travel fees as all other students in Devon. However, this rise will be offset by the fact that, also from September 2004, many students in North Devon will be able to apply for Education Maintenance Awards (EMAs). EMAs are means tested and provide weekly payments which are linked to college attendance.

Don't Forget Your Smartcard!!!

An increasing number of students are forgetting to carry their smartcards! Many bus drivers have been allowing the students to travel in to college, whilst warning them they need to obtain a temporary permit to get home. Temporary permits are not intended for this purpose and drivers are being instructed not to carry students in to college without a smartcard. **However, in an emergency they will carry students home to avoid any student being stranded.**

Therefore please ensure that you have your smartcard each morning before you leave home. **If you do not carry your smartcard you will have to pay for your bus journey.**

If your card fails to work on the bus, the bus driver may confiscate it to make sure it is repaired. If this happens ask the driver for an unpaid ticket, which you should take to the Travel Centre in A23 at North Devon College as early as possible in the day. Temporary permits, for use until the card is returned, will then be available for collection at the end of the college day, at 4.15 pm. Students at Bideford and Ilfracombe College should go to their admin office for assistance.

Additional Sunday Services

From 25 May "Life in the Bus Lane" will provide extra Sunday services as follows:

- **Barnstaple to Croyde**
- **Whiddon Valley to Woolacombe**
- **South Molton to Lynton**
- **Roundswell to Ilfracombe via Barnstaple and the North Devon District Hospital.**

For more details please ring **Traveline on 0870 608 2 608**

Transport Focus Group

If you would like the opportunity to discuss any problems you are having with your transport, or to suggest any ideas you may have for improving the bus services, then you may be interested in joining the Student Transport Focus Group. This Group meets once a term, usually with a representative from "First" who will answer any queries you may have.

If you would be interested in joining the group please call into the Travel Centre in A23 and have a chat with Marcia, the College Travel Co-ordinator.

"Life in the Bus Lane" Travel Audit 2003

In March 2003 a travel questionnaire was sent to all full time students at North Devon College, and the sixth form students at Ilfracombe and Bideford Colleges. There was an excellent response with over 1,000 questionnaires returned.

The results from the questionnaire provide useful information on student travel patterns and will be used to produce a Travel Audit and Report for the project. Audits were also carried out in 2001 and 2002 and will be used as a comparison with the results of this year's audit.

A similar audit, carried out in 1999 was used to secure funding for the "Life in the Bus Lane" project. Therefore this information is important in helping to keep the cost of student transport down.

The first page of the questionnaire contained the student's name, which was entered into a prize draw for £25 of gift vouchers from Boots. The photograph below shows Nerys Cadvan-Jones, the Manager of Boots, Barnstaple picking out the winning entry.



The lucky winner is **Daniel Braund**, a full time student at North Devon College. Daniel is 17 and lives in Bideford. He is studying Computing and Information Technology. Daniel will be presented with his prize at the next "Life in the Bus Lane" Steering Group Meeting in May.

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