

Spokesworker is an occasional ("roughly monthly") news sheet, with stop-press news of forthcoming events, and of road, traffic and planning matters. It is not automatically sent to all members. A copy is enclosed if we are writing to you anyway, and copies are handed out at working group meetings. You can make sure to get a copy by sending us 10 or so stamped addressed envelopes. Spokesworker also appears on our Internet web site - to be notified of such updates by email, contact spokesATspokes.org.uk.

Latest: TRAM TROs

IMPORTANT!!! The tram Traffic Regulation Orders consultation is Feb22 - Mar21. For details and how to object see edinburgh.gov.uk – transport – publictransport – trams – TRO consultn. If there's too much to look at, concentrate on the places you use most. They cover banned turns, parking restrictions, etc [e.g. no left from Lothian Rd; Constitution St no-entry - we want Kirkgate alternative]. We may put more info in another spokesworker soon.

Staffed exhibition (with experts): City Chambers, High Street, Feb 22-Mar 20, 11am-3pm Mon-Sat [open till 7pm Thurs]

Libraries: The plans will also be available at these libraries – Central, Portobello, Leith, W Hailes, Blackhall, McDonald Rd.

If you send in an objection please copy to Spokes asap so we can consider including your points in our objection.

CONSULTATIONS SOON

PRINCES STREET FUTURE

Cllr Mackenzie Edinburgh Council Transport Convener said [15.10.09]: *"The Director of City Development is modelling six options, offering varying degrees and combinations of enhanced pedestrian facilities in Princes St/ George St area. The outcome of modelling should be known in Jan 2010. Full pedestrianisation, with inclusion of trams and cycles, will be one of several options considered for Princes Street. ... in preparation for a consultation process over the next few months. ... There will be an interim report detailing the outcome of the traffic modelling and feedback from this phase of consultation in the first half of 2010."*

PICARDY PLACE: A CYCLIST-NEGLECT ZONE

See news item Spokes 106, p3. This is a critical location for many cyclist trips, and is scary. We have fought hard on the proposed design, many members wrote in, and we got minor concessions - but cars, developers and the tram get top priority, with cycling to be fitted in as well as it can be after that – the whole area designed with a UK mindset, quite unlike Denmark or Netherlands where safe, pleasant cycling conditions would be a **basic requirement** from the outset! Further plans are likely soon, based on the recent 'development principles' [see Spokes 106].

EDINBURGH OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

Consultation on the draft strategy is expected to last from late March to mid May. *To get on the mailing list to be notified of the consultation* email openspacestrategy@edinburgh.gov.uk. For details of the current position, including a report on the initial consultation see www.edinburgh.gov.uk/openspacestrategy.

FOR YOUR DIARY

See Spokes 106 for more dates.

Mar 4 St James Centre – past and future. Cockburn Assn mtg at Scottish Storytelling Centre, High St, 7.30. Book in advance (£5) 557.8686. See news item on p2 of Spokes 106 for latest on provision for cyclists in the new development. The meeting may be an opportunity to raise this. There are problems, but **many useful opportunities if grasped** – e.g some tramline alternatives, potential accesses to & through the development including from and between York Pl, St Andrews Sq, Princes St/East End, and (with steepness problems) Picardy Pl. For this to happen we/you must keep a watchful eye and keep reminding councillors etc.

Mar 23 Edinburgh Cycle Action Plan: Spokes public meeting. Full details in Spokes 106 and on website. Or Jackie 664 0526.

Mar 28 North Edinburgh Path Cleanup See link on Spokes website [left column] or phone 07786 632114 or email edinburghcyclepathcleanup@hotmail.com. Also Water of Leith and towpath cleanups – see Spokes website for links.

Jun 13 Sustran Two Capitals Ride. Dunfermline-Edinburgh (25 miles). www.twocapitals.org. Money goes to school cycling equipment. lisa.black@sustran.gov.uk, 524 5159.

June 22-25 Velo-City 2010, Copenhagen global conference for campaigners, experts, decision makers across the world to discuss the potential and challenges of cycling. www.velo-city2010.com.

CAPITAL RAIL ACTION GROUP – CRAG – three meetings below, all 7.30p.m. at Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terr.

Mar 2 Borders Railway Steve Milligan, Transport Scotland. A chance to ask about bike carriage, access routes to stations, and preservation/enhancement of existing bike routes. [Note also the comments re. Transport Scotland in Spokes 106 p7].

Apr 6 Green Transport Patrick Harvie, Green MSP, convener of Parl't Transport Cttee. A chance to ask about cycle funding: did Green MSPs make this a priority in budget negotiations? And what should be in the Greens 2011 Holyrood election manifesto?

May 4 High Speed Rail Claire Keggie, Transport Scotland.

DONATIONS

The Spring mailout is our main annual membership renewal time. **If there is a computer-printed renewal form in your mailing, you are due to renew for 2010 according to our records. You must return the form to us, even if there are no changes to the information on it, in order to be renewed for 2010.** If there is no renewal form in your envelope, then you are already a 2010 member, new or renewed, and you need do nothing.

When you renew we greatly appreciate a donation – Spokes has no fixed membership fee, and we depend very largely on donations and map sales. However, if you are very hard up we still welcome your membership – you can support us by lobbying your councillors or MSPs occasionally – that's worth a great deal!

At present we can't accept **Gift Aid** as we are not a charity. We are looking into this, but there are minuses as well as benefits.

Members increasingly ask to donate to Spokes by standing order, BACS or online – see below. We hope also to set up PayPal, but first have to transfer our website to a new provider.

We hope eventually to set up **online membership**, but this is complex owing to our large membership (not all of whom are online) and the many uses we make of our existing database (e.g. to enable emails to members in specific areas about local matters).

You can make a renewal donation in 3 ways:

a. Enclose a cheque payable to Spokes when you post in your renewal form. This is the traditional method, still used by the vast majority of members. We are quite happy with it.

b. Set up a standing order to Spokes. *If you do this, please also post in your renewal form, and write on it that you are setting up a standing order.* If you wish to use a standing order, email spokesATspokes.org.uk **with your name and postcode** to request a standing order form. We will email it to you in a format readable by Open Office or by Microsoft Word. If you don't have email and would like a paper copy, please let us know.

c. Make a BACS online transfer to our account. *If you do this, please also post in your renewal form, and write on it that you are making a BACS donation.* If you wish to use BACS, email spokesATspokes.org.uk **with your name and postcode** to say you wish to do this. We will send you a standing order form as in (b) as this has the details you need to use BACS.

ONLINE TO DO

IAM CYCLING SURVEY The Institute of Advanced Motorists [which attempts to raise driving standards] is taking a growing interest in cycling. Please consider responding to their **online survey** at www.iam.org.uk/iam_polls – **closing date 10 March**. Unfortunately the survey is mainly ticking boxes, but the question on 'what should be done to help cyclists' has a text box. The list of options omits presumed liability* and suggests compulsory helmets* – you could use the text box to comment on either point. If you wish to make further constructive comments on the survey, and what it does(n't) allow you to say, the IAM has a cycle contact person – see the cycling tab at the top of their site, then 'contact.'

*For more on presumed liability, see Spokes 106, p12, and for evidence on compulsory helmets see www.cyclehelmets.org.

POST OFFICE BIKES Petition to retain post office staff's right to use a bike [ends 29 Mar]. petitions.number10.gov.uk/Royalmailbikes.

ROAD MAINTENANCE SURVEY Edinburgh council has an ongoing survey which you can complete any time. It [and other consultations] are at www.edinburgh.gov.uk – council – consultations.

TENEMENT BIKES

Spokes is very aware that cycle storage problems in tenements and flats are reducing potential bike use for everyday travel. We have applied to the Climate Challenge Fund for a project to produce and promote information on storage improvements – including **in-flat, in-stair, onroad, backgreen** etc, along with other options to support tenement dwellers such as **folding bikes**. The project will also look at bike storage standards for new-build.

The project aims to assist individuals, community groups, developers and public authorities achieve domestic bike storage/parking in tenement/flatted areas, through...

(a) information (paper and online) detailing practical storage options, useful organisations, the process to follow to achieve the installation of equipment etc., following thorough research

(b) a plan to achieve cycle storage improvements across the city, over time. We hope consequent cycle storage improvements will result in increased use of bikes for everyday journeys, reduced car use, and lower bike theft and other storage-related problems.

The project will apply across Edinburgh, with particular focus on areas of high residential density such as Marchmont and Leith. The materials resulting from the work will also be shared with local authorities and other relevant bodies throughout Scotland, to create awareness (and use) of the online information by cyclists and potential cyclists facing similar problems elsewhere.

A number of bodies have already offered support - the Council, Edinburgh Community Backgreens Assn, Sustrans, Bike Station, Greener Leith, various Community Councils and others.

Information on your or other existing flat/tenement storage solutions, photos of facilities etc, would be very welcome.

If you have ideas or are interested in helping to develop this project, please email katherine@tusks.org.uk/667 5576.

AND NOW WE ARE 30

The 2010 Edinburgh-St.Andrews ride is June 19th [01968 682369].

Here longstanding Spokes member Harry Henniker [no.1 on our membership database!] recounts its fascinating history.

[slightly edited to fit the space available]

“The next annual **Edinburgh to St Andrews Cycle Ride** will be the 30th ride. You might be interested in how it started. If any single person started the ride it is **Sue Downie**. In 1980 she was the chairperson of the Events Group of **Spokes**.

At the time Spokes was campaigning for the first cycle paths in Edinburgh (cycling was even banned on Middle Meadow Walk!) Mostly we organised political stuff, but Edinburgh politician Cllr Brereton was making out that cyclists were just a small bunch of wierdos. A big charity cycle ride would show this to be wrong.

We wanted the ride to be organised by cyclists for cyclists. Once it was put about that a mass cycle ride was planned plenty people came to help. This included people from **Spokes, CTC** and a bike shop called **Recycles**. The latter was the workers cooperative later re-named **Edinburgh Bicycle**. They agreed to provide a repair crew for the ride – and have done ever since.

But where was the destination to be? The preference was for a small town a reasonable distance away, preferably by the sea. It had to be near a railway line. Berwick upon Tweed was discussed but that was in England. **St Andrews** was finally decided on, with hopefully, trains from Leuchars returning cyclists to Edinburgh.

Meetings were held in the Scottish Sports Council offices (now Sports Scotland). We became regulars on the train to Fife as we checked out the various ways you might get to St. Andrews. Negotiations started with **British Rail** for a special train to return cyclists to Edinburgh. This cost an eye-watering amount but we reckoned if we managed to fill the train we could afford it.

We certainly had plenty of volunteers for the day. This was just as well as we planned to station someone at every road junction on the route so nobody got lost. The starting point was the foot of The Mound in Princes Street. At that time the police were quite happy with that, they even agreed to close Princes Street for us.

Finally the day came. The repair crew arrived in fancy dress (Noddy and Big Ears). During the first hour it became obvious that a lot of rusty bikes had not seen the light of day for some time. Bike after bike had to be fixed in Queensferry Road. There was a complete absence of Lycra (not invented yet) and no mountain bikes (not invented yet either). Bicycles were mostly traditional touring bikes or sit up and beg Dutch style machines. Quite often the latter were pedalled by ladies in skirts. It wasn't entirely dry either. While GoreTex did exist, most participants hadn't heard of it so we arrived in Kinross for lunch fairly damp.

During the earlier rides bicycle brakes weren't quite as efficient as today. Some cyclists were relatively inexperienced. These two factors, combined with the wet conditions meant that not everyone got down **Cleish Hill** in one piece.

Once, an ambulance had to be called. Fife police, who were generally great, became quite concerned. **Kinross Town Hall** was being used as the food stop. Those inside heard a senior police officer demand to know who was in charge. Mobile phones of course did not exist so not much could be done. Someone suggested the repair crew would be here soon – perhaps he could speak to them. Unfortunately when Noddy and Big Ears arrived he was not impressed. As the afternoon went on we found out that fortunately the injured person was not seriously hurt.

Falkland Youth Hostel (now closed) was the next tea stop. By this point many of the cyclists were suffering in various ways but nobody was going to give up easily. The finishing point was, as now, the bandstand at the **Bow Butts**. This was the centre of a vast operation allocating cyclists to sleeping spaces in churches in St Andrews. Not too many people wanted to go home immediately because there was the ceilidh to go to.

Leuchars station the next morning was a sight to see. *At that time British Rail had the ability to provide a train that was capable of carrying many hundreds of bicycles. The train that rumbled into Leuchars had eight guards vans.*

Over the years the ride has had a number of crises. Perhaps the biggest was when British Rail told us that due to the progressive scrapping of rolling stock they could no longer provide a special train. At one time we hoped to hire a ship to return the cyclists to Leith but this proved too difficult, so we hit on the present solution of buses and removal vans.

The ride has not always been run for Lepra. Early on it was for a charity for the disabled. The reasoning being that we should assist those less mobile than ourselves. When this folded we cast around for someone else to help, eventually choosing Lepra because people with leprosy are disabled, and because Lepra often used bicycles in India and Africa to get around.

It's impossible to know exactly, but over the years perhaps 25,000 people have cycled from Edinburgh to St Andrews raising money for a good cause. This has transformed the lives of an even greater number of people. We hope you will come on the ride in 2010. It has a great atmosphere and you'll be doing yourself and at least one other person a bit of good.”