

*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](mailto:spokesATspokes.org.uk).*

## LOCAL AREA NEWS

**Christian Path in Portobello** is to be upgraded by Sustrans, and so is expected to be closed to the public for 6 weeks as from Mon 13 June. Further info: [lan.imaxwellATgn.apc.org](mailto:lan.imaxwellATgn.apc.org)

**North Meadow Walk** As mentioned in Spokes 110 the council is this year to draw up plans to raise 3 important Meadows area routes to 'family network' standard: **canal to Meadows**; along **North Meadow Walk**; and **Meadows to Innocent path**. Hopefully some or all of these will then be implemented next financial year, 2012/3. We understand design work for North Meadow Walk is now beginning and will be consulted on in the next few months - we will inform local members at that time. Meantime if anyone has major queries/comments the council contact is [mike.trotter@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:mike.trotter@edinburgh.gov.uk) 0131-469-3628.

**Incidentally, whether any/all of these projects are built next year will depend heavily on government decisions on funding for cycling projects. If you want projects like this to happen, please read the articles on funding in Spokes 110, and contact your new MSPs telling them why this matters to you.**

### Edmondstone: between Old Dalkeith Road, The Wisp and Ferniehill Road

**Public exhibition - June 14, Danderhall Library, 2.03-7pm**

**If this area concerns you please attend the exhibition and leave written comments.** [Further info from Peter Hawkins, who supplied these notes [peterhawkATphonecoop.coop](mailto:peterhawkATphonecoop.coop) 443 6712].

Developers have lodged a 'proposal of application' (the stage before a planning application for large developments) (reference 11/01471/PAN Edmondstone) with Edinburgh council for a huge development (60ha?) here, including a retail food store, hotel, up to 200 residential units, and infrastructure. Currently the boundary is a track running from opposite Ferniehill Rd northwards, past the ruin of Ed. House, then east to emerge at The Wisp almost opposite Ed. Road (NB the Spokes map is quite inaccurate here!) It's a beautiful estate, with lots of woodland, and rocky outcrops, but shut off from the outside world. It's tricky cycling because the land is elevated, but there is potential for a route from the SW corner (opposite F'hill Rd) to the NE corner, and perhaps also an east-west route, since there's a lot of development in the valley below, to the west, with RIE-related medical research.

## STRICT LIABILITY

**See article on p8 of Spokes 110, then please ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 1393.** Its excellent wording is as follows...

*"That this House acknowledges that many other European countries have much better cyclist and pedestrian safety records than the UK; recognises that these countries apply the principle of stricter liability to vulnerable road victims, so that drivers of vehicles that hit cyclists or pedestrians are assumed liable unless they can prove their innocence; believes that this makes drivers more aware of the vulnerability of children, cyclists and pedestrians; notes that, in contrast in UK road traffic personal injury cases, the burden of proof is on the victim to prove the other party was negligent; is aware of research that shows the fatality rate of cyclists aged 10 to 14 involved in collisions with motor vehicles is five times worse in the UK than in the Netherlands and Sweden; and calls on the Government to bring road traffic personal injury legislation into line with workplace health and safety law, product liability law and car passenger protection by adoption of the principle of stricter liability."*

## FOR YOUR DIARY

*See Spokes Bulletin 110 for more dates and more info*

**June 10 Oxfam Humankind Index for Scotland 11-1**, event at Scottish Parliament, to discuss developing an index of wellbeing. More info and to book (free): [humankindindex@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:humankindindex@oxfam.org.uk).

**June 22 SPOKES BIKE BREAKFAST** - see [www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk)

**Sep 24 International Day of Climate Action** - see p2 article.

## MIDLOTHIAN

### ROSLIN/LOANHEAD-STRAITON [& EDINBURGH]

[Article & photo from Spokes member David Wardrop-White]

Midlothian Council, with Sustrans match-funding, has built 1.8km of traffic-free tarmac cycling and walking path from the former Loanhead railway station to Straiton Pond. This provides a 5km route from Roslin (near Rosslyn Chapel) to Bilston Viaduct, Loanhead and the nature reserve at Straiton Pond, where an existing path also provides a connection to Straiton Retail Park.



It is understood that Edinburgh City Council is considering how best to provide a direct link onwards to the Edinburgh cycle network [CEC Transport Cttee 8.2.11] which will offer new leisure and commuter options. Eventually it is hoped the route will extend also to Shawfair, a proposed new development just south of Danderhall, with cycle links to eastern Edinburgh.

### TRUNK ROAD CRAZINESS at DALKEITH BYPASS

[Article by Spokes & CTC activist Peter Hawkins]

Cycling is allowed on Dalkeith North Bypass, which terminates as a T-junction with the Edinburgh City Bypass (A720) on which cycling is not allowed. When cyclists reach the north end, they are told to do a U-turn and return, a distance of 1.4km, and a 20m height difference. Transport Scotland [the government agency responsible for trunk roads] even built a pair of 'jug handles' so that cyclists can cross the carriageway at right angles here.

Only 250m from the end of the road is a farm track tunnel under the City Bypass. This track leads north and onwards to Millerhill and is the obvious potential cycle route. Over a year ago TS reluctantly agreed to ask Midlothian Council to negotiate with the landowner for the 250m link to the tunnel, after pressure from CTC-S and Spokes. Nothing more has happened, and TS say only that it is their "intention to make a connection" - but no timescale.

This is a ludicrous situation and suggests a disturbing attitude to cycling by the TS trunk road developers.

**If this situation affects and concerns you, please raise it with your new MSPs [find them at [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)].**

# HEALTH & SAFETY

## Do the Health Benefits of Cycling Outweigh the Risks?

Yes! - and this research says by a factor of 11 to 1. Search for 'health benefits of cycling' at <http://journals.lww.com/epidem>.

## European Cycling Federation *Road Safety Charter* seeks

- ◆ comprehensive cycling infrastructure
- ◆ using rate-based targets for cycling which measure safety in number of kilometres cycled
- ◆ adopting the "Safety in Numbers" principle, which says that the more cyclists on the road, the higher the level of safety.

[http://www.ecf.com/4408\\_1](http://www.ecf.com/4408_1) – press release

[http://www.ecf.com/4029\\_1](http://www.ecf.com/4029_1) – ECF Road Safety Charter

## Road Danger Reduction Forum *rdrf.org.uk*

A sceptical view of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety – including a picture of helmeted child pedestrians! [May 22 news item at the above web address]. According to RDRF the Decade is largely funded by the motor industry - "*powerful bodies committed to increased dominance of road building and motor vehicle use throughout the developing world, with all the health and environmental problems that would bring.*"

RDRF also points out that **UK launch of the Road Safety Decade** by David Cameron featured 2 celebrities who between them have 4 speeding offences (including one at 144mph in France, and one driving at 50mph in a 30mph zone in Britain) and a conviction (in Australia) for reckless driving.

## Sustainable Development Commission

Recently abolished by the UK and Scottish governments, one of their final reports was ***Fairness in a Car-dependent Society*** [www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1184](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1184).

### *Press release about the report...*

The Commission on Integrated Transport has described the UK as the most car-dependent country in Europe, and a report by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) argues that the UK's dependence upon the car has contributed to substantial and persistent social inequalities. In its report, the SDC has proposed that transport policy-makers at all levels adopt its Transport Hierarchy to help them to prioritise reducing the demand for transport, encouraging more sustainable modes of transport, and improving the efficiency of existing modes of transport over increasing the capacity of the transport system.

While the SDC's report acknowledges that high levels of car ownership and use have brought benefits to the UK public, the report's authors argue that "these freedoms have been obtained at a substantial price, and one that falls most heavily on the poorest and most vulnerable in society." The report found that vulnerable groups - including children, the elderly, and low-income groups - travel less than other people and carry a greater burden of the costs of other people's travel, including air pollution, noise, traffic danger, injury and crime. Other findings include:

- ◆ The richest 10% of the population effectively receive four times as much public spending on transport as the poorest 10%.
- ◆ Children of the lowest socioeconomic groups are up to 28 times more likely to be killed on the roads than those at the top.
- ◆ Car owners in the lowest income quintile spend 25% of total household expenditure on motoring (by comparison spending 10% of income on energy is defined as 'fuel poverty').

The report recommends a new approach to transport policy in line with the Coalition Government's commitment to fairness as one of its three guiding principles. Central to the report is the SDC's Transport Hierarchy for policy makers, and the authors recommend the Government and the Devolved Administrations adopt the transport hierarchy approach and promote its use at all levels of transport decision-making as a tool to ensure that the most sustainable and fair transport solutions are prioritised. Other recommendations include:

- ◆ The Government and the Devolved Administrations should improve the handling of social and distributional impacts in transport decision-making. Changes made should be monitored to assess whether they are leading to fairer outcomes.
- ◆ In order to tackle unfairness in society, the Government and the Devolved Administrations should make reducing transport inequalities a specific goal of transport policy.

# WORLD FUTURE

## CO2 EMISSIONS IN 2010 - "*The worst news...*"

World CO2 emissions in 2010 rose by a huge 5% over 2009. Chief Economist at the International Energy Agency, Fatih Birol, told the Guardian, "*I'm very worried; this is the worst news on emissions.*" Temperature rises over 2 degrees now seem likely by 2100 bringing huge problems worldwide, 40degree temperatures in England, and a strong possibility of London being flooded.

[www.iea.org/index\\_info.asp?id=1959](http://www.iea.org/index_info.asp?id=1959)

[www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/may/29/carbon-emissions-nuclearpower](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/may/29/carbon-emissions-nuclearpower)

## CLIMATE – International Day, September 24

[article by 350edinburgh@googlemail.com, 0788 4125540]

The theme for this year's 350.org International Day of Climate Action is 'Moving Planet.' In Edinburgh on Sat 24 September we'll be 'moving on' from a climate problem (the proposed site for the Leith Biomass Plant) to take our messages to Holyrood - sustainably of course. But we really need your help!

The aim of the event is to demand a sustainable energy future for a world below 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide, which is what scientists consider the safe upper limit in the atmosphere.

Please get in touch if you and / or your organisation are willing to help mobilise cyclists and other forms of sustainable transport - the more creative the better.

More info: <http://www.350.org>. Email/phone as above.

<http://www.moving-planet.org/events/uk/edinburgh/311>

## PEAK OIL - UK Oil Shock Response Plan

[www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2072738/exclusive-government-develop-oil-shock-response-plan](http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2072738/exclusive-government-develop-oil-shock-response-plan) **Press release...**

"Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne is to develop an '**Oil Shock Response Plan**', following a meeting with ITPOES [UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security].

The group, which was formed by Arup, B&Q, Buro Happold, Solarcentury, SSE, Stagecoach and Virgin, and campaigns for greater awareness of the economic threat presented by dwindling oil supplies, said that the meeting had proved "constructive" and had helped to advance the energy security dialogue.

Huhne agreed that DECC and ITPOES would work together on peak oil threat assessment and contingency planning. Details are yet to be agreed, but the group is expected to be tasked with modeling some of the impacts if, as growing number of experts fear, global oil supplies peak within the next five years.

Members of the taskforce said they would also explore steps that would need taken now to protect the economy "**if we knew now that the oil price would soar to \$250 in 2014**". Oil prices have been over \$100 a barrel recently, driven by rising demand plus supply fears over ongoing Libya and Middle East unrest.

However, growing numbers of experts in and outside the oil industry have voiced fears that there is insufficient spare capacity for oil producers to respond easily to growing demand, with figures such as IEA chief economist Fatih Birol suggesting that global oil supplies could peak in the near future.

**The taskforce members also revealed that Huhne had called on them to present their concerns to the Chancellor and Treasury - a meeting that the group is now seeking.**

A DECC spokesman told BusinessGreen that the department will publish a formal "call for evidence" from interested parties in the near future as it develops the *Oil Shock Response Plan*."

## SCOTLAND'S ROLE

Despite a few encouraging signs [see lead article in Spokes 110] there is also great cause for concern, not helped by First Minister **Alex Salmond**'s recent speech to Parliament laying out plans for the first session. No mention of the Climate Change legislation, its targets, or the RPP with its concrete steps to meet the targets [[www.scotland.gov.uk/News](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News) 26 May, also link to full speech].

**Renewables** are mentioned, but seen more as a path to economic growth than in a climate change context. His **Future Travel Fund** will have little impact on cycle investment – £10m a year to cover low-carbon vehicles, bus, bike and walk. Maybe £1m of that will get to cycling: a tiny sum given that current cycling investment is around £20m, and should be at least £50m if government is serious about its bike use target [Spokes 110].