

1977-2017 : 40 years of Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign

WHAT IS SPOKES??

With over 1000 members, we fight for better cycling conditions, as part of an integrated transport, public health & environmental policy, and to encourage more people to use bikes more often for utility and leisure.

SPOKES OBJECTIVES

- To encourage cycling as part of an environmentally sustainable transport and access strategy.
- To encourage other organisations, including councils and government, actively to do the same and to make high quality provision for it.
- To educate all sections of society in the benefits of cycling for the community and for individuals - like walking, it is cheap, efficient, enjoyable, healthy, non-polluting and intrinsically safe.

LESSONS AND TACTICS

- Encourage *individuals* to contact politicians and the media – it's vital to our philosophy and our success!
- Don't just criticise – *praise where you can* and try always to make criticism constructive.
- *Continuity and consistency* – success may take time, even a long time - so don't give up on important aims.
- Be flexible - *seize opportunities* as they arise.
- Work at *national, regional & local levels* if it helps locally - each feeds on the other, e.g. national budgets.
- Do *practical stuff* too – maps, stalls, rides, paths, etc.
- *Avoid cynicism* – most politicians / officials genuinely do wish to benefit society, at least as they see it.

EDINBURGH 1977 : CAN YOU IMAGINE?

	2017	1977
What people think	Cycling is healthy; I'd love to cycle	Cycling is outdated; only for eccentrics
Bike facilities	200 miles of bike paths/lanes, 125 miles traffic-free; protected road routes appearing; 4000 public bike parking spaces.	Virtually nothing; cycling banned even through the Meadows; zero onstreet bike lanes; no public bike parking.
Commuter trips	~8% are by bike	~1% were by bike
Cyclists killed or serious [KSI]	~30 KSI per annum [deaths ~1]	~70 p.a. [despite the very low bike use]
Miles cycled before KSI	~1,100,000 [from Edin Bike Life report]	~60,000 [estimate via the data above & left]
No. of lifetimes before KSI	~15 [assumes 75,000 miles cycled in lifetime]	~1 [i.e. you could expect one serious injury]
Edinburgh bike campaign community	EdFoC, PoP, CCE, Bike Station, ABC, Sustrans, Council ..	FOE Edinburgh – active but tiny!
Council cycle investment	10% of transport cap. & rev. budgets	Zero

Photo/cartoon credits: Chris Hill, Stuart Threlfall, Jerry Neville, Dave du Feu, Tim Smith, Colin Baird the Cycling Scot

SPOKES

40 YEARS IN TWO PICTURES



Meadows 1977



Meadows 2017

1983 First major success when the iconic Meadows Cycleway opens! An ultra-cautious first design by engineers new to cycling, but the start to a great commuting corridor, and vital to reduce the toll of some 10 cyclist injuries a year on surrounding roads.



THE 1980s

North Edinburgh railway path network, Haymarket to Leith with no road crossings. A fantastic leisure facility with some commuting, but largely invisible to the public.



In 2000 road plans were to cut the path: we fought for a bridge

THE 1990s

Extensive onroad coloured lanes/ASLs. Today some question their utility, but they were then politically feasible and a major step forward, *reminding every road user every day that cycling is legitimate and a real form of transport* - not just for eccentrics. Bike commuting nearly doubled.



THE 2000s

Decade with some severe government and council cycling reverses - but tough and eventually successful fightbacks.

THE 2010s

Completion of long-distance commuter routes such as Edinburgh-Fife and Edinburgh-Midlothian - and the start of urban main road segregated provision, as below.



1977-2017 a Spokes bikeography

Autumn 1977 - FOE holds a meeting to decide how to grow cycle use in Edinburgh. Soon, **Spokes** is formed.

1977 Our first letter from the then 'Highways' Dept...
"Pressure of other work in the formulation of major transport policy has precluded any action on cycling so far." In those far-off days there was not a single onroad bike facility, and in just 3 years there were 39 bike injuries near the Meadows, where using a bike was banned [*Case for a Meadows Cycleway*, Spokes 1978].

1978 Spokes Bulletin no.1 - *"Cycling has been neglected by council policies too long. Many people who would cycle feel the roads are too dangerous. Millions of pounds are spent providing for cars, but nothing is done to encourage the healthiest, most efficient, safest method of personal travel after walking."* [Spokes editorial]

1978 Spokes Bulletin no.2 - **The Council Planning Committee Chair who put Spokes on the front page!**

"Spokes can get lost and take its commie friends with it. Who wants a proletarian dictatorship anyway? Ralph Brereton, Conservative Councillor for Marchmont, and proud of it" [Scotsman, 5.5.78].

There was a huge public response and Cllr Brereton thought again! - **the first of countless examples of individuals helping Spokes by contacting politicians or the press, showing the public concern. Encouraging you to do this is vital to our philosophy and our success**



1979 Spokes 5 - Canon Bill Brockie introduces an early Spokes rally [Spot future Chancellor **Alistair Darling!**]



1979->83 Spokes 6 & 18 - Our Middle Meadow Walk cycleway campaign took 5 years. **Lesson: continuity & consistency are vital.** Here early Spokes activist David Bellos lobbies Cllrs Cairns & Gorrie.



1980->83 Spokes 7 - Scandal at the Scottish Office. Spokes hits the UK press! We reveal that civil servants have been banned from railing-parking at super-ugly New St Andrews House - because bikes don't look nice! In 1983 Sheffield racks were at last installed [Spokes 17].

1980 Spokes 8 - We campaign to get the Sheffield rack adopted as council bike parking standard - later modified to the 'Edinburgh' rack with second horizontal bar.

1981 Spokes 11 - First onstreet Sheffield racks opened in Chambers Street by great early supporter **Cllr Willie Roe**.

1981 Spokes 12 - Lothian Regional Council buys **North Edinburgh disused railways** from British Rail; agrees a path network, following Spokes's *Rails to Trails* report. Edinburgh City opens Warriston path, bought earlier.

1983 Spokes 18 - At last!! **Middle Meadow Walk** opens.

1983-86 Spokes 18-29 - Fight against **Western Relief Rd** plan, Tollcross to M8, with spur along Roseburn path.

1983 Spokes 20 - Massive 2-year lobbying effort [Spokes 13-19] highlighting Scottish Office cycling neglect brings huge achievement - **John Grimshaw** appointed by Scottish Office and Lothian Region to prepare reports on cyclistroute opportunities. So begins **Sustrans Scotland!**

1985 Spokes 26/27 - Grimshaw reports on Scotland and Lothian, the basis for much future work and campaigning!

1986 Spokes 28+33 - We persuade Lothian Labour Party to include a **full-time cycle team** in its election manifesto. One of our most valuable ever political achievements.

1986 Spokes 29 - Spokes builds the 1km **Pilton Path** in a frenetic week under John Grimshaw [spot him in photo], a true inspiration - and a true slave-driver! Our council credibility grows hugely. **Cllr Ron Muir** cuts the ribbon.



1987 Spokes 31 - Our first Edinburgh Cycle Map!

1987 Spokes 33,31,28 - Lothian Regional Council creates 3-person Cycle Team. The cycle budget, previously underspent by £100,000s(!) now *rises* as the team grabs and uses underspend from roads projects. Action also begins on (time-consuming) onroad bike lanes and ASLs.

1988 Spokes 36 - Lothian Regional Council specifies bike parking requirements for future planning applications.

1990 Spokes 42 - Our first article on **Climate Change**.

1990 Spokes 43 - The Secret of Eternal Youth - Our first article on the growing evidence of **health benefits**.



1991 Spokes 45/46 - We instigate a massive campaign when ScotRail bans bikes between Scotland's main cities!! In 4 weeks the ban is rescinded!

THE SCOTSMAN

IT IS not often that a specific group of customers persuades a major industry to change its policy. But the bicycle lobby has just done that. It has forced ScotRail to end its ban on cycles on its 158 expresses after only four weeks. The campaign has been brief, noisy and spectacularly successful, ending with the network's managers agreeing to schedule more spaces for bikes on their services.

1993 Spokes 51 - Waverley die-in over new ScotRail bike fee, quadrupling some local trip costs.



1996 Spokes 61 (& 52-60) - Perhaps our biggest disaster: Tory gov't scraps the Regional Councils. End of Lothian Cycle Team, lost expertise for new mini-councils, severe setback to cycle & transport development across Scotland.

1996 Spokes 61/62 - under Transport Minister **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton**, the Scottish Office responds to years of lobbying, with policy and actions on cycling.

1996 Spokes 63 - Our first **councils funding survey** finds bike money squeezed while government trunk roads soar.

1997 Spokes 64 - Edinburgh Council Transport Convener **Cllr David Begg** proudly opens **Princes St bike lanes**.



1998 Spokes 68 (& 51+) Our 4-year campaign succeeds! **ScotRail scraps the £3 bike fee**, wins the government Cycle Challenge, and puts £2m into train bike spaces.

1998 Spokes 69 - Mound bike lanes open.



2000 Spokes 74/75 - We survey MSPs & embarrass govt into cutting the new Parliament's car space plans 136->65.

2000 Spokes 76/77 Sustrans 5000-mile UK Network opens. Local festivities include Spokes Bikefest rally.

2001 Spokes 78/79 - **Sarah Boyack**, Transport Minister and Spokes member, modifies the Public Transport Fund to prioritise cycle/walk/PT integration and creates the CWSS fund .. so Scottish cycle funding doubles 2001->6.

2001 Spokes 80 - We jointly host the Velo-City2001 conf.

2002 Spokes 83 - George Street is closed for carfree day - and the ubiquitous Spokes stall is there.



2002 Spokes 83/84 - The Bike Station opens at Waverley

2002->present Spokes 83-> The long & unending bike/tram integration fight begins ... many setbacks to come!

2003 Spokes 86 (&->96) - We correctly predict plunging cycle funds by 2005, due to abolition of Public Transport Fund. The Scottish government pays no attention - yet!

2006 Spokes 93 (& 88->) - We fight the new 'streetscape' fashion which threatens bike promotion/safety, tries to ban coloured tarmac & does ban Princes St bike parking.

2006/07 Spokes 95 (& 86->96) - Our government funding campaign at last succeeds, turning likely collapse into growth for Sustrans and Council projects across Scotland.

2007 Spokes 98 - **We are 30!** We launch Glasgow bike map and 8th edition Edinburgh map [nearly 100,000 sold]. The Council holds a reception - here Dave du Feu praises the council and challenges them for the future!



2008 Spokes 99-106 - Disastrous early budgets under new SNP govt: £4.6m SEStran cross-boundary cyclistroute plan ends (e.g A90 path delayed many years); Sustrans cash 50% lower than under previous Lab/Lib government; and huge rise in trunk road spending.

2008 Spokes 100 - Mound car parking banned

2008 Spokes 100 - Bikes 20% of all citybound vehicles in our rush-hour Lothian Road traffic count.

2009 Spokes 103 - Scottish Govt announces 2020 target, 10% of all trips by bike - but cash is down from last govt!

2010 Spokes 107 - Transport Convenver **Cllr Mackenzie** on why bike use up in Edinburgh when static in Scotland.

2010 Spokes 108 - Decade ends well!!! Edinburgh Council's first Active Travel Action plan; & Scottish Govt reverses its previous Sustrans cash cut.

2011 Spokes 109 - Our tenement storage project and factsheet - now included in Council Planning Guidance.

2012 Spokes 112 – Superb Edinburgh Council decision, *unique in UK*, to allocate 5% of transport budgets (capital & revenue) to cycling, rising 1% a year until 10%. Thanks to LibDem Transport Convener **Cllr Gordon Mackenzie**.

2012 Spokes 111-112 – Major campaign by Spokes, Transform, SCCS & others drastically reduces a Scottish Government proposed 33% cycle/walk funding cut.

2012 Spokes 112 – Princes St traffic-free all December!



2012 Spokes 113 - New Lab/SNP coalition continues the % policy with new Transport Convener **Cllr Lesley Hinds**

2012 Spokes 113 – First **Pedal on Parliament**, 3000 people - big media coverage & parliamentary motions result. Spokes donated seed-corn funding to help first PoP.

2013 Spokes 115/6 – We petition for walk/cycle/tram only in **Princes St**, but then have to fight a shock City Centre consultation which would ban Princes St cycling.

2013 Spokes 115 – Council starts gritting main offroad paths - thanks to the revenue budget 10% cycle element.

2013 Spokes 116 – At last [see also 2008] cash assembled for the complete **A90 cyclistroute** Edinburgh-Forth Bridge.

2013 Spokes 117 – After long campaign & some upsetting cases, Council approves our garden sheds factsheet.

2014 Spokes 118 – **Protected E-W route** plan revealed.

2014 Spokes 119/120 – Scottish Govt cycle cash up from ~1% of transport spend to ~1.9%, but big lack of clarity.

2014 Spokes 119 – **Meadows public bike counter**.

2015 Spokes 121 – Council decides on **city-wide 20mph**.

2015 Spokes 121-7 - Start of long, finally unsuccessful, campaign against scrapping Saturday & offpeak bus lanes.

2015 Spokes 121/2 - Abellio win ScotRail franchise: more bike parking, bike hire, but train-spaces problems to come.

2015 Spokes 122/3 – **Tram bike-carriage**, a *UK first* and culmination of many years' determined lobbying. If only we'd had similar success on tramline layouts - Thomson solicitors are now handling over 100 tramline crash cases.

2015 Spokes 123 – Major campaign restores cycling into Waverley. Big political support, notably **Jim Eadie MSP**.

2015 Spokes 123 – **First onroad segregated provision**, part of Meadows-Innocent route, opened by **Cllr Hinds...**



2016 Spokes 126 – Controversy re E-W segregated route. Roseburn support group born. All parties finally agree after **Cllr Hinds** leads negotiations [spokes.org.uk 16.12.16].

2017 Spokes 127 – We use our **Bike Alert** video & leaflet with over 2000 sixth-years at young-driver sessions.

2017 Spokes 127/8 – Major Spokes & #WalkCycleVote campaigns achieve Lab, SNP & Green election manifesto promises to keep Edinburgh 10% cycle budget policy.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Our bikeography timeline doesn't reveal the host of other regular activities by our many dedicated members. The **planning-applications scrutiny**, **summer competition**, **traffic counts**, **bike breakfasts**, etc, etc ... and ...

STALLS – promoting Spokes and our aims at festivals, public meetings, farmers' market, etc. This one in 2002...



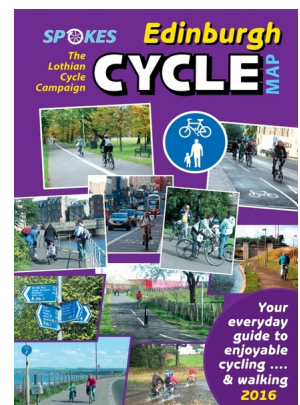
SPOKES MAPS

- ♦ Edinburgh
- ♦ Midlothian
- ♦ East Lothian
- ♦ West Lothian

Over 130,000 sold, and an almost embarrassing series of compliments - see some of them at spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps.

"Your maps are superb"

"Among the finest cycling maps"



SUNDAY RIDES - Explore, dream, discover



BULLETIN & MAILOUTS – 13,000 copies printed of each Bulletin [[see spokes.org.uk/bulletin](http://spokes.org.uk/bulletin)] ...

- ♦ distributed mainly by bike in Edinburgh & Lothians
- ♦ by 40-50 volunteers, *including...*
- ♦ 1000+ to named decision-makers (e.g. all MSPs)
- ♦ 2500+ to members who volunteer to leaflet bikes
- ♦ 1500+ to a wide variety of relevant organisations
- ♦ 5000+ to bike shops, libraries, etc for the public.

PUBLIC MEETINGS – 3 a year on relevant topics, with informed and articulate audiences 60-120 strong.



If you support what we do ...

PLEASE JOIN SPOKES!!

Download form at spokes.org.uk/membership