

SPOKES 2011 'CYCLING SOLUTION' COMPETITION

Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign www.spokes.org.uk 0131 313 2114 [twitter-SpokesLothian](https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian)

Our 2011 Spokes summer competition asked for cycling challenges or problems you'd experienced or heard of – and how to solve them. A mundane everyday problem, a one-off disaster, something exotic - anything significant in your cycling life. We hoped the competition would spark suggestions useful to others, and so it proved!

Many thanks to all who entered, for such a range of ideas and inspiration - from the simple to the bold, from the "why didn't I think of that" to the frankly ludicrous! Thanks too to the competition organisers and our outside assistant judge, **Ged Holmyard** of Edinburgh Bike Coop.

First was longstanding Spokes member **Ken Morrison**, a senior social worker in Fife, whose challenge was to visit places all over the county without excessive car use - bad for personal health and for the planet. Ken's solution is taking his bike by rail and cycling from the nearest town. **What is special** is that many people think bike/rail is a hassle; but, as Ken shows, if your trips are mainly off-peak and in an area with good services, then bike/rail is a great way to get to a wide range of local destinations. And it allows working/preparation time on the train and keeps you healthy without spending time & money on gyms etc.

Second was **Euan Renton** whose bike had been stolen from his garden shed. Euan provided detailed, cheap and simple instructions for making a door more burglar-proof, making it difficult for a thief to lever off hasp, hinges, etc.

Third was **Mark James**, who has brought up a large family in a rural town without a car, thanks to a wide range of bikes and trailers. His entry is truly astonishing – read it! - and even though you probably can't fully emulate him, you're bound to get inspiration/ideas from his experiences.

Some of the other highlights are summarised below...

Practical tips

- use 'armadillo' puncture-resistant tyres: will save a lot of grief mending punctures.
- if you've no clip for your D-lock, hook it round your seat post and through the rear rack, if you have one.
- fed up with wet feet? Put plastic bags over your socks!
- cable-ties to fix small problems like loose mudguards, temporarily fitting accessories etc. Carry a few with you!
- John Franklin's book *Cyclecraft* is very useful on cycling practice and skills, especially if you're inexperienced or helping inexperienced riders (incl children)
- use a cheap canvas tarpaulin/plastic sheet, tied against wind, to shelter your bike, e.g. when away from home.
- stop your expensive bike being stolen by getting a cheap second-hand everyday bike, e.g. from the Bike Station

Bike storage

- to avoid handlebar marks on walls in stairwells/porches, paint a 6" wide black gloss border at handlebar height
- to avoid marks on floors/carpets from dirt or drips wheel your bike into a large sheet or inverted canvass bike cover
- if space is really tight, esp indoors, turn the handlebars round parallel to the frame

Cycling for everyday trips such as for work

- give it a go; don't assume driving is the only option! Start with short, easy journeys and you'll be amazed how soon longer journeys seem not just possible but normal.
- Use waterproof panniers to carry smart clothes to change
- rail and bike are a great combination – see 'First' above
- if cycling to meetings, phone in advance about storage
- to transport loads, many trailers are available - or get a bespoke one - e.g. from Intermediate Technology.

Widening cycling participation

- There are many cycling solutions to travel with children: see **Third** above [or spokes.org.uk –documents–advice–kids]
- if you have balance and/or mobility problems, consider a trike, or cycling clubs which help people with disabilities.
- worried about cycling alone? Ask around to find a buddy, or join a local group with regular rides

THE TOP ENTRIES

NB - to see all entries in full, and previous comps, go to...
www.spokes.org.uk – downloads–odds&ends- competitions]

The top 12 entries [with 9 prizewinners] were...

1 Ken Morrison	Getting to places all over Fife
2 Euan Renton [no prize as in Spokes Resources Group]	Bike shed security
3 Mark James	Cycling with loads & children
4 Caroline Barr	Disability balance problem
5 Peter Hawkins	Repairing stone-based paths inaccessible by motor vehicle
6 David Wardrop-White	Cycling to meetings in a suit
7 Alistair Armitage	Being seen in the dark (without spending too much)
8 David Holmes	Avoiding soggy feet if lots of rain
9 Angus Ivory	Cycling to school
10 Katharine Wake	Carrying unplanned shopping
11 Andrew Johnson	Using busy roads with a child
12 Oliver Brookes	Handlebar marks on hallway

PRIZES - Top prizewinner has first choice of prize, and so on till all are claimed

Scottish Seabird Centre	www.seabird.org	Family ticket
Jupiter Artland	www.jupiterartland.org	Family ticket & couple-ticket
EDINBURGH BICYCLE COOPERATIVE 	www.edinburghbicycle.com	Revolution workstand [£89.99 rrp]
Sustrans	www.sustrans.org.uk	Set of all Sustrans Scotland maps
ScotRail	www.scotrail.co.uk	Return 1 st for two between any 2 Scottish stations
Lothian Buses	www.lothianbuses.com	Ridacard for 4 weeks travel
Camera Obscura/ World of Illusions	camera-obscura.co.uk	Family ticket
Kalpna Indian Vegetarian Restaurant	www.kalpnarestaurant.com	Meal voucher for 2