

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 spokes@spokes.org.uk.

PRINCES STREET

Our campaign for Princes Street to be tram, pedestrian and cyclist only [Spokesworker 16.3.09 and 31.3.09] is being received remarkably positively at the highest decision-making levels.

If you have already contacted your councillors – thank you!! As a direct result several councillors raised this with transport convener **Cllr Phil Wheeler**, who then asked for a report from the Head of Transport. Cllr Wheeler replied to a Spokes member that his email “mirrors a lot of the messages that have reached me.”

The impending report then prompted press articles [“the idea emerged from cycling lobby group Spokes” - Evening News] with reporters obtaining views such as these...

Rob Winter, Princes Street Traders: “If the main thoroughfare is safer and more appealing it would have a positive effect on the whole environment.”

Simon Guerin, Visit Scotland Regional Director: “It would help promote Edinburgh around the world.”

Cllr Steve Cardownie, Deputy Council Leader: “Pedestrianising Princes Street would be great for the city and would allow us to compete with the likes of Paris, Barcelona and Prague.”

Nothing is certain however! George Street traders may be against, **Lothian Buses** are against, and the **Association of British Drivers** “really can't see any reason for not opening up Princes Street to all vehicles including cars once the trams are running.”

It is thus vital to build up widespread understanding amongst all councillors of the support for the idea, and what it would mean for the city. If you haven't yet contacted your councillors, please do so. [Get names and contact details at www.edinburgh.gov.uk. Send us any useful replies].

Point out the benefits for the city, and phrase your message so that cycling is prominent. Even though Spokes raised the idea, cycling could easily slip down the agenda now that the 'big boys' are involved. For example, don't say 'pedestrianise' – instead refer to Princes Street being 'tram, pedestrian and cyclist only.' Mention cycling when you are saying what you'd like to see – for example, pavement cafes, links with the Gardens, a safe and quiet environment for shopper **and** a high-quality European-style cycle route alongside the Princes Street tram tracks.

EUROPE MATTERS

European 2009-2014 elections are on 4 June [europarl.europa.eu/elections2009]. The **European Cyclists' Federation** has issued a 10-point policy [www.ecf.com/3456_1] including 10% of transport spend going to cycling, upping the status of EuroVelo bike routes, lower VAT on bikes, and creating less dangerous car fronts.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

We'd like a Spokes volunteer to email Scottish European candidates, asking which of the 10 points they will support if elected, and for any other actions they would take to support cycle use if elected. You'd also need to collate the results and get them to us by May 22, to go in our summer mailout *spokesworker* (and website). In the elections, Scotland is just one constituency, with 7 MEPs, so to minimise effort you could just email the top 3 candidates on each party list. Hopefully you might then also have time to send out reminders to non-respondents.

If you can volunteer, contact davedufeuATgmail.com a.s.a.p.

STOP PRESS - CONSULTATIONS

The long-overdue **Cycling Action Plan for Scotland [CAPS]** and a **Climate Change Adaptation Framework** will be published for consultation this week. See www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations.

FOR YOUR DIARY

See Spokesworkers 16.3.09 and 31.3.09 for more events

May 30 Spokes Summer Mailout – to deliver a pile of envelopes: davedufeuATgmail.com 01506 670165. Usual helpers will be notified.

May 30 To Copenhagen and Beyond conference, Edinburgh 1300-1700. How to prepare and lobby in advance of December's vital world Climate Change talks. Organised by FOE, SCCS and Unison. www.foe-scotland.org.uk/copenhagenconference.

Jun 12-21 Ireland sponsored ride www.maternityworldwide.org/pages/ireland-bike-ride-challenge.html 01273 682241.

Jun 13-21 National Bike Week www.bikeweek.org.uk, includes...

Jun 17 Spokes Bike Breakfast jackiehATwaitrose.com

Jun 20 Edinburgh-St Andrews sponsored ride 01968 682369 www.lepra.org.uk. Bus transport back for you and bike.

Jun 20 [night] Edinburgh Moonwalk for cancer charities – adult cycle volunteers needed for mobile support. www.walkthewalk.org.

Jun 21 StoryBikes Edinburgh-Portobello 2-5pm with stories en route by Spokes member Andy Hunter. Tickets on sale 556 9579. Day & week tours also. www.storybikes.co.uk 07762 000039.

Jul/Aug Ecotopia Bike Tour Western Balkans, Serbia to Croatia, taking environmental actions en route. www.ecotopiabiketour.net.

Oct 10 Suffragette Centenary Procession Edinburgh. A cyclist group is welcome with banners, flags etc. To help organise or join in, contact gudecause@peaceandjustice.org.uk or see gudecause.org.uk.

Dec 5 Climate Change Marches in Glasgow and London www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Stern attacks politicians over climate 'devastation'

Part of an article from *The Guardian*, Friday 13 March 2009

Politicians have failed to take on board the severe consequences of failing to cut world carbon emissions, according to Nicholas Stern, the economist commissioned by Gordon Brown to analyse the impact of climate change.

His stark warning about the potentially "devastating" consequences of global warming came as scientists issued a desperate plea last night for world leaders to curb greenhouse gas emissions or face an ecological and social disaster.

More than 2,500 climate experts from 80 countries at an emergency summit in Copenhagen said there is now "no excuse" for failing to act on global warming. A failure to agree strong carbon reduction targets at political negotiations this year could bring "abrupt or irreversible" shifts in climate that "will be very difficult for contemporary societies to cope with."

In a significant break from scientific tradition, not to comment directly on policy, the experts insisted politicians must stand up to "vested interests that increase emissions" and "build on a growing public desire for governments to act". They called for a "shift from ineffective governance and weak institutions to innovative leadership in government, the private sector and civil society".

Katherine Richardson, a climate scientist at the University of Copenhagen, who organised the three-day summit, said: "We have to act and we have to act now. We need politicians to realise what a risk it is they are taking on behalf of their own constituents, the world's societies and, even more importantly, future generations. All of the signals from the Earth system and the climate system show us we are on a path that will have enormous and unacceptable consequences."

Speaking after giving a keynote speech, Stern said he feared that politicians had not grasped the seriousness of the crisis. "Do

the politicians understand just how difficult it could be? Just how devastating four, five, six degrees centigrade would be? I think not yet. Looking back, the Stern review underestimated the risks and underestimated the damage from inaction."

Edinburgh Climate Change Rally 22 April



Some 600 members of environmental, social justice and other concerned organisations, including Spokes [pic], turned up at the **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland** rally to urge Parliament to toughen the Climate Change Bill – including 3% annual CO2 reductions starting immediately as promised in the SNP manifesto – not in 2020 as now proposed [www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland].

The Spokes Bill submission [www.spokes.org.uk – downloads – national] calls for rapid investment in making towns and cities walk and cycle-friendly – recommended as a 'quick win' by **Lord Adair Turner**, head of the UK Advisory Committee on Climate Change in his recent Edinburgh University lecture – attended by Scottish Cabinet Secretary **John Swinney** who had just rejected the Spokes proposal for greater cycling investment in the Scottish 2009/10 budget. We also point out that it's not a question of there being no transport money – trunk road spending increases by over £150m from 2008/9 – it's purely a question of priorities.

Please contact your MSPs about the Bill - ask for 3% annual targets starting immediately, and for action in transport policy.

BIKES/BUS/RAIL/TRAM

Report of Spokes public meeting 25.3.09 on integration between cycling and public transport – notes by Peter H/ Dave dF.

The meeting was one of our best ever, with 100 people present, constructive and amusing talks and useful discussion.

First was an Oxford Cycle Campaign film of a cyclist and bus driver swapping places. Each pointed out the good and bad behaviour of both groups and agreed that tolerance, courtesy and communication, like waves, smiles and hand signals, helped a lot.

Ian Craig - General Manager, Lothian Buses - then gave a very lively and meaty presentation, including a video of himself cycling with a helmet cam to record everyday city experiences.

Reported incident rates are very low [An 'incident' is any complaint alleging dangerous driving, unprofessional conduct or similar]. In 2008 there was 1 incident per 1.25million bus miles. A total of 21 incidents, of which 1/3 were found to be the driver's fault. Buses have CCTV and sound recording.

Driver complaints about cyclists: running red lights, esp at pedestrian Xings; lack of signals; lack of awareness of bus performance (eg rapid acceleration); lack of lane discipline.

Cyclist complaints about buses: pass too close, leapfrog between stops; unawareness at juncs/rbts; encroaching in ASLs.

Please report problems: customer service dept tel 554 4494, mailATlothianbuses.com. *Please report promptly* so that video sound and vision evidence can be used before the tapes are wiped. Drivers have regular training and serious discipline if at fault.

Lothian Buses values cycling as a travel mode – fewer cars, less congestion. Works with Spokes and others to raise awareness – safety posters for staff developed at suggestion of Spokes [posters at www.spokes.org.uk – linked from bus news item]; training info; certificate of performance competence. Joint working for better road conditions eg bus/bike lanes, multi-modal interchange.

Bus drivers are encouraged to cycle to work, to increase their awareness as well as for the usual reasons – new bike park in bus depot already full [picture shown in his video].

Des Bradley - Scotrail Transport Integration Manager outlined **cycle/rail integration benefits:** extends station catchment areas; reduces access time to station; more revenue; provision of bike storage easy/cheap compared to cars.

Scotrail initiatives include: £200K on cycle storage in year 1 of franchise; partnerships with SPT etc for more storage; train refurbishment eg the 322s to N Berwick now carry up to 8 bikes. Links to Sustrans map from Scotrail website; more spaces on Kyle line; Cycle Forum twice yearly; discount on cycle hire being developed and will be linked to stations on website.

Ongoing improvements: better storage on the 158s; new lines eg Airdrie-Bathgate; more info on cycling at stations; Safer Routes to Stations; cycle carriage leaflet; staff briefed on rules.

Good conditions: peak bike carriage allowed; no local service reservations – Strathclyde, Central Belt, Ed to Perth/Dundee.

Gavin Murray (TIE – tram developers)

Tram mock-up on Princes St – bike carriage try-out 13 March – [Spokesworker 16.3.09]. 2 bikes to be carried offpeak – but depends on initial tram experience to identify peak hours and safety issues. Folders can be taken aboard as luggage from the outset.

Company TEL will run trams and buses jointly, with common branding, fares and tickets and info.

Photos showed onroad provisions – e.g. 'jug handle' or road markings to enable bikes to cross rails at right angles.

Bike parking at tram stops, with CCTV coverage.

Neil Anderson from TPI was then introduced by Gavin – TPI has been taken on by TIE to look at detailed cycle/tram issues. On-route, this is mainly scrutiny of Traffic Regulation Orders and Safety Audits, but they plan off-line signed routes for cyclists who wish to detour to avoid tram tracks, as in Sheffield, Nottingham, etc. – eg alternatives to Leith Walk, and to the West. [Spokes note: we are pleased with this belated appointment as TPI seems knowledgeable about cycling issues]. Neil noted that some on-route roads will have less traffic, eg Leith Walk, whereas parallel roads will get more. There are opportunities to improve NCN routes, and offer routes into the city and out to the west. Training and leaflets for cyclists (and tram drivers re cyclists) will be produced.

Question and answer session

1 to Scotrail: Could bike reservations be online, as with NXC? **A:** good idea, but was looked at, and costly - will look again.

2 suggestion: cyclists and bus drivers – get eye contact if poss.

3 Cycling Scotland would like to use the work Lothian Buses have done with Spokes re cycling, especially the posters for drivers, and apply it to other bus companies across Scotland. LB might also consider Cycle-Friendly Employer Award.

4 to Scotrail – N Berwick trains good for bikes but much space is wasted – could take tandems if re-organised. **A:** unlikely.

5 to TIE – bikes on trams common in Europe, why the trials and delay? **A:** ORR (Office of Rail Regulator) have to approve the scheme, a lot is involved, too much to cope with at time of launch.

6 TPI recommendations – who will pay? is there a funding ceiling? eg one alternative route may involve a busy rbt, costly to replace with signals. **A:** no stated ceiling, but CEC would have to approve TPI's recommendations on cost/benefit basis.

7 Why need for trams? Will fares be interchangeable with buses? **A:** Each tram carries up to 250 people. Increasing demand for public tpt as city grows – eg Waterfront and Leith Docks. Same company will run trams and buses. Day tickets etc will be valid for both modes, and senior cards likely to be valid on trams.

8 Why no bike lanes on tram route, eg Leith Walk? **A:** TIE and Spokes have had several meetings, and efforts were made to find room for both, including bringing over a Dutch consultant. But in the end not possible to satisfy all demands on road space. **DdF** added that Spokes not happy with this outcome, felt central island was taking space which could have been used for a cycle lane.

9 What are the LB regulations for folders on buses? **A:** policy is to accept if bagged up and there's enough room. Regs could be improved to state this more clearly – he will look at this.

10 Problems of buses pulling out – signalling time can be too short. **A:** problem recognised, part of driver training – but not always possible to achieve fine timing.

11 Will tram tracks be solely for trams? **A:** on the roads, mostly no – except at stops and a few other places. In practice, some cyclists will probably ride in the tracks sometimes.