

Thirty Years of Toil and Triumph!!

1977-2007: Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign

1977 - IT REALLY WAS DIFFERENT!!

- Official disinterest in cycling
- Not one Edinburgh onroad cycle facility; cycling illegal in all Edinburgh parks.
- 39 bike injuries in 3 years on roads round the Meadows [Case for Meadows Cycleway, 1978]
- Bike-rail integration on a downward slide

LESSONS AND TACTICS

- Continually encourage individuals to contact politicians and the press - a vital part of our philosophy - and of our success!
- Continuity and consistency - don't expect success at once - and don't give up on really important objectives.
- Be flexible - seize opportunities as they arise.
- Lobby at national, regional and local levels: each feeds on the other.
- Do practical things too - maps, path building, rides, etc.
- Don't just criticise - and try hard to combine criticism with praise.
- Avoid cynicism - most politicians and officials genuinely want to improve society - at least as they see it.

WHAT IS SPOKES??

With 1000+ members, we campaign for better conditions for cyclists (as part of integrated transport, public health & environmental policies); and to encourage more people to use bikes more often, for utility and for leisure.

Photo/cartoon credits

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More info - www.spokes.org.uk.

Autumn 1977 FOE calls a meeting to foster cycle use in Edinburgh. Soon **Spokes** is formed.

1977 First letter from the then 'Highways' Dept "Pressure of work in the formulation of major transport policy has precluded any action on cycling so far."

1978 Spokes Bulletin No.1 - "Cycling has been neglected too long. Millions of pounds are spent providing for cars, but nothing is done to encourage the healthiest, most efficient and safest method of personal travel after walking."

1978 The man 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 massive public response, and Cllr Brereton thought again! The first of countless examples of how ordinary cyclists help Spokes - and make a real difference.

1979 An early Spokes rally [Spot future Chancellor Alistair Darling!]



1979->83 Middle Meadow Walk campaign took 5 years. **Lesson: Continuity/consistency are vital.**



1980->83 Scandal at the Scottish Office. We hit the national press, revealing civil servant rail-parking has been banned at ugly New St Andrews House - because bikes don't look nice! In 1983 Sheffield racks were at last fitted.

1980 We campaign for Sheffield rack to be council standard - later Edinburgh rack with horizontal bar.

1981 First onstreet Sheffield racks opened in Chambers Street.

1981 Lothian Region buys North Edinburgh disused railways and agrees a path network, following Spokes's *Rails to Trails* report.

1983 Meadows Path opens!

1983->86 - Fight against Western Relief Rd, Tollcross/Roseburn-M8.

1983 Massive 2-year lobbying effort on Scottish Office cycling neglect, brings huge achievement - **John Grimshaw** appointed by Scottish Office / Lothian Region to report on cyclist opportunities. So begins **Sustrans Scotland!**

1985 John Grimshaw reports on Scotland and Lothian - the basis for much future work / campaigning!

1986 We persuade Lothian Labour party to promise a **full-time cycle team** in its election manifesto. Our most valuable political success?

1986 Spokes builds the 1km **Pilton Path** under John Grimshaw [spot



him in photo], a true inspiration - and slave-driver! Our credibility with officials grows hugely.

1987 Lothian Region 3-person Cycle Team created. The cycle budget, previously under-spent by £100,000s(!), now rises as the team



grabs underspend from elsewhere. Serious action also begins on (time-consuming) onroad facilities.

1990 We highlight **climate change**



and the growing evidence of the **health benefits** of using a bike.

1991 We instigate a massive campaign when ScotRail bans bikes between Scotland's main cities. In just 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.

1992 Our lobbying, Sustrans, and Lothian's example help spur cycling development across Scotland.

1993->98 Waverley Die-in when ScotRail brings in bike fee, raising some journey costs over 300%. Best ever Spokes photo? [Chris Hill]



1995 Council agrees cycle lanes on Edinburgh's iconic Princes St.

1996 Disaster! Tory govt scraps Regional Councils. End of Lothian Cycle Team, lost expertise for new mini-councils, severe setback to cycle/transport work in Scotland.

1996 Our first funding survey finds council bike money squeezed while government trunk roads soar.

1997 Cllr David Begg proudly opens the **Princes St bike lane**.



1998 ScotRail Delight! - Our 4-year campaign succeeds! ScotRail scraps the £3 bike fee, wins the Scottish Office Cycle Challenge, and puts £2m into bike spaces.

1998 Mound bike lanes open.



2000 We embarrass the govt into cutting car space plans from 136 to 65 at the new Parliament.

2001 Transport Minister **Sarah Boyack** amends PT Fund to boost cycle integration - we constantly highlight this to councils - and creates CWSS fund. As a result, **Scottish cycle spend totals £40m instead of £20m during 2001-6.**

2002 Carfree day in George St.



2002 The Bike Station opens.

2002->present fight begins for the tram - and for bike/tram integration.

2003 We correctly predict plunging cycle funds by 2005, due to abolition of PT Fund. Scottish government pays no attention - yet!

Annual Spokes Bike Breakfast



Often! Spokes rides - Explore, dream, discover!



2005 TryCyclinginEdinburgh seed-funded by Spokes to run stalls and innovative bike promotion.

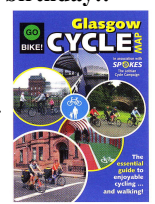
2004->present Coloured surfacing campaign. New *streetscape* fashion threatens cycle promotion/safety, and bars Princes St bike parking.

2006->07 (and on as needed!) Our Scot Exec funding campaign succeeds, turning likely collapse into growth for Sustrans and Council projects across Scotland.

2007 Bikes form **20%** of 8-9am northbound Lothian Road traffic.

2007 It's our 30th birthday!!

We launch our first **Glasgow cycle map** and our **8th Edinburgh map**. Nearly one tenth of a million Spokes maps have been sold since 1987!



The Council puts on an anniversary reception - at which we praise them for work so far - and highlight their many current challenges...

