

1977 to 1986

SPOKES

“It appears that many councillors have never before considered the needs of cyclists, and do not believe that there is a large demand for better cycling facilities. But they are willing to learn.”

– First Spokes Bulletin 1978

1977

Spokes founded

Friends of the Earth hold a meeting to decide how to grow cycle use in Edinburgh. At this time the Council has no cycle budget, there is no on-road cycle provision, cycling is forbidden in parks, disused railway lines are derelict and cycle casualty rates are far higher than today. A group is formed called Spokes.

1978

First Spokes cycle count

20 Spokes supporters from 7:30-10:00am on May 10 and May 12 do a count at 7 road junctions round the Meadows. Results 766 and 1090 cycles.

1981

Railways into cycle paths

Lothian Regional Council buys North Edinburgh disused railways from British Rail. Spokes sets up a new Railways group to press for early conversion to cycle routes and urges the Council to commission the founder of Sustrans, John Grimshaw, to produce a report.

1982

Innocent Railway

Lynda Chalker, Under Secretary of State for Transport, opens the Innocent Railway for use as a walkway and cycleway.

1983

The Grimshaw Report

After Spokes' lobbying John Grimshaw is appointed by the Scottish Office and Lothian Regional Council to report on potential cycle routes, nationally and, in more detail, locally - the beginning of Sustrans Scotland. John Grimshaw's *Scottish Railway Path and Cycle Route* report is published and serves as a blueprint for later cycling developments.

1986

Cycle team promised

Faced with chronic underspending of the Council cycle budget, Spokes persuades Lothian Labour Party to include a cycle team in its election promises.

1986

Making progress

Spokes is regularly consulted by the Council. Cycle use begins to rise. Cycling now has a significant political profile in Edinburgh and the Lothians.



Bulletins

Spokes produces its first bulletin in **1978**. It is now on issue 129.

At election times Spokes holds hustings to get the candidates' views on cycling, and reports on relevant manifesto policies.



Middle Meadow Walk

1978 - Cycling is illegal in all parks, so no Meadows cycle route. Spokes campaigns for five years including a mass slow walk to reflect the slowness of the Council's actions.

March 1983 - the Middle Meadow Walk cycleway opens on the snowiest day of the year. It is at first experimental, then becomes permanent.



Building a path

1986 - Spokes obtains Council funding and permission to build the 1km Pilton railway path, with Spokes volunteers supervised by John Grimshaw. A week of exceptionally hard graft follows.

The new path is opened by Cllr Muir and the Edinburgh Nor' Loch Highland Pipe Band. Part of the 7km car-free North Edinburgh Path Network from Dalry to Leith with a 4km spur to Cramond.



Rallies

During this decade Spokes lobbies and holds annual rallies in Princes Street and elsewhere, attended by 500 – 1,000 demonstrators and by Councillors and MPs. The rallies make the cycling population visible and put pressure on the Council and Government.