

# How The West Was Done

## *A case of many hands making light(er) work!*

By autumn 2017 the 2012 (3rd) edition of the Spokes **West Lothian & Livingston Map** was looking conspicuously out-of-date, mainly due to infrastructure changes. Although a healthy number of 2012 edition copies remained in stock, it was felt that a new edition would be justified.

In the absence of any other obvious candidate, **Tim Smith** (TS), the author/co-author of all three Spokes Lothians maps, was trundled out of his recent retirement to undertake the updating of the artwork itself. Spokes always encourages 'ordinary' members to contribute their time and skills to specific tasks, both for their own satisfaction and also so that 'core' volunteers do not feel overburdened. Therefore, to reduce the workload on TS and to involve local members in the production of the new map, **Dave du Feu** suggested and organised an email to Spokes members living in the map area, asking if they could help with local area content checking and on-the-ground research. This experiment turned out to be very successful.

At an initial meeting of the principals in December 2017, the 12 volunteers were divided into two groups, imaginatively called West and East (the dividing line being set at the 08 N-S gridline on the main map) each with a co-ordinator who would channel feedback to TS. The co-ordinators each subdivided their area into smaller rectangles and allocated each of these to an individual volunteer.

The hard-working co-ordinator for the **West group** (which also covered the Livingston street map on the reverse of the sheet) was **Eric Ingram**, based in Livingston. His volunteers were **Pete Easson, Arthur Elsy, Paul Freeman, Ross Hendry, Angus Meiklejohn** and **John Matthews**.

The equally hard-working **East group** co-ordinator was **Anne Douglas**, based in Balerno. Her volunteers were **Bob Allen, Bob Douglas, Fenella Watson** and **John Wilson**.

The volunteers were enthusiastic and well-motivated, proof of which is that much of the research was started during the cold weather of early 2018. Progress was logged on master maps (one for each side of the sheet), grid square by grid square, to ensure complete coverage.

Meanwhile TS was using mainly online sources to draw the major infrastructure changes already in place, including the *Queensferry Crossing* and approaches, the re-routed *NCN 76* from Bo'ness to Blackness and the *John Muir Way*.

What Spokes believes is a helpful feature of all the recent Lothians titles has been showing proposed developments (usually in broad outline only) due to be started within the expected lifetime of the map edition. For the 2018 WL map these included developments at *Winchburgh, East Calder, Armadale* and *Whitburn* (main map) and several items of new road/path infrastructure and (mainly) new housing (Livingston street map). As well as planning drawings, TS was supplied with much useful advice and help from **Donald Ashwood** at West Lothian Council during this process.

Prompted by a suggestion from Anne and Bob Douglas, TS re-drew the whole area around *Edinburgh Airport* so as to make clearer which parts allow public access, something that had not been obvious on the 2012 edition. Also in this area the route of the *Edinburgh Tram* was added. TS was helped by Spokes member **Alec Mann** to clarify public access around *Craighall Army HQ* and to update the area around the temporarily removed *Burnshot Bridge*.

A very useful addition was to show the whole of the *Forth crossings* (now three in number) and as much of the *North Queensferry* area as would fit on the sheet (using space created by re-arranging text panels). In this, TS was greatly assisted by detailed advice from **Alastair Morrison**, a Linlithgow resident and cycling/walking activist, who also gave guidance on parts of the *John Muir Way* and changes to cycling routes in *Beecraigs Country Park*.

Long-time Spokes stalwart and Spokes Maps co-founder **Peter Hawkins** (PH) handled administration. One major task was to find new printers; *Victoria Litho*, who had printed several previous Spokes maps, had since gone out of business – although we trust this was an entirely unrelated development! PH identified *Dennis Maps*, in Frome, Somerset as the preferred choice. After checking samples of their map work PH and TS opted for the new WL map to be printed on *Enduro*, a tear- and water-resistant paper similar to the *Polyart* used successfully for the recent *Victoria Litho* maps. Although slightly more expensive than ordinary paper, judging by favourable feedback from map customers these products are well worth a little extra on the cover price.

As the map artwork neared completion, the final admin task for TS was to order up a supply of Spokes membership forms from *Barr Printers* in Edinburgh. These were then sent to *Dennis Maps* to be tucked inside the folded copies before these were boxed up and sent to the Spokes map store in Edinburgh, along with some flat copies which Spokes routinely likes to make available for display purposes.

Spokes is very grateful to all those mentioned above, who gave generously of their time and energy to make this a very successful co-operative effort. It may well show the way to go for future Spokes map production ...