

*** Continued from p.1

but not to and through the Lothians. The government says small councils will be more responsive to the public, but even if they want to be, they may be too small to be able on specialist matters like cycling. So, paradoxically, smaller councils could mean reduced local control.

There is a frightening precedent in the abolition of Councils such as Greater London, and Tyne and Wear, some years ago. Cycle teams and projects disappeared overnight, as can be seen from the 1/2-built, 1/2-abandoned South Tyne Cycleway. Total disaster befell the planned London-wide cyclist route network. The small Borough Councils had very varied attitudes, some car-obsessed ones even removing existing bike routes, and planned long-distance routes instead stopped at Borough boundaries.

Many people fear the government is rushing into council re-organisation without adequate study, for political reasons following the poll-tax fiasco. Sir Robert Calderwood, Strathclyde chief executive, said the idea that all public services can be adequately

provided by small councils is "nonsense". Arthur Midwinter, academic specialist on local government, says the present system works well, and that to run major services and their specialisms through small councils would be more expensive and less effective. Of course, there is always fear of change, but Lothian seems a good size for transport decision-making - and the present set-up certainly works remarkably well for cyclists. Strathclyde may be over-large, but to move to far smaller Districts is a very dubious idea.

There is a widespread view that before any re-organisation there should be an independent Commission, to examine the pros and cons of different approaches. The government has turned this down, but promises to consult widely - possibly starting early May.

We urge you to write in to the public consultation, and also to your MP. Seek assurances that specialist services like Lothian's Cycle Unit will continue, with adequate funding and support. And that the Lothians, or city cyclists who visit them, will not lose out. (see p.1 for how to contact your MP).

Jocky Allan Cycles

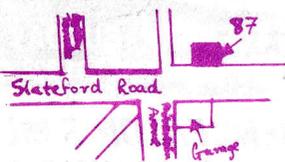


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SPOKES

LEAFLET 45
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Calling all walkers and cyclists . . .

BUILD A PATH!!

SPOKES is to build another cyclist route, in the June 1/2 and 8/9 weekends. The path is **DONKEY LANE**, a crucial 600m. connection from Currie (Muirwood Rd) and the Water of Leith Path to Wester Hailes and Riccarton (see centre-page map). For years we've asked the Council to repair this ancient drove road, and now we've decided to do it ourselves! Edinburgh District Council is providing materials.

If you helped in our 'glorious' 1986 Pilton Path Project you'll not miss this! Something to tell your grand-children about! Our main need is **MANUAL LABOUR**, but other help is also vital - phoning, organising refreshments, etc. (Tea/coffee etc will be available on-site, but bring sandwiches).

PLEASE PHONE NOW: leave your name, phone, address, and the day(s) you will DEFINITELY come (or offer other help). ☎ Peter Hawkins 031-453-3366.

Note: If you enjoy the project, Sustrans needs helpers in other schemes (eg a Clyde walkway link under Rutherglen Bridge). To help, ☎ 041-552-8241.

CYCLE UNIT UNDER THREAT???

Lothian Region's Cycle Project Team could disappear if talk of local government re-organisation becomes a reality. Local cyclists should be fully aware of this major threat, and raise it with politicians of all parties.

The importance of Lothian's pioneering Cycle Team cannot be over-stressed. Provision for cyclists needs a lot of staff time, since, although the cost is far less than road-building, the paperwork is similar - legal orders, public consultation, land acquisition, etc. Equally important is the team's expertise, built up through experience and continuity. Previously, the Council only managed to spend around 1/3 of its cycling budget, and progress was in fits and starts as staff were available from other work.

In the 3 1/2 years of the team's existence, the budget has been fully used, in city-centre cycle schemes, growing long-distance routes in the Lothians, Safe Routes to Schools, signposting, cyclist route publicity maps, etc. Equally important, there is time and expertise to ensure cyclists are considered in all road and traffic proposals, and private developments (eg access routes and bike parking); to liaise with ScotRail and BWB, and to assist District Councils (which are too small to have comparable expertise). The Cycle Unit is undoubtedly SPOKES's greatest single success, resulting from a Labour manifesto commitment at the 1986 Regional elections.

Under government plans Councils like Lothian could be abolished, with some powers passing to the government (Scottish Office) and some to smaller 'unitary' Councils like Edinburgh or West Lothian.

Transfer of Lothian road responsibilities to government is likely to be detrimental to cyclists. They have consistently refused to fund 'trunk' cycle routes (as



Lothian's Cycle Project Team

they do trunk roads). When planning trunk roads they have normally only included cycle facilities where the public heard of the plans and objected - the 2 Dalkeith bypass plans, for example, cut proposed cyclist routes - although the Scottish Office says new procedures will improve things in future.

We are equally worried about small councils. It is very unlikely a council the size of, say, W.Loathian, or the mooted East/Mid-Lothian, could support specialist functions like a Cycle Unit. Edinburgh might get only a single cycle officer, unable to build up the expertise and continuity of a team like Lothian's. Cyclist routes might appear in the city. *** Continued on p.8

SCOTRAIL SURPRISES!

Last autumn a SPOKES member (whose bike was vandalised in the official 'parking' spot at the back of Waverley) was told by ScotRail: "a complete review of bike parking and carriage throughout Scotland is being effected". There are still some very worrying signs (SPOKES 44) but it is delightful to report 2 small but positive new initiatives!

First, ScotRail has installed 3 Sheffield-type racks at Waverley, in a convenient location!! This might appear trivial, but after the incredible hassles it is a stunning development! Bike parking at Waverley was the biggest single source of complaint to SPOKES in 1990! The racks are experimental - so if you like

them, please do send compliments to ScotRail (Mr. Dingwall, area manager, Waverley Station EH1 1BB). You could also suggest other locations, and the need for Waverley-type racks to replace the Haymarket wheel-twisters. *** Continued on p.7

WHO TO WRITE TO

We often suggest you contact your MP or councillor. A letter is a very effective way of doing this.

If you don't know their name, address, surgery times, etc, phone the Citizens' Advice Bureau and give your address - they can then look up the details for you. Central Edinburgh CAB is 031-557-1500, and others are in the phone directory.

*** New cycling publications

*** West Edinburgh cyclist routes map

*** SPOKES summer events

INSIDE...



Summer Events

SPOKES has a full summer programme of Sunday and Weekend rides. We show the way, help mend mechanical malfunctions, wait for the less-speedy, and try to ensure all have a wonderful time! *Please* make sure your bike is in good order; and *cycle carefully and considerately*. You are entirely responsible for your own safety. Children under 14, or not used to the roads, may only come if accompanied by an adult. **Further details: Michael, ☎ 031-332-7602.**

SPOKES SUNDAY RIDES

Meet 10am. Usher Hall, Lothian Road. These rides are fairly gentle, 30 miles or so. Lunch at pub/cafe, or bring picnic. Light showers won't put us off, but persistent bad weather may cause cancellation. ☎ Michael 332-7602.

Dates: June 30*, July 28*, Sept 1*, Sept 22, Oct 13.

Special rides, as follows:

June 30 **West Lothian** – picnic at Dave & Susan du Feu (Linlithgow). Free tea/coffee (bring sandwiches).

July 28 **Midlothian** – Meet Usher Hall 10am or Eskbank Toll, Dalkeith, 11am. ☎ Tony, 663-6000.

Sept 1 **East Lothian** – Meet Usher Hall 10am or Old Roman Bridge, Musselburgh, 11am. ☎ Tom, 663-8404.

SPOKES CYCLING WEEKENDS

We usually use youth hostels, catering for ourselves. Not fast, but you must be fit to cycle all day (with rest-stops, tea-breaks, visits, etc!). Due to Sprinters, most weekends use the BIKEBUS (see SPOKES 44). To book accommodation, phone the organiser at **least 10 days before**. Late booking may be possible, but is not guaranteed.

June 8-9 **Dumfries & Galloway** Sally, 447-5647

June 15-16 **Midsummer all-night ride** Shane 229-1962

July 6-7 **Loch Lomond** Shane, 229-1962

July 20-21 **Loch Tay/Glen Lyon** Michael, 332-7602

Aug 3-4 **Borders/Broadmeadows** Michael, 332-7602

Aug 17-19 **Glen Coe/Glen Etive** Ewan, 0382-541715

Sep 14-16 **Strathpeffer** Harry, 229-6274

Oct 5-6 **Borders/Snoot** Doreen, 452-8057

Oct 19-20 **Glendoll** Neil, 557-0378

CTC TUESDAY EVENING RIDES

Graham Dann continues his excellent evening rides: 10-15 miles, ending 9-9.30 (bring lights in case). Learn about Edinburgh's off-road paths.

June: Meet 7pm, Commonwealth Pool.

July: Meet 7pm, Roseburn Railway Path bridge.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

☎ 0981-251087. For organised bike holidays, try 'Bicycle Beano'. 'Non-macho green tourism!!!'

☎ 031-552-3631. Bikes are free on the new **Granton-Burntisland catamaran**. Try a circular ride using the Forth Bridge path, Fife coast path, then back by ferry.

☎ 071-278-6612. **ALARM UK** is a national network for groups seeking sustainable transport policies. It sprang from the 200 groups which defeated government £3,000,000,000 London road plans (SPOKES 42).

☎ 031-557-6628. **Lothian Environment Partnership (LEEP)** was set up by local councils and university to identify and develop environmental projects in Lothian (eg bike-related!). Financial support available.

☎ 669-5450 **Ian Patterson: Lothian Teachers MTB group.**

☎ 657-4546 **Andrea McKirdy (day): New Niddrie Bike Club:** rides, practical help, maintenance training, etc.

☎ 337-4611 **Edith McLean: Edinburgh Canal Society** aims to improve the canal and increase usage.

☎ 071-928-7220 **Tina Cox: Women on Wheels UK-wide women cyclists network** – rides, ideas, support.

OTHER INTERESTING DATES

Note: we list several *Ramblers Assn* walks (marked RA) along bike paths – an interesting new perspective! (SPOKES is affiliated to the RA).

June 15 **RA: Rights of Way** day E.Lothian survey. ☎ B.Ginty, N.Berwick 2720, by 1st June if possible.

June 16 **Trossachs WWF** sponsored ride. ☎ 031-449-5509.

June 23-24 **THE EDINBURGH – ST. ANDREWS RIDE**



A fun day/weekend for 100s of cyclists of all types – amazed to find they can cycle all the way! Repair van, snack-stops, ceilidh, etc. Sponsored for LEPR. Transport back (if not cycling) by bus & removal van. *Advance van booking may be needed.* All members get brochure with this mailing, or ☎ LEPR 557-1013.

June 25 **RA Innocent Path evening walk** ☎ Cameron 449-2555

June 30 **RA Family Rambling Day** ☎ L.Neil 0968-72978.

July 7 **RA Livingston greenways walk** ☎ Bob Lennox 0506-842630.

July 27-Aug 17 **Great British Bike Ride** 'The ultimate cycling-/fun experience': Land's End – John O'Groats with 200 others. Cost £500. ☎ Bike Events, 0225-310859.

Sep 8 **Fun Bike Ride, Meadowbank-Meadows!** Fundraising for Sick Kids Hospital. ☎ Robin Tatler 668-4949.

Sep 14 **RA N. Queensferry-Aberdour walk** ☎ C.Craig 442-1348.

Oct 6 **TOUR DE FORTH** The other 'big one'. Rest-stops, repair van, etc. Sponsored for Disability Scotland. ☎ Inez 229-8632.

Oct 12 **RA Penicuik-Bonnyrigg walk** ☎ B.Weld 449-4260.

Nov 19-22 **Velo-City, Milan 5th International Cycling Conference.** Hugely inspirational! *Theme:* 'The bicycle – improving mobility & the environment in our cities'. Find out what's happening in Europe (except the UK!). Pay your own expenses!!! *Details:* ☎ Sandy, 551-2663.

LOST LETTERS

We now have a lockable letter cage, as a few letters since Xmas have gone astray. *Please contact us if you haven't had a reply to a letter.*

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Available from addresses shown, not SPOKES.

☎ **Get around Lothian with ScotRail.** See trains article. Free from Lothian Highways, 19 Market St, EH1 1BL.

☎ **Johnston-Greenock railway path** map-leaflet. SAE to Sustrans, 53 Cochrane St, Glasgow G1 1HL.

The above, plus other leaflets (St. Andrews ride, BIKEBUS programme, random breath-testing campaign, bikeshop adverts, etc) come free to members with this mailing. One new member told us: "May I say how pleased I am with the amount of information received!"

☎ **Traffic Advisory Leaflets:** 4/90: Tactile markings for segregated pedestrian-cycle shared use; 5/90: The Nottingham Cycleroad Network; 1/91: Cycling Bibliography. Free from: Traffic Policy Division, Dept of Transport, 2 Marsham St, LONDON SW1P 3EB.

☎ **Settle & Carlisle Country Walking & cycling routes** Skipton-Carlisle. 160-page book, £6.60 from Leading Edge Press, Burtsett, HAWES DL8 3PB.

☎ **Cyclists at Roundabouts** CTC report on the risks, solutions and research. £10 from CTC, 69 Meadow, GODALMING GU7 3HS.

JATES TOO LATE!

A major study on future Edinburgh transport – including cycling – the JATES report, is due in May (too late for us to report). It is expected to recommend road-pricing, the metro, and possibly a revived 'Western Relief Road'. Although many European cities are now promoting mass shifts to cycling, most British politicians, officials and consultants still view it as peripheral. Cyclists should therefore not expect too much from JATES! *Please do send in comments when asked in the press (& send us a copy).*

PAVEMENT CYCLING

SPOKES has received 2 complaints from members about adults cycling on pavements. We did campaign for young children to keep the right to cycle on pavements (now abolished by government for children of ALL ages), and there are some pavements where we support formalised shared use. However, there is no excuse for some of the pavement cycling which can be seen. Apart from being illegal, it is unexpected by pedestrians and can undoubtedly be frightening. We urge cyclists to remember this.

UNION CANAL

For the first time ever, a SPOKES member has received a positively encouraging letter from BWB! And it's from the top – **Peter Coyne**, regional manager for Scotland. Whilst admitting BWB don't wish to encourage bikes on the Union Canal because of possible liability if anyone falls in, Mr. Coyne emphasises towpath cycling will be encouraged wherever possible. After pointing to the lengthy Glasgow-Loch Lomond towpath section, he hints strongly that legal cycling on the Union is possible where it can be upgraded with help from local councils.

Although we still seek a more relaxed attitude to current use of the Union, the tenor of the letter shows a remarkable change. We particularly thank **Nigel Griffiths MP** for raising the matter with BWB

CENTRAL EDINBURGH

Edinburgh District Council has a 'Central Edinburgh Local Plan' discussion paper, covering land-use (including transport) in the area bounded by Roseburn, Holyrood Park, Grange and Inverleith. We are delighted that, after discussing the results of ever-increasing car use, the paper seeks "a bias in favour of public transport ... and all alternatives to the car, including cycling and walking."

The paper is in general terms, but you should also suggest useful routes. SPOKES favourites include: Innocent railway-Princes St (via Waverley site), Kings Buildings-George Sq, Bruntsfield-City Centre, Roseburn-Canal-Meadows, Roseburn-Morrison St-Lothian Rd, Water of Leith, Inverleith Park, and Princes St gardens 'back route' (Kings Stables Rd-Mound). Road conditions must also be tackled – eg Princes St / Lothian Rd.

The paper is free from 1 Cockburn Street (☎ 031-225-2424 ext 6536). Send comments by the end of May or as soon after as possible.

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Spokesfacts 24 WEST EDINBURGH BIKE-PATHS April 1991

Please send comments/suggestions to: SPOKES, St.Martins Church, 232 Dalry Rd, Edinburgh EH11 2JG.

Huge tracts of West Edinburgh are undergoing major redevelopment. Determined efforts by SPOKES, and individual members, over many years, look likely to result in a network of cyclistoutes which many councillors, officials and developers would have dismissed out of hand just a few years ago. Much of the cost will come from developers, as a condition of planning permission.

Several major routes are in prospect, with linkages to adjacent housing, shopping, business and industrial sites. A north-south route Wester Hailes - Maybury was proposed by the Wester Hailes Partnership and is now enshrined in the District Council's S.W. Edinburgh Local Plan. A route from Riccarton campus to Maybury 'High Tech' Business Park is also virtually certain. The existing recreational east-west 'route' from Corstorphine

railway path to the lanes of W.Loithian will be enhanced, and safety improved at South Gyle Broadway. Major changes within Wester Hailes, including eventual canal re-opening, could bring a local cycling network.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The basic principles for cyclists in the area are now in place, and show what can be done by long-term consistent pressure. Many detailed decisions are still to be taken, and cyclists can help greatly by writing letters as suggested in this & other leaflets! You can also try the actual and potential routes shown, and send comments to your Regional and District councillors (☎ CAB, 557-1500 if you don't know their name/address). Please send SPOKES copies of your correspondence.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Railway Path and Cycle Route Project (Grimshaw Report), Annex 2: Balerno-Meadows-Musselburgh. Route proposals and technical info on path construction & design. Available from Scottish Office Library, New St. Andrews House, EH1 3SZ, price £2.55.

Local Plans for N.W. and S.W. Edinburgh. Land-use plans (including transport) prepared by Edinburgh District Council. Can be inspected or bought at Planning Dept, 1 Cockburn St, EH1 1BJ.

Wester Hailes to Maybury, a Proposed Pedestrian-Cycle Link. Report by Wester Hailes Partnership, 19 Hailesland Place, EH14 2SL.

KEY TO MAP

- Existing pedestrian-bike path
- Promised or recommended path (exact route not always known)
- On-road link (temporary or permanent)
- Existing path, currently unsuitable and/or illegal for bikes
- Useful route, not currently proposed
- Main road
- Minor road
- Proposed road
- Dangerous road crossing

A-A Wester Hailes Greenway. To be improved, including shared cycle use (much already suitable). See S.W.Ed. Local Plan.

B Hailes Park routes, to Longstone. Opened thanks to SPOKES in the early 1980s when the park was created. A few steps on 2 paths.

CD Proposed eventual canal re-opening (route safeguarded in S.W. Local Plan). We must ensure towpath is shared-use (see canal article in SPOKES 45). More immediate routes are suggested in Grimshaw Annex 2 and in W.H. Partnership report.

D Current towpath appalling. Path also needed on other side (or new bridge over) for safe access to development site between canal and bypass.

GDE Turnbull-Jeffrey Partnership appointed by Lothian to design this crucial path section, where BWB has agreed to shared use.

EFHJ Routes to be built by developers (condition of planning permission), including new segregated crossings of rail/road at F, H and possibly J.

FI,HI SPOKES seeking further routes to avoid roads, to enjoy proposed Gogar Burn loch, and link A8 cyclistoutes.

I A8 cyclistoutes to be continued to Newbridge-Queensferry path, A89, and eventually Broxburn. Fly-over proposed at roundabout may worsen Corstorphine traffic, and no mention of improved bike facilities.

K Cycle-pedestrian crossing planned for Safe Routes to School (Craigmount).

L S.Gyle Rd closed at bridge, except for bikes/walkers.

NMLHP Minor road/path route from Corstorphine-Balgreen path to W.Loithian. Section HP to be maintained during Maybury Park construction.

M Pedestrian/cycle underpass leading to W.Loithian minor roads. Underpass is entirely due to objections lodged to City Bypass in early 1980s. Underpass further north currently leads to dead end.

PQ Thanks to recent objections by SPOKES (also CTC, Cockburn, and many individuals) a pedestrian-cycle path will be built when Gogar Station Rd is moved for the M8 extension. No decision yet on a ramped canal access.

PQR Our idea of a Maybury Business Park to Riccarton Campus route is supported by Maybury developers and the University. A safe crossing of Calder Rd is essential.

R Traffic consultants commissioned by Heriot-Watt recommended a campus bike-route network (not all shown), and safer approach routes. We don't know what action, if any, the university is taking, but recent plans for westward extension of the campus make no mention of cycling.

TSE Towpath currently 'rural standard' and not officially open to bikes (see canal article in SPOKES 45). BWB is worried someone will fall in and claim against them (it's not their problem if you use the A71 instead and get run down by a lorry on the roundabout!). Section SE (on the map) was expected to be upgraded during bypass work in the 1980s, but not done.

U Unstaffed walk-bike level crossing, but trains now fast.

UV Donkey Lane appalling surface (horse damage). Drainage improved recently by Ed. District Council. SPOKES construction project being considered.

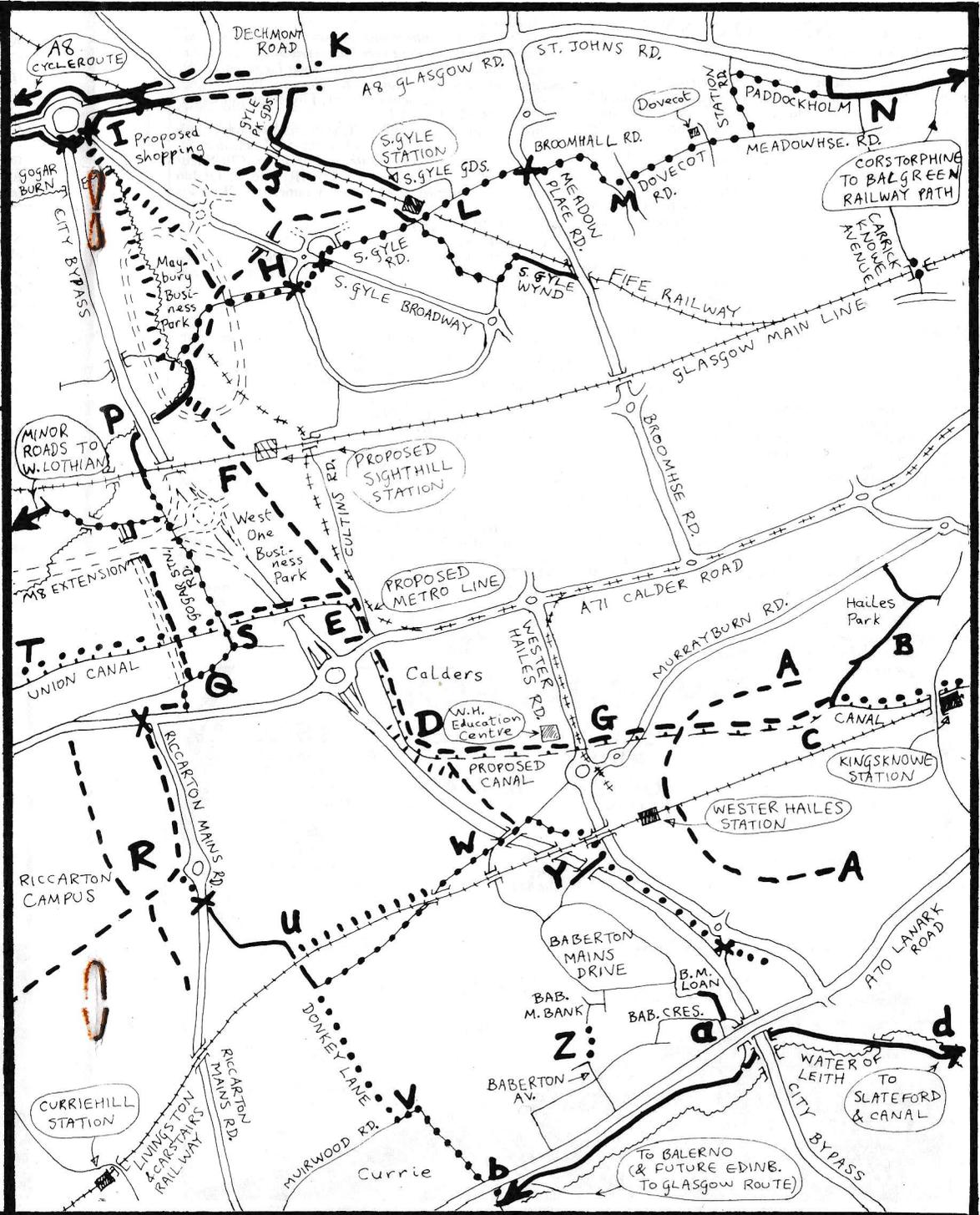
UW Grimshaw report (Annex 2) suggests route to avoid level crossing at U between Wester Hailes & Riccarton.

Y Pedestrian overbridge built to shared-use standard, thanks to SPOKES objections to bypass plans.

Z Potential link, but barriers both ends.

a Useful connection from Baberton & Wester Hailes to Water of Leith path.

bd Water of Leith (Slateford-Balerno) railway path. Delightful, but surface appalling in parts in wet weather. Local councillor turned down official recommendation to tarmac worst sections. Forms part of proposed Edinburgh-Glasgow long-distance path.



AROUND SCOTLAND

BORDERS REGION

For some time we have pressed for a shared-use path along the old **Waverley Line, Gala-Melrose-St. Boswells** (SPOKES 42, 43), and last year we forced the Council to drop plans to infill the old A7 rail underpass. The line is similar to many others, now successful shared-use paths, but, despite government money clearly intended for shared-use, and despite consultants recommendations, Borders Region insists cycling is inappropriate. Nor have they replied to our suggestion to appoint Sustrans for an up-to-date feasibility study. It seems they prefer cyclists to use main roads - 'A' roads in places. Sadly, a recent letter to a SPOKES member, whilst friendly in tone, showed absolutely no sign of action.

The Council has also produced new plans for **Melrose bypass Phase III**, which was rejected at a public enquiry last year. The new route reportedly has many similarities, and again uses a long stretch of Waverley line. **On both points, write to:** Cllr. Hewat, Borders Regional Council, NEWTOWN ST. BOSWELLS, TD6 0SA.

Borders has published its draft **1991 Structure Plan**. Section 3.28 states that a recent tourism report showed the need for action on cycleways by Borders Region. However, the transport section doesn't mention cycling, let alone promise action; and the one mention under recreation is little more than preserving existing rights of way. **To see/comment on the draft plan:** ☎ 0835-23301x417 (Mr. Smith, Planning Dept).

CENTRAL REGION

Following complaints about cyclists in a pedestrian area of **Grangemouth** we asked why bikes were forgotten when cars were banned (particularly as the Council has an environmental charter). We have been assured bikes will get full consideration in the next major development, a Relief Road. **If you know the area, write to:** Cllr Thom, Falkirk District Council, FK1 5RS & Cllr Connolly, Central Regional Council, STIRLING FK8 2ET.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY REGION

Galloway Cycling Group hopes to set up a **Dumfries** campaign. **Details:** John Taylor ☎ 0556-67395.

FIFE REGION

Two **SPOKES** members who attended a Fife Region cycling strategy meeting were very impressed by the new air of commitment (SPOKES 44). **We hope soon for a reasonable budget, and concrete results!** **Send ideas to:** Peter Milne, Cycling Officer, Engineering Dept, Fife Regional Council, GLENROTHES KY7 5LT.

Sustrans proposals for a **St. Andrews-Leuchars** path have been published, price £5 from 53 Cochrane St, Glasgow G1 1HL. **Please write in support to:** Cllr Sneddon, NE Fife District Council, CUPAR, Fife, & Dr Ian Goudie, St Andrews Community Council, 10 Windsor Gdns, St. Andrews.

HIGHLAND REGION

Corran Ferry is now free for bikes.

The Miller Group is to build the **Skye Bridge**. We have assurances (SPOKES 40) it and the approach roads will have pedestrian-cycle paths, and that walkers and cyclists will be toll-free. However, there are fears it could be dangerous or unpleasant for bikes when windy.

Following complaints that the **Structure Plan** omits cyclists, 2 councillors hope to ensure the next TPP (transport policy) doesn't. **Send ideas on Highland cycle needs to:** Cllr. Michael Foxley, 2 Achaphubuil, FORT WILLIAM PH33 7AL, and/or Cllr. David Green, Achnahaird, Achiltibuie, ULLAPOOL IV26 2YT.

STRATHCLYDE REGION

Strathclyde has approved the Edinburgh-Glasgow plans (SPOKES 40), and there has been wide TV & press coverage. With much of the Lothian section in place, Strathclyde must also put its money where its mouth is!

Strathclyde plans to abolish **Renfrew Ferry** bike tolls. Forest roads in **Inverliever Forest** (Lochawside) have been opened to bikes, and more are intended. **Details:** Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Rd, Edinburgh EH12 7AT (we don't have the local address).

Glasgow City Council is preparing an **Environmental Action Plan**. **Members who know the city should send ideas to:** Cllr J. McCarron, Environment Working Group, Glasgow City Council, Queen St, GLASGOW. (see also SPOKES 44, centre pages).

*** Continued from p.1

Second is **ScotRail's** new leaflet **Get around Lothian with ScotRail** showing how to get quickly by train to walking-cycling routes in the Lothians. Yes, there can be problems getting your bike on the train, especially for families & groups, but for 1 or 2 friends, out of the rush-hour, it's nearly always ok (and free) in Lothian. The leaflet is also a re-assuring sign that ScotRail really **does** want our custom! All members get a copy with this mailing.

Both developments result partly from extensive discussions with ScotRail by **Lothian Region's Cycle Unit**, plus financial contributions. However, it also shows cyclists are not totally without friends in ScotRail. **We should continue pressing for government investment to allow better designs of rolling stock.**

BIKE CARRIAGE

One very worrying rumour is that ScotRail may restrict class 158 units (Glasgow-Edinburgh-Aberdeen) to 1 bike (though they were designed for 2!). Better news is that class-225 electrics (soon to replace 125's on the East Coast Main Line) have a big guards van! - though £3 compulsory reservations still apply. The local N. Berwick line is also electrified (eventually to W. Calder-Shotts-Glasgow). The initial service will use refurbished multiple-units, but new trains are planned. **Now is the time to write about bike capacity to ScotRail and your Regional councillor.**

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Even before the economic recession brought new problems, BR had suffered drastically by reduced government grant. The independent **Transport Users Consultative Committee for Scotland** (whose chairman is a former Tory MP)

in a hard-hitting report stated "It is very sad to see trains being cancelled and shortened to cope with a budget insufficient to provide the desired quality of service. This is not BR's fault, and the travelling public should remember this when complaining". The 3rd biggest source of complaints, after overcrowding and lateness, was bike-carriage.

Quite apart from bike space, other problems resulting from inadequate finance include: cancelled plans for 15-minute Glasgow-Edinburgh services; severe overcrowding due to every 3 old DMUs being replaced by only 2 Sprinters (Scotland on Sunday 17-2-91); and transfer of freight to the roads (SOS 17-6-90 & SPOKES 44).

The TUCS also criticises BR management for going along with cuts. In 1989-90, BR actually asked for £90 million less than the government had agreed! SOS (17/2/91) said one BR manager accused bosses of "lying on their backs saying 'hit me more'" when speaking to government. But this may be changing - new BR chairman, Sir Bob Reid, amazed press and politicians by asking for an immediate £2bn cash injection, then £6.5bn over the next 5 years.

With an election likely, we urge readers to write to MPs now (see p.1 for address). Two things are essential. **First**, more investment for BR. **Second**, BR must be given environmental as well as financial objectives - including full consideration of bikes in all rolling-stock design. Does your MP's party support these points? Finally, if writing to a Conservative MP, ask how bike-carriage will be guaranteed if BR is privatised? (bike-train is environmentally good for society, but not financially lucrative for BR).

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** Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope (9"x4" if possible) **