

RAILWAY NEWS

Although we didn't stop the iniquitous new £3 bike flat fare, the campaign has had worthwhile results and retains a high profile, with MPs such as **Tam Dalyell** and **Nigel Griffiths** still lobbying.

The main problem has been the government's ever-tightening screw on rail. We have called for BR (and any private rail companies) to be given environmental objectives, not just financial. This has not happened - as clearly stated by BR executive **John Welsby**, in reply to government minister **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton**. BR accept there are "environmental arguments" for encouraging bike/rail, but they have a "strictly commercial remit" from the Secretary of State for Transport. We might add that Regional Railways (including ScotRail) has had its government funding cut by 23% this year.

But BR are far from blameless. We suspect no advance research was done - BR has not answered our query as to what bike counts were done prior to the £3 local-journey charge. Even their aim is unclear - but if it was more revenue we are convinced from members' experiences and from the almost total disappearance of bikes on local services that more was lost than gained. But if no counts were done, this cannot be assessed.

BR have also generated huge ill-will amongst former supporters. Instead of championing rail with friends and colleagues, some disgruntled cyclists now add their woes to the unfortunate prevailing stereotypes of BR. This will continue - for we have examples of Strathclyde and other PTEs where free bike carriage continues happily without the rail system falling to pieces under the pressure! *It is absolute nonsense that BR will not do the same.*

We have, however, heard from inside sources that BR has been astonished by the opposition, and that

MIDDLE CLASS MALAISE

We live in suburbs on villages from which we drive to work. We take the children to school by car. We shop by car, buying potatoes from Egypt instead of waiting a few weeks for those grown locally. One way to prevent further episodes like Loyalford Down is to examine our lifestyles, and see how we contribute by our pattern of travelling and what we buy.

[Letter to Environmental Transport Assn, Summer 93 (extracts)]

some aspects are being reconsidered. And Regional Railways has just stated "we now recognise that substantial discrepancies can occur between the passenger fare and the bicycle charge on short journeys. Our policy for bikes on short journeys is being reviewed" [Transport Retort, Sep 93]. That this was not recognised before the new policy shows how little thought went into it!

With signs of change, it is vital to keep up pressure! Write to: Cyril Bleasdale, ScotRail Manager, Port Dundas Rd, Glasgow G4 0HG, asking him to raise the matter with Regional Railways, and Sir Bob Reid, BR Chairman, Euston House, PO Box 100, London NW1 1DZ.

If your journeys have stopped or reduced due to the charges, start by explaining this. We suggest you then ask for... a. As before, free bike travel on local services, with space at the guard's discretion.

b. As before, £3 booking fee for longer journeys, covering returns as well as singles. If writing to your MP, ask also for improved finance and a requirement for flexible space for bikes, prams and luggage in all new/refurbished rolling stock.

There is little about rail privatisation in this leaflet, because by publication date the bill will probably be through Parliament, hopefully in drastically amended form. We can only hope you will not have to book your bike with 3 different companies next time you want to go on holiday from, say, Bathgate to Bangor!

Available now from good bookshops and bike shops or send £2.50 cheque to SPOKES (inc p&p).

THE SPOKES CITY BIKE MAP

INSIDE *** BIKE SCHEMES FACE CHOP *** CYCLE HELMETS *** SCOTLAND BIKE NEWS LEAFLET 52 AUTUMN 1993

SPOKES



CYCLE TEAM FACES CHOP

The government's local authority re-organisation plans could spell disaster for innovative transport policies in Scotland.

Lothian Region's pioneering Cycle Project Team - SPOKES's biggest ever success - may be disbanded. Central Regional Council's remarkable 'All Change' transport policy [SPOKES 49] is almost certain to disappear when the Council is abolished. And in Strathclyde the growing long-distance cycle route network will come under many small authorities, some of which may have no interest in maintaining or extending it.



photo: Lothian Regional Council

Smiling at the Axeman?? - The Cycle Project Team

In deciding council boundaries the government has been widely accused of gerrymandering to ensure Tory control wherever possible. From academics to newspaper editors, all agree the proposals are "indelibly tainted with Conservative self-interest" [Scotsman editorial 5.8.93]. The absence of an independent commission on the changes (as in England, and formerly in Scotland) is surely final proof.

CYCLING AND TRANSPORT

With such political aims it is no surprise that the effect on services - such as transport and planning - has received scant attention. The government white paper [Shaping the Future - The New Councils, July 93] has only 9 lines on transport other than roads; and no mention at all of cycling. 4 1/2 lines deal with Glasgow, and 2 of the remaining 4 1/2 are: "Those few services which require co-ordination between adjacent authorities can readily be arranged through joint co-operation". This gives little hope cycling has been considered at all.

*** Continued on p.7

WHO TO WRITE TO

We often suggest you contact your MP or a councillor. Letters and surgery visits are good ways of doing this. If you don't know the name, address, surgery times, etc, phone the Citizens' Advice Bureau and give your street - they can then look up the details for you. Central Edinburgh CAB is 557-1500; others are in the phone book.

NEW ERA FOR UK CYCLING??

The most positive comments ever on cycling from a roads minister have come from new incumbent **Robert Key** [DoT Press Notice 7.9.93]. His department's old story that cycling is very dangerous, or that the best way to safety is by encouraging helmets, were not mentioned! Welcoming 100's of cycle planners, politicians and campaigners to Britain for the 1993 Velo-City international cycling conference, Mr Key might have been massacred had he taken a different line!

"People want to use bikes, especially for local journeys. They meet many of the requirements that society demands from transport in towns - environmentally friendly, health promoting and cheap to use. But, if people are to see bicycles as a safe, convenient and attractive alternative, conditions have to be improved. This means better and wider provision of facilities to attract would-be cyclists onto the road".

Unfortunately there were no new initiatives! Indeed other comments [see Key, in love] make one suspect Mr Key just has good news for every audience!

The minister was criticised by **Ton Welleman** of Netherlands Transport Ministry for not setting targets to increase bike use. Between 1990-92 the Dutch cycling masterplan [SPOKES 50] brought a 30% increase in cycling and 20% decrease in deaths and serious injuries! "The test is whether funding matches planning", he said [Local Transport Today 16.9.93].

LETTER FROM A NEW MEMBER

I have recently discovered the cyclenays in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and our family has had some wonderful excursions. I am writing to my councillor to let him know how these routes are appreciated. Thank you for fighting for them.

NEW SPOKES CITY BIKE MAP

The long-awaited map is due early 1994. Costing approx £3 it has full-colour cover and extends to Musselburgh and Balerno. Full details in January mailing.

** PUBLIC MEETING **

Our series continues at the Friends Meeting House. Two expert speakers on the health aspects of cycling. Should you lobby the Council for restrictions on cars, or buy a pollution mask?? Are there really health benefits to city cycling?? What should you do?? Hear and interrogate the experts!!

Richard Carson Environmental Services Director, Edinburgh District Council: **City air pollution.**
Dr Helen Zeally Lothian Health Board's Director of Public Health: **The health benefits of cycling.**
Place: Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terr (off Geo.IV Bridge). Date: Tue 16 Nov. Time: 7.30. Come early for coffee, stall and chat from 6.45.



Hello Mum

Stop Press: Councils in Lothian are co-operating under Lothian Health Challenge to examine and develop health-promoting transport policies, based on the excellent report *Health on the Move* [£5.50 inc p&p from SPOKES]. Lothian Health Challenge is at: PO Box 43, Freepost, Edinburgh EH1 0AH.

SPOKES, St Martins Church, 232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG. ☎ 031-313-2114.



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

Please enter your name, address, postcode ...

Where did you find this leaflet?

WINTER SUNDAY RIDES

Meet 10am, Usher Hall, Lothian Road. *Normally* 1st Sunday each month. Rides are fairly gentle, 30 miles or so. Lunch at pub/cafe, or bring picnic. Odd showers won't put us off, but real bad weather may cause cancellation. We show the way, help mend mechanical malfunctions, wait for the less-speedy, and try to ensure all have a wonderful time! **Please** ensure 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 with an adult. **Dates:** Nov 7; Dec 5; Jan 9 (not 2!); Feb 6; Mar 6; Apr 3. For further details, or to help: ☎ Mark 552-9581.

CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

Nov 4 **Traffic Pollution & Health** Birmingham (£25) - latest research ☎ 071-388-8386 F. Coathorpe.
Nov 9 **Are Roads Safe?** Leeds (£26/£52) - includes Bob Davis [SPOKES 51 - 'Death on the Streets'] ☎ 0532-475198 M. Page.
Nov 13 **Transport v. Environment** London, Transport 2000 1/2-day (£16) ☎ 071-388-8386.
Nov 16 **Cycling & Health**, SPOKES meeting See p.1.
Nov 19 **Less Traffic, Better Towns** Stirling, FOE & Central Region Council ☎ 031.554.9977. *Highly recommended.*
Nov 27 or Dec 4 **All Change** Central Region transport strategy, CTC Scottish Cycling Council ☎ John Mackay 0250-872296.
Dec 7 **Privatisation of British Rail** seminar for Highways/Planning officers ☎ 0463.702264 A.Short.
Dec 10 **Transport & Climate Change** London, Greenpeace etc. SAE to: CAN UK, 21 Tower St, London WC2H 9NS.
Jan 19 **A Blueprint for Scottish Transport** Scottish Assn for Public Transport, Glasgow (evening) ☎ 041.637.0784.

RAILWAY RAMBLERS

SPOKES is affiliated to the Railway Ramblers, who have a Scottish branch and a most interesting magazine [*Railway Ramblings*], in SPOKES price list. Their aims include exploring-documenting old rail lines; and they have close contact with Sustrans. Forthcoming walks...
Oct 31 **Beith-Kilwinning** 11 miles. 0945 train from Glasgow. ☎ A.Jervis 0383-732834.
Nov 27 **Dolphinton-Leadburn** 10 miles. 9am bus from Edinb.
Dec 4 **Fountainhall-Lauder** 9 miles. 0845 bus from Edinb. ☎ A.Homan-Ely 031.229.5668 for Nov 27 & Dec 4 walks.

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CANAL TOWPATH UPGRADE

On June 12-13 SPOKES volunteers transformed a 1/2-mile of towpath at Hermiston. Soil which had built up since commercial barges ceased in the 1930s was cleared to 1-metre width, revealing in places the setts of the original (1810) path!

Sadly, due to a paperwork mix-up, BWB halted the work, so we couldn't lay the stone/dust surface next weekend. Negotiations continue, and hopefully we will soon finish the job! The situation is complicated by BWB's cycling policies, which are in flux, though several schemes (eg Forth-Clyde path) have been approved.

SAYINGS OF THE FAMOUS KEY TO THE HIGHWAY

Top politicians are renowned for extra-marital affairs, but few are so serious for the nation as that of **Robert Key**, government roads minister. In a candid moment he incautiously admitted "I love roads" and "I love cars" [Environmental Transport Assn, Autumn 93].



Minister
Robert Key
- in love

He added "The car is going to be with us for a very long time. We must start thinking in terms that will allow it to flourish". In case anyone thought middle-aged men have a fetish about railways he went on "If ever there was an environmentally-unfriendly form of transport, it was railways".

Mr Key has no qualms about using public money to consummate his passion with roads, for in August he announced over £500m to widen 57 miles of M6. The government's morality watchdog, Environment Minister **Mr Gummer**, had again failed to persuade the cabinet to step to its commitments to sustainable development and cutting CO₂ emissions by year 2000.

MODERATE MAGNUS SPEAKS OUT!!

Magnus Magnusson, widely regarded as the epitome of moderation, and perhaps invited for this reason, caused minister **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** and his Road Directorate officials to blink when he spoke at the conference 'Roads, Bridges and Traffic in the Countryside' [Dundee 11.12.92]

"Present transport policies are not inherently sustainable. Road traffic projections that rise exponentially; car ownership levels that cannot be accommodated in our towns; freight traffic switching from rail to road for short-term financial reasons. We need to assess all the transport options, not just road options... We have to recognise we have choices... We could set rigid pollution standards... We could rely on less energy-profligate transport..."

He (gently) attacked the Scottish Office for having a roads policy, not a transport policy. And road responsibility itself had been transferred from the Environment Dept to Industry.

Whether Mr Magnusson will be invited again remains to be seen! He would certainly be unpopular with Lord James's colleague, 'Transport' Secretary **John MacGregor** [SPOKES 50], who soon after announced a further £2,100,000,000 for roads [Guardian 5.2.93] whilst halving BR's cash. What a contrast with Dutch Minister of private Transport **Jacques Remmen** who proudly revealed his government has halted private traffic growth! [Local Transport Today 4.3.93]

MAJOR NEW REPORTS

☛ Cycle Helmets - the case for and against

This painstakingly researched report [by Mayer Hillman, pub Policy Studies Institute, £6.50 from SPOKES inc p&p] summarises the evidence on helmet-wearing, and its conclusions give cause for thought.

If you have an accident (especially the low-speed falling-off type for which helmets are designed), a helmet may well reduce head injury. But there is evidence that the feeling of safety from a helmet makes you weigh risks differently, and be more likely to have an accident. Road safety experts and helmet manufacturers give a false sense of security, by not emphasising a helmet's limited protection in motor vehicles collisions.

Balancing risks is not about behaving illegally or stupidly. We continually modify behaviour, often unconsciously, according to perceived danger. If the road is icy you feel unsafe and go slow or walk. Conversely, helmet-users often tell how vulnerable they feel unhelmeted, and may then cycle with marginally higher concentration.

If you imagine your helmet will help in a collision with an HGV you may be more likely to choose a busy 'A' road rather than a longer but safer minor road. Recently a cyclist, describing their Highland tour, wrote to us: "We rode along the A95. This was naughty as we didn't have our helmets and... there were lots of HGVs" i.e. they felt it relatively safe to use the HGV-infested A95 with a helmet but not without.

Taking more risks when you feel safer seems almost instinctive in all road users. When car seat belts, and motorbike helmets, were made compulsory, collisions with pedestrians increased! Conversely, when motorbike helmets were made non-compulsory in some US states, motorcycle fatalities rose less than in compulsory states!

Compulsory helmets are also controversial for cycling. Victoria, Australia, saw a 40% cyclist head injury reduction after compulsion. But the same period saw a 50% accident reduction to all types of road user, due to new speeding and drink-drive laws and other factors. And

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

☛ 'Bike Culture' & 'Encyclopaedia'

New *Cyclist* founder **Jim McGurn** moves to new pastures with 2 subscription-only publications aimed at an international readership [☎ 0904-654654]. The first annual *Encyclopaedia* is a truly inspiring guide to unusual and forward-looking pedal-powered transport. Folding bikes, family-transport, luggage-carrying, recumbents, custom-built chainrings; plus shops world-wide who will try to supply all the products. *Bike Culture* (quarterly) promises not to be a consumer magazine (no adverts) and is for those "committed to cycling as a way of life".

☛ Children, Transport and Quality of Life

This book [£10 from BEBC, PO Box 1496, POOLE BH12 3YD] by Dr Mayer Hillman focuses growing concern about children no longer allowed to make even short local journeys alone, for fear of traffic. The shocking statistics show that whilst in 1971 80% of 7-8 year-olds travelled to school alone, by 1990 only 9% could do so. Four times as many children were driven to school in 1990, and whilst 80% of schoolchildren own a bike only 2% cycle to school. In the Netherlands 60% of journeys by 12-14 year olds (both sexes) are by bike, but here it is 13% for boys and a miserable 4% for girls. The report looks at the extensive implications for children's rights, health and development, and even for parental lifestyles!

☛ Leaflets for SPOKES members

We don't have enough of the following for all members, so are sending one to those who do bike-leafletting, as a thank-you. Other members may get leftovers

Tetley Guide to Cycling in Scotland (10 routes in central Scotland), free from *J.Grose, Biss Lancaster, 69 Monmouth St, London WC2H 9DG. Dalkeith/Glenesk Viaduct Footpath Link* - a delightful leaflet on bike routes from the restored viaduct, free from *Midlothian Community Services, 1 White Hart St, Dalkeith EH22 1AJ.*

compulsion reduced teenage cycling by 40%, adults 20%, and young children 15%, disastrous for public health generally.

☛ Costing the Benefits - the Value of Cycling

This report [£10 from SPOKES], commissioned by the CTC with support from York and Leicester City Councils, analyses in detail the costs to society of car-based transport, and the benefits of a shift to cycling. It concludes that a 20% transfer of non-walk trips to bike (already achieved in a few UK and many European towns) would mean some £1,300,000,000 annual savings.

The report suggests health benefits over £200m p.a., mainly from working days lost through illness. Savings from reduced car use include £725m due to congestion, over £130m from less accidents to pedestrians, and nearly £100m from lower air pollution.

Much of the report's interest is in the mass of detailed information: towns in the UK and Europe which have increased cycling and reduced or stabilised car use by deliberate policy; evidence that reduced car-parking can improve shopping turnover; the effects of sedentary lives (especially in professional households) on children's health; bike mileage allowance details; and so on.

☛ Cycling in Pedestrian Areas

This long-awaited government report [£20 from Transport Research Laboratory ☎ 0344-770587], based on extensive observations, finds "no real factors that justify exclusion of cyclists from pedestrian areas", and concludes "cycling can be more widely permitted without detriment to pedestrians". The report also points out that bikes excluded from pedestrian areas are often forced onto dangerous alternatives.

The study found pedestrian areas very safe, even with cyclists present. Walkers get out of the way for cars (where allowed), but pay little attention to bikes. However cyclists go slower as walkers increase, and dismount if necessary. At low densities they mix easily, but at higher levels bike paths give smoother flow.

Fife Cyclists Charter - Fife Region's extensive plans for cyclists, free from *Engineering Dept, Fife House, N.S-treet, Glenrothes KY7 5LT.*

The next SPOKES will feature new Scottish bike-route leaflets, to whet your 1994 imagination! If you know any we might not, please send details.

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FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO LOSE ...

Our lead article outlines possible effects on planning and transport, particularly cycling, of government plans for local councils. Here we look at two crucial potential losses – Lothian's Cycle Project Team and Central's 'All Change' transport strategy. We also feature rail and cyclist advances which might never have happened without a region-wide transport authority.

LOTHIAN'S CYCLE TEAM

Lothian's 3-person Cycle Project Team is 6 years old, and the most important single decision the Council ever took on cycling. Lothian is now a leading UK authority on cycle planning. Some 70km of cycle route/lane have been opened, as well as conversion of the 350km Livingston path network to shared-use.

Time-consuming legal, land-acquisition, and consultation issues often arise in creating even a short cycle route. Before the team was set up, money for cycle schemes often lay unspent and was lost at the year end. SPOKES quickly realised *full-time expert staffing* was the key, and persuaded the Labour Party to promise a 4-person Cycle Team in their 1986 manifesto. A year after the election the team (albeit 3-person) was in action! Now at year end, money unspent elsewhere comes into cycling!

The team's work includes on- and off-road routes; safe routes to school; commenting on road plans, traffic schemes, supermarkets; publicity leaflets & maps; measures at cycle accident blackspots; etc. They have provided a lead, and technical advice, for other councils. **Richard Williams**, team leader, gave a paper at the 1992 Montreal World Cycling Conference.

Now, a government claiming to be bike-friendly looks set to abolish the Cycle Team – SPOKES's greatest success, and Scotland's centre of cycle planning expertise!

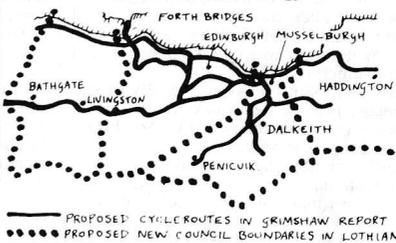
A POIGNANT PICTURE

ScotRail Director **Chris Green** and Lothian Convener **Brian Meek** flag off the first train from Livingston South station in 1984; followed soon by a re-opened Bathgate-Edinburgh service. The picture is poignant because although **Chris Green** is returning to Scotland, expansion of services will be a far tougher job due to smaller councils and rail privatisation.

If the government persists, there will be no region-wide transport authority with resources and united political will for projects like the Bathgate line. And the ScotRail to which Mr Green returns is an emaciated body. Instead of controlling the track, for example, it has to hire it from a 'RailTrack' quango. An early test

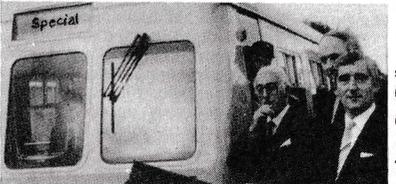
GRIMSHAW CARVED UP

In 1983, pressured by SPOKES, Lothian Region set up the *Lothian Cycle Route Project*, under Sustrans consultant **John Grimshaw** [see SPOKES factsheets 19 & 22]. The resulting documents on long-distance routes into the Lothians, safe routes to schools, and city cyclist routes, formed the Council's cycling strategy.



The map shows new Council boundaries superimposed on Grimshaw's long-distance routes. This makes depressingly clear how a Region the ideal size for decisions on commuting and leisure routes is to be split into parcels which make no sense in transport terms. It shows dramatically what we would have lost without Lothian to sponsor Sustrans.

Had there been only District Councils, we might have persuaded Edinburgh to commission Sustrans for a city bike strategy, but our chance of persuading separate Lothians councils to participate would have been minimal. Even if they were sympathetic, our voluntary organisation could probably not have coped with getting them all together. There might have been no routes to the Lothians, nor Safe Routes to Schools for towns outside the city. The 350km Livingston cyclist route network would probably still be pedestrian-only.



for the 1990s similar to Bathgate in the 80s will be the fate of ScotRail and Central Region's proposed 1994 Stirling-Alloa re-opening. **Stop Press: Stirling-Alloa shelved due to BR cuts and privatisation problems. Future uncertain due to council reorganisation** [Scotsman 30.9.93]

ALL CHANGE BACK AGAIN??

One tragic result of government plans to split up Central will be loss of the council's **All Change** transport strategy, perhaps the biggest transport policy change ever in Scotland. The strategy has been widely quoted in transport journals UK-wide, and even threatens Lothian's reputation as Scotland's top bike-friendly authority!

- ✓ Road spending slashed from 90% to 33% of the transport capital budget; many plans scrapped.
- ✓ £200,000 pa on cycle facilities – more per head than Lothian!! Grangemouth 'cycle-friendly'.
- ✓ £1/2m pa rail investment, with re-opened lines to Alloa and Grangemouth.
- ✓ £0.9m pa pedestrian schemes & better lighting.
- ✓ £0.6m pa on traffic calming measures.
- ✓ New planning policies so that housing, shopping etc. are designed and located for walking, cycling and public transport.

On cycling, it is truly incredible to see 'action plan' maps of cycle route networks for each town. These were to be linked by a region-wide cyclist route network for tourists and locals. Cyclists from Lothian and life would have routes **Edinburgh-Falkirk-Stirling, Union/Forth & Clyde canal, and Dunfermline-Alloa-Stirling.**

The whole strategy is now at risk, due to the government's desire to split up Central and create a Stirling council which could be Tory-controlled. An act of "political vandalism" and "deserving all the criticism it will receive" says **Prof Midwinter** of Strathclyde University Government Dept [Scotsman 15.6.93 & 9.7.93].

FIND OUT MORE...

There is an *All Change* talk at the CTC Scottish Cycling Council; and Central Region/FOE are organising an exciting conference *Less Traffic, Better Towns*. Details p.2.

AROUND SCOTLAND... Help yourself, other cyclists, and SPOKES, by writing about any items below that concern you. And... do let us see the reply!

FORTH ESTUARY CROSSINGS

Alastair Darling MP has claimed the government's public consultation on another Forth Road Bridge at Queensferry is "a bogus sham" [Scotsman 13.9.93]. A Treasury briefing paper states the £400m project will go to tender by end 1993, and an advertisement is seeking firms interested in building the bridge. All this before the public consultation report is published!

SPOKES has joined the **Cockburn Assn**, FOE and many others to campaign against the bridge, and for better use of existing links, plus new employment and shopping for Fifers. **Please write to your MP on this.**

STRATHCLYDE REGION

Strathclyde is the first Regional Council to compel developers to traffic-calm all new residential roads. Their new *Guidelines for Development Roads* aim for self-enforcing 20mph limits in all new housing estates [Local Transport Today 5.8.93]. This is a great development, but it would be nice to see the same philosophy applied to new motorways in city centres!

In SPOKES 50 we reported **Lord James Douglas-Hamilton MP's** announcement of a 100km cyclist route based on the superseded A74. Consultation on the exact route is now underway. We are pleased to hear Sustrans has been asked to co-ordinate responses, and that the route will continue south to Carlisle, the start of an extensive network of minor roads.

CENTRAL REGION

The 'All Change' transport strategy [SPOKES 49, 50, 51, 52] begins to take effect! The 1993/94 budget has £80,000 for bike facilities, including routes to Wallace High School, Stirling, and work on the Highland Way. There is £600,000 for pedestrianisation (have they read the TRL report on bikes in pedestrian areas? – see p.2) and £20,000 for traffic calming near schools. On a smaller scale, there are now bike racks at all stations, and bike lanes at a Grangemouth accident blackspot.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY REGION

Following extensive comments by **Galloway Cycling Group** [John Taylor ☎ 055667-395] the Regional Roads Committee has given more attention to cycling in their TPP transport plan. £25,000 has been included in the 1993/94 budget. While this is very low compared to, say, Lothian, it is now a baseline figure in many Scots regions, a welcome improvement on 2-3 years ago when it was the maximum anyone outside Lothian could expect! The Roads Dept is also to set up a Cycle Development Committee with campaign group representation.

The Scottish Office has proposed an A76 Kilmarnock-Dumfries 'action plan', aiming for accident reduction, easier overtaking, and traffic calming in villages. Galloway Cycling Group is lobbying for bike lanes.

BIKE FOR JOBS... AND FUN!!

Where most cities snarl and roar, Groningen ticks, squeaks, rattles and (occasionally) rings its bell. This is because in Groningen – the Netherlands' 6th largest city – the bicycle is the main form of transport.

Sixteen years ago ruinous traffic congestion led Groningen to dig up its city-centre motorways in pursuit of an ideal – the "compact city". Last year it embarked on the creation of a car-free city centre. Its motives, however, repay examination.

"This is not an environmental programme", **Gerrit van Werven**, a senior city planner, said. "It is an economic programme. We are boosting jobs and business. Planning for the bicycle is cheaper than planning for the car". Groningen, a city of 170,000, now has the highest level of bicycle use in the West. 57% of inhabitants travel by bicycle – compared to 4% in the UK.

Since September 1977, when a 6-lane motorway intersection in the city's historic centre was replaced by greenery, pedestrianisation, cycleways and bus lanes, the city has staged a remarkable recovery. Rents are among the highest in the Netherlands, and the outflow of population has been reversed. Businesses, once in revolt against car restraint, clamour for more.

A vital threshold has been crossed. Through sheer numbers the bicycle lays down the rules, slowing traffic, colouring the attitudes of drivers. According to Mr van Werven this demonstrates the "important law... (that) the more cycling there is, the safer it becomes".

A ½-hour ride round the city shows roads being narrowed or closed to traffic, cycleways under construction, and new housing to which the only direct access is by cycle. All new buildings must provide cycle garages. Out-of-town shopping centres are banned. The aim is to force cars to take longer detours, but provide a 'fine-mesh' network giving bicycles easy city centre access.



Cyclists in Groningen, The Netherlands

"We don't ride bicycles because we are poor – people here are richer than in Britain. We ride them because it is fun, faster and convenient", Mr van Werven said.

Like the Netherlands nationally, Groningen backs bicycles because of fears about car growth. Its 10-year bicycle investment costs £20m, yet every commuter car off the road saves £170 a year in hidden costs such as noise, pollution, parking and health.

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BORDERS REGION

The Council tells us the 62-mile Biggar-Berwick **Tweed Cycleway** [SPOKES 51] has attracted many compliments and constructive comments during its first summer. Further comments from users, or ideas for the planned guidebook, to: **P. Gregory, Planning Dept, Borders Region HQ, Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA.**

The Borders Cycle Campaign, **Pedal Power**, has been relaunched with cycle journalist **Geoff Apps** as co-ordinator. Contact: **Sandy ☎ 0890-830355.**

A new transport strategy for east Dumfriesline includes a cyclist route network and traffic calming. The Council sees cycling reducing ill-health, pollution and congestion [see p.3 – *Fife Cyclists Charter leaflet*].

Lothian and Fife are seeking Scottish Office approval for extra rolling stock and stations on the **Edinburgh-Fife Circle** service. With the massive investment proposed for another Forth Road Bridge, it is hard to see how the Scottish Office could refuse this very modest request!

The **Dunfermline/W.Fife** campaign group **Cycleways** has issued its first newsletter. For a copy, send SAE to: **D.Hanlon, 19 Christie St, Dunfermline KY12 0AQ.**

GRAMPIAN & HIGHLAND REGIONS

Sustrans is working on 2 exciting new studies, **A9 Pitlochry-Inverness** and **Inverness-Aberdeen**. The first updates the plans commissioned, but never implemented, by the Scottish Office, in the mid-1980s [SPOKES factsheet 22 (10p + sae)]. Sustrans wants your ideas for problems/problems in both areas. Write to: **53 Cochrane St, Glasgow G1 1HL.**

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