

SPOKES



NORTH EDINBURGH CYCLEROUTE NETWORK!!

Cyclists and walkers can now travel from Dalry to Leith without meeting a single car! A 7km path almost half round the city, only 2-3km from Princes Street, and on 3m width tarmac. A network any British city would be proud to possess!

With one road crossing (West Shore Rd) a further extension leads 4km along the foreshore to **Cramond**. Growing tentacles lead from the main path to **Davidsons Mains**, Sainsbury's at **Craigleith**, **Broughton**, **Newhaven**, and elsewhere. The main path also forms part of the Glasgow-Edinburgh-Dunbar plan.

First started 13 years ago, the network results from a vision by a few in SPOKES and the Regional Council, and continual political pressure – both by SPOKES as an organisation and through letters from individuals. We are often asked the 'secret of our success': we're sure consistent pressure year by year, backed up by letters from the public, is a vital ingredient! [That is why we are always asking you to write to councillors, MPs, or the press!].

Highlights in the network's history were the original dust-surfaced **Warriston-Leith** (District) and **Davidsons Mains-Craigleith** (Regional) paths in 1981 and 82. Thanks to Liberal Cllr Gorrie, a 3m tarmac standard was later adopted. In 1986 with materials paid by the Conservative administration we amazed the Council and ourselves by building the 1½km **Pilton Path**. Supervised by **John Grimshaw** of **Sustrans** we did it in one week, so linking Roseburn-Crewe Toll to the foreshore path.

The new 1986 Labour Council cancelled the Western 'Relief' Road, on which work had started, and which was to use the Roseburn-Crewe Toll path. Unbelievably, behind the scenes this threat remains, as the government forbade Lothian from deleting the road from its long-term 'Structure Plan'. A more

environment-friendly threat came with Labour's metro plans; but after extensive consultation the Council agreed a path beside the metro – a decision we hardly dared hope for. Lack of government support, however, has scuppered the metro for now.

Work on the final link, **Granton Rd-Victoria Park**, was delayed for years by negotiations with BR, who still owned the track; though the time taken still perplexes us. Then a few short weeks by the contractor this year – and the path was complete!

North Edinburgh Network – Fiveways Junction



photo: Peter Verity

SPOKES is to publicise the network by delivering a map (via the Herald & Post) to all 50,000 houses from Cramond to Leith, the £1500 costs shared between SPOKES, Lothian Region and Edinburgh District. We are also organising N.Edinburgh Network Day, Sunday 29 May at Victoria Park, on the route – see p.2. Please help if you can – and come along anyway.

But, especially if you fought through the former undergrowth and flooding, if you cycled along the early stone-dust paths back in 1982, if you lobbied your councillor, or if you helped build the Pilton section in 1986; now is the time to get out your bike or walking shoes, take to the network – and enjoy!

GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT POLICY

"A philosophy that is dangerously one-sided, underpinned by a primitive image of freedom of the car and against railways ... I've never known my constituents so wild ... they sense general incoherence ... There is a policy for cars but there is not a transport policy". So spake Conservative MP **George Walden** recently – one of some 30 Tory MPs thought to be pressing for a new Tory transport policy [Guardian 13.11.93 & 24.1.94].

A few weeks later the government cancelled 49 schemes [Trunk Roads in England 1994] and suspended work on 69, leaving 255 active. They got some useful 'green' publicity, but it seems little more than public relations – expenditure is not being cut, priority

schemes will be built faster, and minister **John MacGregor** said schemes being dropped were those "not likely to be built in the foreseeable future".

Meanwhile Scotland doesn't even get the green fig-leaf. Secretary of State **Ian Lang** proudly announces **5% more cash for trunk roads** [SPOKES 53].

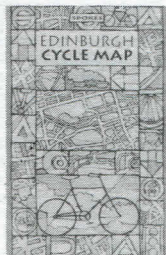
WHO TO WRITE TO

We often suggest you contact your MP or councillor. The Citizens' Advice Bureau can tell you the MP and councillor for your street. Central Edinburgh CAB is ☎ 557.1500; others are in the phone book.

Make sure your letter asks questions, so your representative has to investigate and reply. If you feel very strongly, visit their regular surgery. The CAB can tell you how to find where and when it is. Send SPOKES any correspondence which could be useful for our leaflet!

Out Now!

The SPOKES City Bike Map – £3 from good book & bike shops, or post-free from Spokes



LETTER FROM A NEW MEMBER

"Keep up the good work – I wish you had been around when I was cycling regularly! Having retired recently, and bought the SPOKES map, I may really take to cycling again!"

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* be sure your bike is in good order. *Cycle carefully and considerately* – you are entirely responsible for your own safety. Children under 14, or not used to roads, may **only** come with an adult.

SPOKES 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. Light showers won't put us off, but persistent bad weather may cause cancellation. ☎ Mark 552.9581.

Dates: June 5, July 3, Aug 7*, Sept 4*, (Not Oct 2 – Tour de Forth instead!), Oct 9, Nov 6.*

Also Evening Rides: Thu 2 & Wed 15 June. See below.

(*Special rides, as follows:

June 5 West Lothian – picnic at Dave & Susan du Feu (Linthgow). Free tea/coffee (bring sandwiches).

Aug 7 Midlothian – Meet Usher Hall 10am. ☎ Tony, 663-6000 for 11am Midlothian start point.

Sep 4 East Lothian – Meet Usher Hall 10am or Old Roman Bridge, Musselburgh, 11am. ☎ Tom 663-8404.

SPOKES CYCLING WEEKENDS

Not fast, but you must be used to cycling, and fit for 50ish miles a day (with rest-stops, tea-breaks, etc!). Your bike must be in good working order – get it serviced *before* if necessary. To book bike-bus space & accomodation (youth hostel usually) phone the organiser at *least 14 days before*. Late booking may not be possible.

Jun 4-5 Cowal & Bute Fiona 229.6274

Jun 18 ST. ANDREWS RIDE ☎ 0506.460990 for leaflet

Jun 25 Midnight Madness Mystery Shane 229.1962

Jul 9-10 Forth Valley Pineapple Quest Shane 229.1962

Jul 23-24 Angus & The Mearns Euan 0382.541715

Aug 13-14 Braemar & Ballater Sarah 667.5147

Aug 27-29 Dumfries & Galloway Michael 332.7602

Sep 17-19 Arran Island Tour Stuart 0968.676797

Oct 1-2 Abbey St Bathans Michael 332.7602

Oct 15-16 Glendoll – Final Fling Paul/Di 343.3354

OTHER INTERESTING DATES

May 26 North Edinburgh Network Ceremony by Lothian Regional Council politicians-officials. *All welcome.* 11am on path, entry from Craighall Rd.

May 27-30 KM154 Annual Dumfries & Galloway cycling extravaganza! ☎ P.Hawkins 031.453.3366.

May 27-Jun 5 ENVIRONMENT WEEK including ...

May 29 N.EDINBURGH NETWORK DAY, 2-5pm: see article *May 31 Railway Ramblers Walk* *SPOKES members specially invited.* History & features of disused rail lines. Start 6.30 Granton Sq; end Newhaven. ☎ Tony Jervis 0383.732834.

June 1 CTC evening treasure hunt ☎ U Ryalls 441.1109.

June 2 SPOKES RIDE 7pm Usher Hall ☎ Mark 552.9581.

June 3 Transport Policy & the Environment in Edinburgh Lothian Region Council conference ☎ 469.3668.

June 3 LRC Green Transport Day Commuter Challenge Workplace team entries (bus-bike-car-etc) wanted ☎ P.Hawkins 453.3366. Also pledges by 'senior businesspeople' to go to work today by environment-friendly means ☎ P.Noble (Lothian Region) 469.3668.

June 6 European Elections If you'll be away, register now for your postal vote ☎ 031.455.7455.

June 11-19 NATIONAL BIKE WEEK (☎ 0483.425909) ...

June 14 Green Belt Trust Bike Ride 5-8 miles, starting Loanhead ☎ 652.1114. Fun ride, not sponsored.

June 15 SPOKES CRAMOND FAMILY PICNIC Meet 6.30 Roseburn cycleuroute bridge. Bring picnic. ☎ Mark 552.9581.

June 18-26 Green Transport Week ☎ 0832.828882.

June 26 Family Rambling Day Ramblers' Assn. *Edinburgh hill walk:* Ranger-led, interesting for children (no buggies) ☎ 0968.672978. *W. Lothian event:* ☎ 0506.410493.

June Breath of Fresh Air Scottish Child Magazine, Children & the Environment conference ☎ 220.6502.

Oct 2 Tour de Forth Disability Scotland annual 50-miles round Forth and Kincardine bridges. ☎ 229.8632.

Oct Breath of Fresh Air Scottish Child Magazine, Children & Environment workshops, Glasgow & Edinburgh ☎ 220.6502.

North Edinburgh Network Day !!!

We are using Environment Week to celebrate and publicise *N. Edinburgh Cycleuroute Network* – see p.1.

Sunday 29 May, 2-5pm will be the big SPOKES day in **Victoria Park, Craighall Rd** – on the route.

2:30 Opening by Malcolm Chisolum M.P. then grand parade of unusual & veteran bikes [bring yours!]

☆ **Neatwork** from Coldstream with unusual 'bikes' for family-carrying, disabled people, loads, recumbents, etc! ☎ 0890.3456 (Sandy Watson).



A family 'bike' from NEATWORK

☆ **Harry Henniker's BikeBus** – book your holiday!

☆ **'Doctor Bike'**: experts to check your bike and advise what might need done! (but responsibility for your bike's condition is your own).

☆ **Refreshments** by Trinity Academy PTA.

☆ **Free police bike-security postcoding**

☆ **Cyclepath Network quiz** – with prizes!

☆ **Stalls** from other related organisations.

☆ **Lothian Conservation Volunteers** are organising

work on the paths today. ☎ D Hoy 337.8842.

☆ **And much more ...**

We need your ideas and/or help for the day. There's no charge for a stall for relevant groups. Or, could you organise extra events, based at Victoria Park? Bike shop displays (not sales) also welcome.

If you have ideas or can help: ☎ **Rosemary 553-5819.**

NEW PUBLICATIONS

☎ **12 Reasons for Cancelling the Glasgow Motorway Plans** Report 80p inc p&p from: Glasgow for People, 53 Cochrane St, Glasgow G1 1HL. Video also for sale/loan.

☎ **Sustrans 15-year Review** Exciting full-colour report on UK-wide path building & future. Free if you join Sustrans, 35 King St, Bristol BS1 4DZ (£15+).

☎ **Death on the Streets** Excellent book questioning traditional road safety 'experts' (see SPOKES 51 p.2). Special price £10 inc p&p from: Scottish Child Book Offer, 130 St Stephen St, Edinburgh EH3 5AD.

☎ **Holidays 94** Bike holidays UK & abroad. *Free:* Bicycle Assn, Starley Hse, Eaton Rd, Coventry CV1 2FH.

☎ **Protecting Our Environment** Guide for environmental campaigners in Scotland: water/air quality, combating harmful development, recycling, etc. Your rights, and what you can do. £4.95 inc p&p from: FOE Scotland, 70 Newhaven Rd, Edinburgh EH6 5QG.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

☎ **Womens' Cycling Network** New UK-wide link-up, with newsletter. ☎ Pat Strauss 071.736.8769.

☎ **Sustrans Mongolia** 2000km bike expedition, July-Sep, sponsored for Sustrans, by Centre for Alternative Technology. Sponsors (cash or kind) ☎ 0273.730720.

☎ **Design an Urban Bike** competition (closes 1.7.94). Best design may go into production ☎ 0742.756567.

☎ **SPOKES pathbuilders** have been funded by Lothian Region to upgrade the old E.Lothian **Elphinstone-Macmerrey** coach road. ☎ P.Hawkins 453.3366.

☎ **Route recce-ing** Richard Hutchins, author of *Quiet Wind-Assisted Cycleuroutes between BR Stations* [SPOKES pricelist], needs volunteers to recce Scottish routes in forests, and Inverness-Carlisle. ☎ 0234.363329.

SPOKES LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Members in several areas meet to increase lobbying power over local issues. Please don't just rely on SPOKES centrally to know and do everything for your local area! *If you'd like to organise a meeting of local members, perhaps social, or to lobby your councillor, please get in touch - we'll try to help.*

Linlithgow members spent 5 hours collecting a petition demanding better conditions for walkers and cyclists on the vital path from Springfield to the town centre. A proposed car-park/housing development at Provost Road will bring additional traffic across & beside parts of the route. Councillors **Bill Stuart** (Labour) and **Tom Kerr** (Conservative) are raising this at Regional and District councils.



Linlithgow SPOKES members Jane Thomson & Dave du Feu present their lengthy petition to Cllrs Stuart and Kerr!

Cllr Kerr has also proposed establishing a **Linlithgow path network plan**, and this looks likely to be supported by District and Regional Councils.

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EMPLOYERS & ENVIRONMENT

We are delighted to see some of the biggest local employers - Lothian Region, Edinburgh District, and Edinburgh University - taking seriously their impact on the environment of the city and planet. In particular, all will encourage staff to use more environmentally-friendly (and health-friendly) transport.

Edinburgh District is introducing a 25p a mile bike allowance (on council business), and loans to buy bikes or public transport annual tickets. The higher mileage rate for big cars has been abolished; and loans for large cars go too. The Council says it should set an example to other employers; and bravely points out that previous policies "*discriminated against cyclists who use bikes on council business*".

A SPOKES member on holiday in New Zealand tells us the new policies were reported *there!*

Lothian Region is introducing similar policies - but we don't yet know its new bike mileage rate. The extent to which large employers pollute our city is shown by Lothian's expected £1/5m annual savings merely by stopping higher allowances for big cars! On a smaller scale, Pentland Rangers will use bikes more, and the Council is promoting 'Green Transport Day' on June 3rd - see p.2.

Edinburgh University's new Environmental Policy [Eureka Project Briefing, free from 031.650.2073] includes...

- responsibility for protecting the environment and the health of its members and the wider community.
- minimising the impact of its activities on the local, regional and global environments.
- establishing a rationalised transport policy; encouraging public transport use and providing better facilities for disabled, pedestrians and cyclists.

Send practical suggestions or comments to:
Dr Roger Talbot, Architecture Dept, Chambers St.

Again, the scale of pollution, road costs and traffic danger brought to the city by such a large employer is rarely realised; nor the university's own lost opportunities. De Montfort University in Leicester, for example, devotes over 50% of its land to car parking: this is worth £1.5-3m. for city centre development, or could provide new university accomodation [CTC CRN report, Dave Holladay 4/93]. Policies are being implemented to discourage car use. The lost opportunity from car parking at Edinburgh University could well be substantially greater - maybe the figures will emerge as part of the current environmental review!

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE ??

Whilst public servants locally are taking the environment seriously, MPs, and especially ministers, are practising exactly the opposite of what they preach [Guardian 15.9.93, 12.5.93, 7.6.93].

MPs with cars under 1.3 litres get a generous 39p mileage allowance, but those over 2.3 litres get a staggering 68p. [This reduces to 34p once they have claimed over £13,600 per year - more than the total earnings of many members of the public]. We'd like to know what local MPs are doing about this environmentally appalling arrangement - *please write to your MP, and let us know the result!* The few MPs who use bikes, incidentally, get no mileage allowance at all.

As if this wasn't enough, ministers also get private motoring perks. Businesspeople using chauffeured cars from home to work pay various taxes - but ministers (and some top civil servants) are exempt. On average this means £8000 taxable benefit (they save £3000). And for top ministers in Daimlers, the benefit rises 150% to £20,000 in 1994 when it becomes based on car value rather than engine size. Minister **Stephen Dorrell** told the Guardian "*Frankly, if I had to pay tax for this, I would walk to work*". **In our view, that just about sums it up!**

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

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY REGION

Discussions continue between D&G, Strathclyde Region and the Scottish Office on the promised **M74/M6 cycleway**. Most will consist of bike lanes on the old A74 (possibly 1-way lanes each side in D&G and a 2-way lane one side in Strathclyde!).

The route's value may be reduced if motorway tolls force traffic onto the old road. Another fear is the cyclistroute ending at the border, rather than linking safely to the minor roads round Carlisle.

Please get your MP to raise these points with the government. Planning is going on NOW. Further details: *John Taylor, CTC Scotland, Monksmill, Castle Douglas DG7 2NY ☎ 0556.67395.*

FIFE REGION

The Region's annual **cycle budget** has risen from £5000 to £40,000. More should also come from other budgets such as road safety, and by joint-funding with the EC and other bodies. Projects include more work on the **coastal route** (eg Aberdour-Kirkcaldy), **St.Andrews Viaduct Walk, Leuchars-Tentsmuir-Tay-Bridge**, and promoting **bike tourism**. *Details: P.Milne, cycling officer ☎ 0592.754411x3534.*

GRAMPIAN/HIGHLAND REGIONS

A feasibility study on an **Aberdeen-Inverness** route has been completed for the councils by Sustrans.

TAYSIDE REGION

Over 10 years ago the Scottish Office-sponsored Grimshaw report first proposed an **A9-alternative cyclistroute** [SPOKES factsheet 22; 10p+SAE]. Much could be achieved just by signposting existing minor-roads, although new construction is essential in parts. The plans were disgracefully pigeonholed by the government, who tried to shuffle off all responsibility onto local councils. Despite a hopeful consultants' report for Tayside 2-3 years ago, bike tourists heading for the Highlands are still expected to use the A9. European bike-tourists are horrified at the conditions.

SPOKES has been contacted by **Killiecrankie Community Council**, who fear local towns are losing out on bike tourism, are worried for the safety of cyclists who do come, and want the Tayside A9-route built soon (EC money could assist the cost). **If you have cycled the A9, or are put off by the danger, please do write to: Mike Donagahy (Killiecrankie CC), Wester Balrobbie, Killiecrankie PH16 5LJ. Letters will be used to help press for the route.**

Tayside is putting effort into cycling around **Dundee**, but the A9 needs high priority. Tayside also was the only major Region not to have a single route-leaflet for our SPOKES 53 feature.

STRATHCLYDE REGION

The Region and Scottish Office are planning a **Stepps-Muirhead A80** shared path, also allowing westbound cyclists to avoid Crow Wood roundabout.

The Sustrans Glasgow-Paisley-Port Glasgow route has been extended west with a new bridge at **Devon Glen**. A "stunning place" according to Sustrans.

Sustrans has published a 1994-5 Events Programme for the **Glasgow/Greenock/Irvine** paths, including walks, rides, festivals, surveys and volunteer days. *SAE to: Sustrans, 53 Cochrane St, Glasgow G1 1HL.*

The **Forth & Clyde Canal** Monitoring Report [£3 from Strathclyde Planning Dept, India St, G2 4PF] shows more people walking and cycling. Some conflicts are noted, but the long-term aim is "the towpath be upgraded . . . as a cycleway". This does not cover the narrower Union Canal towpath where cycle upgrading is only being considered at a few sections, in Edinburgh, Linlithgow and Broxburn.

FORTH ROAD BRIDGES

As predicted in SPOKES 51 the government, perhaps worried by opposition to a new bridge, has at last allowed Fife & Lothian to borrow £8.8m (over the next 5 years) for urgently-needed rail improvement: 4 new 2-car class-157 Sprinters (we think these include luggage sections at one end, like class 156 Super Sprinters) plus stations at Dalgety Bay (1996), Dysart (1997) and Dunfermline East (1999!).

Borrowing-permission of £3.7m has also been given for Lothian's 'Greenways' (parking restrictions, bus lanes, etc on main roads into Edinburgh). We have mixed feelings: it will help buses and give some cycle facilities but also helps cars towards the centre.

Many people suspect these announcements are softening-up prior to bridge go-ahead [Scotsman editorial 2.2.94], but the government insists no decision will be taken until Forth-area transport studies are complete.

Opposition to the bridge is not only from environmentalists - motorists fear increased tolls to finance the new bridge and developer profits. The Severn Bridge car-toll, for example, is now £3.40, to finance a second bridge now under construction. Many lorries take a lengthy countryside detour to avoid their £10 toll, with "devastating effects on local communities" [Financial Times 1.1.94].

Although the road industry asserts that new roads are vital for economic recovery [e.g. 'Better Roads Now' - below], evidence is sadly lacking. In extensive correspondence the Scottish Office has failed to show how Fife's economy would benefit from a new road bridge [Railway Development Scotland News Jan 94].

MORE ROADS NOW!

There is, however, concerted pressure on government, including much behind the scenes, from the road/construction industry. A new report 'Better Roads Now' [Transport Action Scotland 0625.615354], supported by the big construction companies, calls for road-building throughout Scotland. Ominously, it largely takes a new Forth Bridge for granted, then spends a long time reviving the Western Radial Road, to connect the M8 right into the city centre.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It is vital to keep up opposition to a new bridge. . .

- ☛ Contact your MP (see p.1 for address). Ask him/her to raise your points with the Scottish Office.
- ☛ Send a protest postcard to the Secretary of State for Scotland (SAE) to SPOKES for card(s).
- ☛ Send donation to and get info from the **Forthright Alliance**, a coalition of groups seeking a socially and environmentally responsible alternative. *SAE to: Cockburn Assn, Trunks Close, EH1 1SR.*
- ☛ Register your protest on the Scottish Office Hotline ☎ 0345.741741 (local rates Scotland-wide).

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LOCAL BIKE-ROUTE NETWORKS

Many new Regional Council proposals are to construct or extend local networks, rather than isolated facilities – a very encouraging sign. [The drawings can all be seen in Transportation Committee minutes at LRC HQ, on request]. Surveying, negotiating and legal work to prepare these network plans is extremely time-consuming, and much of this *would not happen* without Lothian's Cycle Team.

The Council has approved extension of the Roseburn-Dalry Rd-Telfer Subway route to **Morrison St**, though a legal order is required before construction. Once Central Edinburgh Local Plan is out we will know if or how this continues to Lothian Road.

The Council has drawn up network plans for **Gyle-Riccarton-Sighthill-Wester Hailes**, including paths and footways, minor roads, improved towpath, etc., linking destinations such as Gyle shopping & technology centres, Riccarton Campus, the Water of Leith path, and routes into W.Lothian. Some features depend on future redevelopment, but the overall network gives great hope for the future.

A network has also been drawn up to link **Portobello-Bingham-Brunstane-Musselburgh**, and legal steps begun to complete Brunstane Burn path and install A199 Eastfield-Fisherrow advisory bike lanes.

A network plan is also being prepared for Inch-Craigmillar, linked to Cameron Toll Centre, the Innocent path (via Braid Burn valley), and the new Infirmary. The EC is likely to provide much of the funding.

20MPH ZONES

Lothian has opened one of Scotland's first two 20mph zones, at **Niddrie**. Such zones cannot be signed until physical measures forcing cars to go slow are in place. 20mph zones in England have shown dramatic falls in accident injuries. Further schemes are planned for **W.Pilton, Armadale**, and other areas with high injury rates – particularly amongst children.

HOLYROOD PARK

We have had several letters from members about cycling safety through Holyrood Park. The Park authorities say they will consider a cycle path if necessary, but think "it is not needed in the foreseeable future" [Letter to a SPOKES member 19.1.93]. **Clr Catto** is also raising the issue. Concerned cyclists should write to: *Historic Scotland, 20 Brandon St.*

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☛ "I WAS A BIT ANNOYED ..." ☛

Full rail privatisation in 1-2 years will bring many problems. For cyclists on holiday from, say, Middlesbrough to Mallaig there could be bike-fees to 3 separate companies – even getting information would be a nightmare. However, a less toadying attitude to government by rail management could be one bonus!

It has been rare indeed to hear a BR manager criticise the government. But now **Dr Paul Prescott**, Scottish director of semi-privatised 'Railtrack', has publicly expressed his "anoyance" that the government suddenly allowed £5.6m for Stirling East Radial Road, when there was no money for the Stirling-Alloa rail proposal. The £5.6m "would have paid for Stirling-Alloa twice, or gone a long way to a Forth rail circle via Dunfermline." (*Scotsman 25.3.94*).

CHRIS GREEN BACK TO SCOTRAIL

Another incidental benefit of BR's breakup is the return to Scotland of former ScotRail director Chris Green. Under Mr Green 10 years ago ScotRail's mood changed from inevitable decline to hope: re-openings began, and many existing stations had a facelift. Where the money came from seemed a mystery! Now, at his own request, Chris Green is back.

Already Mr Green, while emphasising he is not a miracle worker, has promised to look at bikes on trains. When bike charges for short journeys were introduced in May 1993, we heard from highly-placed sources that ScotRail was very unhappy but felt unable to reject the central decision by BR Regional Railways. We remain convinced they could have made their own decision given the guts. In S.Wales, for example, bike-charging has been experimentally dropped on Sundays on Cardiff Valley lines.

Bikes have continued free within Strathclyde PTE (½ Scotland's population) and London (Network S.E.). The new Nottingham 'Robin Hood' line and even most London Underground services don't charge either! [*London Cyclist Feb 94*]

Now, with more independence for ScotRail, and an independent-minded manager, there could be genuine policy review here. ScotRail should revert to its pre-1993 policy, which worked extremely well given the rolling stock limitations.

- * a booking fee for long distance holiday journeys where assurance of space is vital; and
- * no charges on commuter/leisure lines such as Edinburgh-Glasgow and Edinburgh-Fife. Availability of space at the guard's discretion, as before.
- * Also, better account should be taken of bikes in future rolling stock design/refurbishment.

Most councils (eg Strathclyde and Lothian) strongly support free bike carriage as a contribution to reducing car use. Recent Dutch research [*reported in 'Buckinghamshire Cyclist, Dec 93*] emphasises that such reductions are possible. As well as bike-rail the report emphasises better bike storage at stations, and reliable bus/rail services. Locally, we certainly know people who transferred from bike/rail to car for commuting or leisure due to the new charges.

We urge former and potential bike-rail users to write to: **Mr Chris Green, ScotRail Director, 58 Port Dundas Rd, GLASGOW G4 0HG**. Explain how your travel has been/is affected, and urge free bike carriage on local journeys. Send us useful replies.

CYCLING & THE ENVIRONMENT

Our February Friends Meeting House public meeting was another packed-out success. **Tony Grant of Sus-trans**, whose job includes persuading sceptical motorised politicians and officials that cycling is transport, relished his wholly sympathetic audience! We can't resist quoting some of his gems of possible wisdom!

- * *Present policies aim to treat the symptoms of excessive motorised mobility, while creating more of it!*
 - * *Architects and town planners get the stick for destroying town centres. However, the real damage has been done by traffic engineers and road planners.*
 - * *Widespread traffic calming will do far more for cycling than any number of cycle routes.*
 - * *At current UK rates of traffic calming it will take 500 years to reach levels already installed in parts of Europe. Yet 20% of the motorway programme cost would traffic calm every UK street capable of calming!*
- Our next public meeting will be this autumn. Suggestions for themes/speakers gratefully received.

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