

Cycling star to lead Pedal on Parliament next month

Graeme Obree to Attend Pedal on Parliament

Grass roots cycle campaign Pedal on Parliament are delighted to announce that Graeme Obree – otherwise known as ‘The Flying Scotsman’ – will be attending the second Pedal on Parliament (PoP2) on Sunday the 19th May. Graeme, two-time individual pursuit world champion (1993, 1995), and two-time world ‘hour record’ holder (1993, 1994) will be joining thousands of others in Edinburgh at 3pm at the Meadows to ride to the Scottish Parliament to present politicians with an eight point manifesto for safer cycling in Scotland. At last year’s demonstration 3000 cyclists, young and old, filled the streets of Edinburgh on everything from expensive road bikes to tiny balance bikes, sending a message that they wanted to see real investment in cycling, making it accessible for everyone from the smallest child to a world champion.

From the start, Pedal on Parliament has been supported by high-profile Scottish cyclists, including Mark Beaumont who attended the last event, and Sir Chris Hoy. After the numbers who turned out last year, far exceeding the organisers’ expectations, politicians have responded with kind words but only a small increase in cycle funding – just £6m, split over two years. These actions fall way short of the sort of investment required if the Scottish Government is to reach its own target of 10% of journeys by bike by 2020. Unless there is a significant step change in funding very soon there is little chance of this target being met – as the recent Get Britain Cycling report has found, investment of at least £20 per head would be needed to achieve those levels of cycling across the UK. PoP asks for at least 5% of the transport budget to be spent on cycling and 10% on all active travel, which in Scotland would amount to about £25 per head.

Graeme Obree explained his motivation for supporting and attending the event

'I would love to see Scotland develop a culture which supports cycling and encourages cycling as wholeheartedly as possible, be that for pleasure, leisure, transportation or competition. It's one of the best ways to experience a town, city or the countryside, so any steps to improve consideration for the needs of cyclist will ultimately improve our country.'

The event itself will be a light-hearted ride, but with a serious purpose. The most recent road safety figures for Scotland show that the numbers of cyclists and pedestrians killed and seriously injured has actually risen. Experts have warned that the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists killed or seriously injured on Scotland's roads are set to exceed those in cars within a few years.

Olympics and the success of Scottish cyclists Sir Chris Hoy and Paralympians Aileen McGlynn, Karen Darke and Neil Fachie have created a huge interest in cycling, with thousands more Scots taking to two wheels – but they will quickly give up if the conditions they encounter on the roads aren't safe and inviting, and that will require real investment.

One of the organisers of PoP2, Sally Hinchcliffe said, "We're absolutely thrilled to have Graeme on board with PoP, even if it's likely to be the slowest bike ride he's ever been on.

Professional riders like Graeme have to spend many hours training, and they know what the conditions can be like on the roads. There's a whole generation of children growing up whose parents can't risk letting them out to cycle on their own simply because it's not safe. Not only have they lost the freedom we enjoyed on our bikes, but we risk losing the Graeme Obrees of tomorrow which is a tragedy for Scotland and for the whole world."

The organisers of Pedal on Parliament urge anyone who cycles

in Scotland, or who would like to cycle in Scotland but doesn't feel safe, to join them and Graeme for PoP2 and maintain the pressure on the Scottish Government to put cycling at the heart of its transport policy.

Together we can make Scotland a cycle-friendly nation