

Peace Road in Scotland

Edinburgh, Scotland, 5. July 2015



By Hamish Robertson

The Peace Road event in Scotland took place at the bridges over the Firth of Forth near Edinburgh on Sunday, 5th July. The weather forecast was rain in the afternoon so we brought the event forward to the morning. Shortly after 10.30 am we gathered in front of the high school at South Queensferry, sang a few songs, read a passage from True Father's peace message in 2005 about the world highway and the Bering Strait King Bridge Tunnel, and prayed. Meanwhile, the bicycle hire man arrived and fifteen of us received bicycles. We set off on the path to the Forth Road Bridge, led by Oliver Lane, organiser of the event, along with the camera-man on a bicycle. At the same time the walkers, sixteen in number, set off down the hill to the South Queensferry quayside. All of us were wearing Peace Road tee-shirts.

There is a path for cyclists across the road bridge. Half-way across the bridge, the cyclists stopped for a photo-shot, with the famous Forth Rail Bridge in the background. There was a cruise-liner anchored in the firth.

Coincidentally, the Forth Rail Bridge, which is 125 years old, received UNESCO World Heritage status the very same day as our Peace Road event. The road bridge, which we bicycled across, is 51 years old, and a new road bridge is going up nearby, which will be called the Queensferry Crossing. All the bridges are over 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles) long. The camera-man captured a picture of a steam train crossing the rail-bridge, a rare event these days. We continued to the north end of the road-bridge, and came back south again, and bicycled down to the quayside at South Queensferry, where we met the walkers. Queensferry is named after King Malcolm III's wife, Queen Margaret, who established the ferry for pilgrims nearly a thousand years ago.

Edinburgh councillor representing South Queensferry, Cllr Alastair Shields, met us on the quayside, and said a few words of welcome. He thought the Peace Road project was an excellent idea, and that it was specially fortuitous to hold the Scottish event at Queensferry. We had a final photo-shot, gave in our bicycles, and

adjourned to a café on the quayside for celebration tea, coffee and cake.

One of our young cyclists, Vlad Pritchkin, had come from Airdrie, nearly thirty miles away, and the mechanism on his bicycle had broken when he was half-way. He had to complete his journey, fifteen miles or so, running and pushing his bicycle, and free-wheeling where he could. The camera-man was in his sixties and had not ridden a bicycle for twenty-years, yet he did a good job following us on his bicycle across the bridge, taking videos. We were happy to see members from Newcastle, north of England. Participants were mostly Scots or British, but there were also members from several other countries, including Korea, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Russia.

The Peace Road event was a joyful occasion, and united us in a good cause – world peace through economic, social and cultural communication, and good physical exercise. The weather held until we left the café to climb back up the hill, when the first drops of rain started to fall.