



The history of Living Streets

By Jon Spray



Introduction

As Living Streets carries its pedestrians campaign forward with the launch of many new local branches, community street audits and the campaign for 'liveability', our organisation is delighted to be celebrating being 75 years old. On the surface our modern vibrant organisation, which encapsulates the idea of 'living streets' in its very name, is a wildly different one to that which was formed at a unique meeting in London in 1929. However by taking a fascinating journey through our history Living Streets has discovered that throughout those 75 years, despite a rapidly changing country and some extraordinary world events, the central ethos of the founders of the Pedestrians Association has been constantly upheld. The idea of protecting and promoting people's right to use their street, and therefore their way of life, is as relevant now as it was when those founders brought our organisation to life in the summer of 1929. Their passion and energy established the vision which Living Streets continues to strive for today.

August 2004

Front cover pictures

Top: early pedestrian crossing, Southport, Summer 1955

Middle: protest after child's death on streets, Battersea, 1966

Bottom: launch of Living Streets Haringey, Summer 2003

Living Streets Archives

Committee Leaders of the Pedestrians Association / Living Streets

| Year | President | Chairperson |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1929 | Viscount Cecil Of Chelwood | J.J Bailey/G.E Startup |
| 1930 | | Sir A. Butterworth |
| 1941 | | J.S. Dean |
| 1944 | Rt hon. Isaac Foot | |
| 1950 | Prof A.L. Goodhart | |
| 1963 | Dr Gerald Ellison (Bishop of Chester) | |
| 1965 | | T. Foley |
| 1970 | | C. Jenkins |
| 1975 | Hugh Monefiore (Bishop of Kingston) | |
| 1977 | | T. Bendixson |
| 1981 | | Cyril Myerscough |
| 1982 | Terence Bendixson | |
| 1992 | | F. Lawson |
| 1997 | | A. Hanton |
| 1999 | | A. Purkis |

Directors

Year Director

1997 2002 Ben Plowden
2002 Tom Franklin

Pictures of initial team, and the team today



Viscount Cecil



Tom Foley



Some of today's Living Streets team at their summer cricket match, 2004. Back row from left: Hester Brown, Simon Barnett, Giikah Brown, Ros Young, Jo Pike, Paul Evans, Georgette Taylor, Caroline Fleay, Bron Thornton. Front row from left: Edward Hill, Jon Spray, Simon Bromhead, Tom Franklin, Uddalak Datta, David Early, Kevin Ryan.

In the beginning...

Throughout his classic 1920s 'Jazz Age' novel *The Great Gatsby*, author F. Scott Fitzgerald uses the image of the car as a sign both of man's perceived development and of the inherent dangers that such development may pose to human progress. Just as Gatsby's Rolls Royce was a symbol of his status and the means of his downfall, so the mass adoption of the car throughout Britain in the post Great War period was seen as a tremendous leap forward for the country's society, but also, by some enthusiastic members of the public, a fundamental challenge to its basic way of life.

At a meeting in London's Essex Hall in August 1929 the Pedestrians Association was formed with a specific purpose. The purpose was that

"In view of the serious danger of motor traffic today an Association be formed for the defence of public rights, especially of pedestrians".

The process of forming an organisation with the intention of protecting and promoting pedestrian rights had been undertaken, but it was a process that had developed throughout 1929.

The prominent peer Viscount Cecil of Chelwood had become increasingly concerned with the social problems and public dangers being generated by the rise of the private automobile. The initial evidence of this problem came in the growing accident toll involving pedestrians on Britain's roads (over 6000 fatal accidents in 1929) but Cecil saw the problem as a wider one of personal freedom and a way of life.

"You must not rely on the exceptional care of users of the roads, you must provide conditions under which accidents will not occur unless there is an exceptional want of care" (Viscount Cecil August 14th 1929).

A political reformer from his seat in House of Lords who had since the First World War worked to establish the infant League of Nations, Cecil began to promote road and traffic reform ideas through a series of speeches to his fellow Peers. It was these speeches that a young journalist by the name of Tom Foley became aware of, and he began to develop a unique proposal that would eventually lead to the formation of the Pedestrians Association.

Foley contacted Viscount Cecil with his idea of forming an Association to promote and protect the pedestrian way of life. Tom Foley and his wife Avis were to become champions of the Pedestrians Association for the rest of their lives.

Foley was already an active voice in highlighting the dangers of motor vehicle-biased planning and legislation, and was in contact with numerous members of the public who shared his concern. It was through his vigour that on August 13th 1929 a provisional meeting of the fledgling Association was held. As can be seen from the first page of the original annual report...

'The Association was formed at a meeting held in the Essex Hall, London, on August 13th 1929. The meeting was convened jointly by Messrs J.J. Bailey and T.C. Foley, and was one by private invitation to people who had written to Viscount Cecil about pedestrians grievances or who had written to T.C. Foley following a letter he had sent to the press'.

That meeting led to a provisional committee being established to oversee the running of the Association and the drawing up of a constitution for the purpose of creating policy by which to promote their pedestrian-orientated message. The recently issued Royal Commission on Transport report 'The Control of Traffic on Roads' (1929) was an initial government research report that defined the Association's constitution and created a focus for those original committee and public members. Tom Foley became its Secretary, J.J. Bailey its provisional Chairman and Viscount Cecil the organisation's President.

The progress of the Pedestrians Association over the last 75 years has not by any means been a smooth one. The work of what was for a long time a group of professionally-informed amateurs has often been a struggle against far wealthier and often more narrow-minded groups, and always a campaign to illuminate the hearts and minds of the British public with the ideas of pedestrian rights, freedoms and possibilities. There were many different eras for the Pedestrian Association during the last 75 years, which can be defined by its campaigns and policies - and most importantly the people who were at the heart of each issue and event. The different personalities and talents that each person, no matter how large or small their role, contributed are the flavour and essence of the history of the Pedestrians Association.

First General Meeting

Travis Hall, Aug 13th 1929.

Present Mr J. Bailey (in chair) Wolfe, Brown, Huelstone, Simpson, R. Reynolds, Startup, Field, Miles, Benseker, Burgess, Robinson, Butterworth, Mitchell, Thompson, Hear, Stone, Brewster, Foley & Freeman.

The following resolution was carried proposed by Mr Startup, seconded by Mr Brown

"In view of the serious dangers to motor traffic to-day an association be formed for the defence of public rights, especially of pedestrians."

A Provisional Ctte was appointed to report to a further meeting on name, aims & constitution as follows: - Messrs Bailey, Benseker, Brown, Field, Foley, Huelstone, Jones, Hear, Miles, Startup & Stone.

Mr Foley was appointed secretary to the

Page from the first minute book from 1929. Details of the early meetings were meticulously recorded.

After the inception of the Association there was work to be done immediately in combating the encroachment upon personal and community freedoms by the road lobby, and a government that was largely sympathetic towards it. The Association's Executive Committee, with Tom Foley as its secretary and driving force, began to enrol members, take subscriptions and present the public face of the Association - pedestrian standard bearer, campaigner, educator and lobbying organisation. All of these tasks were achieved with the resources that were funded entirely through membership subscription. As Mr J. Bailey informed the first general meeting at the Association's newly leased premises at 134 Fleet Street...

"The Secretary reported that up to date membership totalled 175 and the receipts were £63. The expenses up to date including those of the public meeting were £37-3-0. The Secretary reported that during the last month most of the time of his two assistants as well as himself had been taken up with correspondence, receiving callers and giving information to the press".

Foley and the Association were at pains to point out to the world that their organisation was not at all anti-car; however, they were pro-pedestrian and when the ideas of convenience of the small minority in the motorised transport lobby clashed with this, their position was one that Britain's streets were first and foremost for Britain's people. Many members of the public seemed to agree with the Association's proposition; highlighted in the early winter of 1930 when Foley received a letter of support from a Watford-based local residents' association offering any assistance they could provide.

This was perhaps the beginning of The Pedestrians Association / Living Streets tradition of national organisation and local cooperation to achieve community-based results. This process can be seen today with the launch of our Southwark and Sheffield branches, which complement the many existing local branches of Living Streets. These local people are without doubt the back-bone of Living Streets organisation and enable us to be effective.

From these humble beginnings it was the work of men such as Foley, Cecil and Bailey which ensured that the infant Association not only survived but began to thrive. The Association's place in Britain's political establishment seemed to be realised when in 1930 the government of Ramsey MacDonald officially recognised it as a representative of pedestrian opinions and rights, and established links for regular consultation with the Ministry of Transport. The Association spent much of the first year establishing itself, both in the consciousnesses of the

British public and within 134 Fleet Street, where administration and structures needed to be put in place that would allow a long term and successful future. It is perhaps fair to say looking back from the distant future that is 2004, that in those early days Foley and his team must have done something right!

The newly formed Pedestrians Association wasted little time in its attempt to influence legislative decision-making. By the end of 1932 the small but committed team had gained pedestrian provision in several areas of interest. The Road Fund Grants Scheme which had been a key section of the Royal Commission's recent Transport Report, and enabled government funding to be given to local authorities for road construction, was given an adjunct that stipulated that every road or street constructed through this scheme had to have suitable footpath provision. At the same time the government, as a result of the Association's first concerted lobbying effort, made it compulsory for cars to be fitted with speedometers. Perhaps the most important issue for the Association at this time was that of speed and the role excessive speeds played in road accidents and the intimidation of pedestrians. Throughout the 1930s the issue of road speed limits was to become a key battleground for the government, the motoring lobby and the Association. As the Association was being formed the government had given in to demands to abolish speed limits - this "progressive" step was seen as a method to keep people moving efficiently and on time. Overturning this policy would become the Association's first great campaign. This tradition of campaigning for speed restrictions remains, with Living Streets commitment to encourage pedestrian-friendly streets, demonstrated by the Pedestrians Association being a founder member of the Slower Speeds Initiative in 1998.

Throughout the next decade the Association campaigned against unchecked speed and its influences on the road casualty rate. The Association pointed to the fact that during the First World War, two and half million British people had been killed, a number that had quite rightly been seen as an appalling loss. However, since that time a further one and half million had been killed or injured on Britain's roads according to Ministry of Transport figures; this slaughter was a virtually unrecognised tragedy. As a response to the Association's continual work the government introduced a steady stream of pedestrian-friendly road safety legislation. The Association continually highlighted the fact that cars doing twenty miles an hour or less were and still are unlikely kill somebody in a collision, a fact that is still often ignored seventy five years later. The Association supported Salford City Council in its design and adoption of the Play Street Scheme that closed local streets for two hours during the rush hour to allow children to play and meet safely after school. This idea has been constantly on the Association's

agenda since the 1930's and is a primary Living Streets policy today. The 1934 Road Traffic Act brought in local authority speed limiting powers and, perhaps more significantly, the introduction of the national driving test. As a result of the early success of the Association Foley secured a move to slightly larger and better-equipped premises - the new headquarters were at 3, Tudor Street, London.

The pre-war period of the Association's history was encapsulated by the tireless work of its small but enthusiastic committee. A brief glance at the "Occasional News letter" for that period shows that Tom Foley travelled the length and breadth of the British Isles to attend public meetings, hear evidence or provide consultations on a broad scope of pedestrian issues. This work, which allowed the Association to build up a great deal of professional knowledge on major pedestrian issues, became fundamental to the Association's reputation. The focus of the Association was, due to this knowledge, focused upon the need for pedestrians to cross their streets, while a more substantial campaign was mounted to prevent roads from becoming mere traffic lanes. As a result the Pedestrians Association became synonymous with the development and introduction of pedestrian crossings.

Due to the Association's constant call for pedestrian-safe crossing places the government introduced the first pedestrian crossing experiments in 1934. From this point throughout the Association's history, the provision of excellent pedestrian crossing and street facilities has been a central tenet of the organisation's work. Much of this success would have been impossible without the cooperation and reforming attitude of the Transport Minister at the time, Leslie Hore-Belisha (later Lord Hore-Belisha). The introduction of the first Zebra Crossings with their distinctive orange "Belisha Beacons" provided him with a vivid legacy. Hore-Belisha's sympathies can be seen through his membership of the Association upon his retirement and in 1950 his appointment as a Vice President, which showed the extent of the Association's influence upon the former minister. The Belisha Beacon takes its place at Living Streets today as part of our logo.

The work and recognition of the Association throughout the corridors of the Ministry of Transport led to their extensive consultation on the proposed introduction of a Highway Code. First introduced in its entirety in 1934 the Association played a full role in the development of the Code, providing consultation throughout. The Highway Code rapidly developed as a foundation for road and street usage and became key to the education of pedestrian, pedal powered and motorised road users alike. Today, Living Streets campaigns for a replacement

of the outdated Highway Code with a 'Street Code', which would reflect other uses of the street apart from traffic. The unstinting work that saw the introduction of the Highway Code, the National Driving Test, Speed Limiting and Pedestrian Crossings established the Association as a true and respected campaigner for pedestrian issues in Britain. The Pedestrians Association / Living Streets are rightly proud of these key early achievements. The first ten years of the Association's work was a successful and worthwhile undertaking and seemed to live up to the goals that Foley and Cecil had envisaged from the beginning. While focusing upon British domestic political issues, the committee of the Association were only too well aware of the international political climate by the late 1930's. Perhaps the biggest challenge to the Association in these early years was the onset of the Second World War, and the decision to carry on the work of the Association, which may have seemed to many of secondary importance, even while the hostilities were raging. The committee, after an emergency meeting, decided that the Association still had a valuable role to play in protecting the rights of British street users from over-zealous war time regulations, while fully appreciating the need to support the vital war effort.

Wartime Worries and a Change in Focus?

The Second World War saw an easing back of Pedestrians Association campaigning due to the needs of the country to make sacrifices; but also a series of interventions that allowed some positives to occur from the devastation. The Association was informed by members that the "Black Out" regulations were creating hazards for pedestrians and drivers alike. These claims were backed up by news of several tragic incidents across the country caused by a lack of street and vehicle lighting. The Association successfully lobbied the wartime government to amend its regulations. As a result, pedestrians were entitled to carry a small hand torch and the sides of road-ways were painted white to allow for increased safety, while not compromising the country's security. At the end of the war the Association, in conjunction with several youth groups, managed to implement a "bomb-site" play scheme. This scheme involved the clearing of bombed out buildings to create free waste ground for supervised play areas for urban children who had no other leisure activities. The Association's cooperation with the government and youth organisations showed an early intent to invest in joint working to get their job done.

The post war period saw recognition that the Association needed to consolidate its position as the leading pro-pedestrian pressure group in a period that was

seen nationally as a chance for a fresh start. Throughout the 1950's the Association managed to defend the continued introduction of local speed limits and stave off the process of abolishing them, which was known as "de-restriction".

The fight against de-restriction was a continuous one against those who claimed speed limiting was a breach of the motorist's rights and freedoms. Despite these successes the committee and membership felt that they were not getting their message across. After a fiercely-argued emergency meeting in November 1952, The Pedestrians Association became "The Pedestrians Association for Road Safety". The intention was to re-enforce the purpose of the organisation but it is arguable that the name change only succeeded in narrowing the remit of the already successful organisation. Despite the possible consequences, the intentions were well meant - the committee was trying to re-assert the Association's place as the guardian of the British pedestrian. This change can be compared to the launch of the "Living Streets" idea in 2001; it's interesting to discover the differing opinions as to the role of the Pedestrians Association throughout its history right up to the present day.

Throughout the 1950's the Pedestrians Association was involved in the creation and improvement of road safety legislation, and also in the promotion of pedestrian rights and freedoms. Classic examples of this outlook are the campaign against the construction of the Hammersmith subways and flyover, and the Association's "Campaign for Rural Transport". Though history proves that both these campaigns were ultimately unsuccessful, it also begs the question, what state would our country's streets and transport networks have been in without such intervention? Anyone who has tried to travel from Hammersmith tube station towards Hammersmith Bridge will appreciate the folly of such negative outcomes in mid-century planning imagination. For cars to be above the ground it would seem there has been a gross error of judgement. Tom Foley strived to get the Association's ideas heard and understood where and whenever possible.

The mid 1950's were notable for the work of Foley, and the chairman at the time, Mr Graham Page. While Foley unofficially led the charity at a national and local level, Page, the Member of Parliament for Crosby in Lancashire since 1953, championed the cause in and around Westminster. By the late 1950's this pair's work could be seen to be achieving notable success. During the Suez crisis Foley published papers on Britain's over-reliance on petroleum whilst demonstrating why cars and roads were strangling Britain's cities.

Their work received an unexpected stroke of luck in 1960 when Page was drawn

from Parliament's lottery to produce a Private Members Bill within the Commons. The completed Bill was entitled: **'Bill to amend the law relating to highways and road traffic, including licences, the sale of vehicles, lighting, insurance, tests for drunkenness; to provide for the appointment of a commissioner for road safety and to define his functions; to provide for a corps of safety enforcement officers; to amend the law relating to compensation for bodily injury, death and damage to property; and for purposes connected therewith'**.

Apart from its snappy title this radical proposal for pedestrian reform suffered from continuous delays due to the change in government in 1960 and the ambitious nature of its content, but was eventually adopted in piecemeal form throughout the late 1960's. Perhaps the major legacy of Graham Page's work was the fact that the section of his Bill that related to Drink Driving led to the legal introduction of Blood Alcohol Level Testing for drivers from 1966 onwards. The continued work of the Association led to it being consulted about the first British Motorway legislation and the Campaign for Rural Transport in 1957. Foley echoed sentiments that are still highly relevant today;

"If transport were run as a public service like the Post Office, efficient branch railway lines and bus services would be maintained, although taken by themselves, they were run at a loss. Every one of thousands of rural telephone kiosks makes an annual loss of £40, but they are installed and operated to meet a social need" .

Throughout this period the energetic work of the Pedestrians Association allowed it to become involved in the planning debates surrounding town centre reconstruction and regeneration, as Britain moved away from wartime austerity and into the 1960s.

Light at the End of the Pedestrian Tunnel?

By the mid 1960s the wave of public disaffection with various governments' refusal to adopt what could be termed "people based policies" seemed to spill over into multiple demonstrations across Europe, and a new level of encouragement was provided for more progressive policy making. The Pedestrians Association took part, as a founder member, in a number of international efforts to coordinate pedestrian policy-making across Europe and the world, most notably with the work on the International Federation of Pedestrians at The Hague and its

contribution to the United Nation's 'Convention on Road and Motor Transport'.

The Association's ties with political authority also became more substantial with the formation of different policy planning groups. Through a brief glance at Tom Foley's thoughts on pedestrian priorities in his quarterly editorial (Foley's Seasonal Diary) it is noticeable that Foley had an extremely professional grasp on most of the fundamental issues that relate directly to Living Streets policy today. Taking the autumn of 1961 as an example Foley outlined proposals on car speed limiting, street lighting, air quality and public smoking, alternative transport and public freedoms. The appointment of Barbara Castle, arguably the most progressive Transport Minister of modern times, allowed the Association greater access to decision making at a parliamentary level. Castle's 1968 Transport Bill was the first serious attempt to introduce an integrated and workable national public transport policy. This influence was most notably felt through the Joint Planning Group which was formed between the Association and the Ministry of Transport, with the brief to undertake informed research into future transport and planning legislation. 1961 saw the Association change its location headquarters to 4 Cannon Street.

The Pedestrians Association for Road Safety embraced this upturn in public interest in their agenda by highlighting their "Pedestrians First" ethos in a number of ways. Foley wrote extensively in the Association's journal *The Pedestrian* about the need to readdress town planning and transport issues to make our urban and rural areas viable for all in the modern world. Research such as 'Legs versus Cars' which was a study into modern causes of obesity and 'The Mirage of Cars for All' were articles with themes that are as relevant today as they were in the 1960's. Ideas such as "Walk to School", "Walkability" and "Street Auditing" were initially proposed from these projects. *The Pedestrian* had become the modern evolution of the Quarterly News Letter, and would become *Arrive* (1970), *Walk* (1979), and most recently, *Living Streets News*. In 1963 the Association's second president Dr A.L Goodheart retired from the post after thirteen years, an announcement that coincided with the recognition of Tom Foley's efforts with the award of the OBE. Foley outlined the Association's broader outlook and greater confidence with the prophetic words:

'If the fashionable word in the Fifties and Sixties was research, in the 1970s it promises to be environment' .

The 41st Annual General Meeting was held in the summer of 1970 and as a part of their forward thinking agenda the Association invited Mr Smigielski, the City

of Leicester Planning Officer, to give a lecture on his ideas for future (the year 2000) planning needs. Smigielski commented:

'I can see cars banned from the city centre altogether. On the fringe of the city centre will be multi-storey car parks. It is like leaving one's shoes before entering a mosque. The city centre will be made like one huge living room. One does not drive into one's living room' .

These ideas were seen as progressive but extremely radical by all but the most informed transport, planning and pedestrian experts. It is extremely interesting to read the entire article, noting the attention to shopping and leisure centres as well as the author's idea on teenage fashions. Whilst in 1970 the banning or limitation of cars from our cities seemed like a distant dream, in 2004 it is a reality for London and hopefully for other population centres in the near future.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

Let us take a glimpse into the city of the future — in the year 2,000 A.D. It is a speculation, of course, on what may happen and not necessarily what will happen, if *homo automobilus* will revolt against the tyranny of the car and become *homo sapiens*.

I can see cars banned from the city centre altogether. On the fringe of the city centre there will be multi-storey car parks. It is like leaving one's shoes before entering a mosque. The city centre will be made like one huge living room. One does not drive into one's living room. The same would apply to the city centre. The city centre could be served by a variety of means of public transport: above our heads glass corridors with moving pavements; mini-buses, a great deal of vertical and horizontal circulation. But the ground floor will be left for pedestrians. If you wanted to go a long distance you would go by the fully automatic underground or by mono-rail.

The car will be used only for weekends, for leisure, to take families to the countryside — its proper role — but not for the daily journey from home to work.

I can see the segregation of people from vehicles and the complete decline and disappearance of the traditional open shopping street. The shopping streets and squares of the future will be only for pedestrians, under cover, with artificial light and controlled climate. There will be tropical gardens and mini-zoos, as people like growing things and animals.

The computer will do so much mechanical work that the practical, calculating mind will lose its value. People will be judged by their imagination, fine manners, appreciation of art and gracious form of living. There will be a great renaissance of art, music and literature. If I am wrong the alternative will be vandalism on an enormous scale because there will be so much leisure time. I see an invasion of art in the city centres with museums and art exhibitions.

There will be variety of entertainment indoors and out of doors. Gambling will flourish. There will be separate entertainment for teenagers in huge halls with deafening music because teenagers will form a separate social class. They will dictate the woman's fashions, and women will submit gladly to the tyranny of teenagers' fashion because women of all ages think they are exempt from the biological law of

growing old! The live theatre will, I hope, survive, because Shakespeare must be played for all time if humanity is not to sink into a technological barbarism.

Historic areas will be carefully preserved and commercially fully exploited. A city without old buildings is like a man without a memory. While the new areas will be hygienic and spotlessly clean, into the historic districts rubbish and litter will be artificially introduced to preserve their humanity and picturesqueness!

In my speculations about the future I see the city centre rehabilitated as the realm of pedestrians as it was in the historic past.

Of course, you may say about my speculations on the city in the year 2,000, why should we worry about that. It may never happen. Humanity has an infinite capacity for throwing their own environment into chaos and it seems that our technicians and scientists, guided by our politicians, may explode this planet.

Mr Smigielski's lecture was illustrated by a fascinating series of coloured slides of cities, old and new in many parts of the world. Some depicted how beautiful squares had been ruined by the motor vehicle contrasted with those where the motor car has been kept under control. (Applause)

Mr FOLEY thanked Mr Smigielski for his excellent survey of what was required in planning for the pedestrian. They had all appreciated the imaginative ideas he had put forward, and his attractive gentle turn of humour. He had made them realise that it was important in planning for the future to incorporate some of the ideas which had been so successfully applied by our forefathers in the ancient civilisations.

Mr Foley also thanked the President for his excellent address which he hoped would be the means of making some people think along different lines to what was conventionally accepted in many quarters today.

Extract from Arrive, the Pedestrians Association journal in 1970

As Foley, and rather imaginatively Smigielski had pointed out, the focus of the 1970s was no longer just to the fight against the established motoring lobby, but the fight for people's living environment. As the realisation of global ecological crisis dawned on the western world, organisations such as the Pedestrians Association demonstrated that the industrially-created status quo that had existed for the British population's living spaces could be both challenged and changed. By 1970 the Pedestrians Association had adopted a proactive stance towards all areas of the pedestrian agenda. The Association, in conjunction with the government, identified the idea that the daily "school run" was a major cause of both congestion and child health problems. After a presentation to the Department of Education and Science on School Transport the Association outlined its ideas for viable "Walk to School" routes (1973). This idea was supported with a broader campaign entitled 'Pedestrians versus Planners' (1975), a series of research-based case studies written to encourage debate on the motivations of modern town and city planning. By 1976 the Association produced a complete

statement of its policy and views through a document entitled 'The Permissive Environment'. This statement outlined, perhaps for the first time, an integrated view of the challenges to modern street life and the viable solutions to those challenges. Through this document the Association was telling people that there was an alternative way of urban living that was both preferable and obtainable.

As the first period of the Pedestrians Association's existence had represented a concerted effort to establish the pedestrian agenda within the consciousness of Britain's population, and the second period can be seen as a gathering of strength and expertise in the post war world, the third can be seen as triumph of pedestrian thinking and progress. The Association was making the ideas of urban environmental thought a reality and using the energy and enthusiasm of the late 1960s to strive for a genuine improvement for people who used Britain's streets on foot. At the same time the Association used its international connections to pool ideas on street and pedestrian issues, travelling to or hearing evidence from such diverse locations as Tokyo and Munich. This spirit of change and the need for reform was reflected by the publishing of a revolutionary book 'The Motor Car and Politics 1896-1970' by the Economist and Transport expert William Plowden. The work seemed the clearest and most informed analysis of the problems facing the car dominated world at the time and is still recognised as such today. Amusingly, the comments of one member when she took a holiday in Venice showed the outlook and state of mind of the Association at this time; she said "streets full of water, please advise". The Venetian's perhaps still need help with their gondola jams.

The significance of the 1970s for the Pedestrians Association and the wider pedestrians lobby cannot be overstated. The chain of integrated street-life based policies that the Association, the British and European wide policy makers created can be seen as marked parallel to the latter half of the 1990s and early Twenty First Century. Significantly the year of 1979 saw the acceptance by Mr Terence Bendixson of the chairmanship of the Association, Terence Bendixson subsequently became President, a position he still holds to this day. Bendixson still recalls the enthusiasm and earnestness of Tom Foley upon meeting with him and his joining the Association. The Pedestrians Association suffered a monumental loss on 26th January 1979 when Tom Foley died after a short illness. As the founder of the Association he had been the driving force for fifty years and without his tireless work the Association would surely have



**Tributes to the late
Mr. T. C. FOLEY, O.B.E.**

The man who was 'founding father' of the Pedestrians' Association and guided it through almost 50 years of its existence died on Friday, January 26.

Tom Foley, a journalist by profession, became secretary of the Association on its formation on August 13, 1929. He was later chairman of committee and editor of the Association's journal, launched in 1931 as the *Quarterly News Letter*, Britain's first road safety periodical. It was later re-named *The Pedestrian* and now appears three times a year as *Arrive*. In 1970 Mr Foley retired from the chairmanship and became the Association's honorary consultant.

As the pioneer body representing pedestrians in Britain, the Association took the initiative in the formation of the International Federation of Pedestrians in 1963 and Mr Foley became its first general secretary.

Photograph by courtesy of Daily Mirror

Tom Foley died in 1979. His obituary appeared in Arrive magazine.

struggled to exist. In honour of their founder the committee dedicated an annual series of pedestrian research lectures to his name. It was fitting that the organisation which Foley had created was fifty years old in the year of his death. Foley was held in such high regard that in 1988 the then serving Minister for Road Traffic, Peter Bottomley MP, gave the 4th Annual Foley Memorial Lecture.

Challenges, Protests and Progress

After short stay in the City and in the offices of the Ramblers Association at 1 Wandsworth Road Vauxhall, the Pedestrians Association moved to its own new headquarters only a stone's throw from the current base of operations of Living Streets. The committee of the Association was keen to build upon the progress of the 1970s and move forward to effect genuine substantial progress toward pedestrian living. The 1980s initially appeared to represent a similar level of enthusiasm for pedestrian rights as the previous decade. The Association used the advantages of having local membership to address both local and national issues at this time. This method was utilised through the development of the Campaign Against Pavement Parking, a major concern for many communities throughout Britain at this time. The continued rise in motor traffic meant that parking in all areas of the country was becoming increasingly inconvenient. As a result many people noticed all kinds of accidents, obstructions and damage caused by the effects of vehicles driving or parking on footways. The issue of pavement parking was not only of direct importance to the people it inconvenienced but also a symbol of the priority that many British road users afforded the car over the pedestrian, surprising seeing that the entire population are pedestrians.

Throughout this period the Pedestrians Association were concerned with both direct challenges to the pedestrian and more long-term research-based theories for an improvement in both urban and rural street life. Some of the country's leaders seemed to be taking notice as well - in 1981 the Greater London Council announced, in conjunction with the Pedestrians Association, its intention to test the feasibility of a "Pay Zone" for London traffic in the city's centre. This policy was however dropped upon the subsequent abolition of the Council. It is interesting to note that in a survey of pedestrian literature in *Walk* in 1981 the editor referred to the various works agendas as giving 'a glossary of all methods of making streets more liveable'. When in 1982 Terence Bendixson accepted the vacant presidency of the Association, Cyril Myerscough accepted the position of chairman of the Association and continued with energy its continuous task. Through their hard work and continued eminence in the field of road safety, the

Pedestrians Association was invited to become a member of the Parliamentary Council for Transport Safety, an organisation that had been 1984 was responsible for the creation of the Green Cross Code. The Association had been reluctant to back such a scheme because it seemed to discriminate a child's right to use their streets. The issue of how much co-operation to give to transport-related organisations has always been a contentious one, with the dilemma being that although co-operation and information sharing leads to success, there are always problems with the identification of vested interests and varying priorities. In 1984 Michael Foot MP accepted an invitation to become a Vice President of the Association. Foot, the recent Labour Party leader and son of the Association's former president Isaac Foot had a noted interest in pedestrian issues.

Throughout the 1980s the communication between the committee of the Pedestrians Association and its membership around the country was strengthened. The Association would develop their campaign and strategy ideas from the input of their local membership. Strategies such as the pavement parking campaign were focused on local areas and co-ordinated on a national level. The Association produced a series of pamphlets issuing advice for those that had been obstructed or injured by a problem with their local pavement or footway. As recognition of their national membership and influence, the Association's committee was invited to take part in a dialogue with the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for the purpose of forming centrally based road safety planning. The status of The Pedestrians Association was further enhanced when in 1986 its President Terence Bendixson became a signatory of the EEC's 'European Road Safety Week', a recognition of the continued European-wide contacts that the organisation had within the road safety lobby.

The dissolution of the Greater London Council had signalled the 1980s were not going to be plain sailing for local or socially based policies. At a time when Margaret Thatcher was promoting the idea that society did not exist, the politics of the individual did not ideally suit community and street related reform. For those advocating the more progressive ideas on the Association's agenda patience and consolidation were the order of the day. Ideas such as congestion charging to limit city centre traffic, and human buses on school routes have eventually been adopted, but such schemes took a great deal of time and effort to encourage and develop. The Association became a partner in a joint Campaign for Safe and Even Pedestrian Surfaces with Friends of the Earth and The Royal National Institute for the Blind. By the Sixtieth Anniversary year ideas for the reform of street life and pedestrian-dedicated town centres were beginning to be

recognised at a central level. As a result, Terence Bendixson chaired a joint working group to analyse the possible pedestrianisation of London's Trafalgar and Parliament Squares with the London Amenity and Transport Association progress has been made on one of these, and there are plans to pedestrianise the other.

The Association began to focus upon some non-traffic related pedestrian issues such as the improvement of street lighting to combat crime, and therefore encourage Britain's people to make full use of their streets and living spaces. These ideas had always been key to the Association's pedestrian agenda but had traditionally been overshadowed by the interests of road safety. Through its published ideas in 'Walk' the Pedestrians Association began to produce pedestrian-orientated leaflets and guides to local areas, with information such as useful walking and cycling routes and local communal and social areas displayed. The success of this initiative led to the launch in 1990 of the 'Park Bench Legacy scheme' that encouraged members to leave funds in their wills for the installation of park benches with their inscriptions for the use of people in their local area. This scheme is an ideal example of a way in which the Association was trying to establish community life and identity. These community-based initiatives convinced the committee to launch their 'Walkways' publication in 1990, a section of Walk that catered for local communities and allowed the interaction of ideas between people up and down the country.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s it is possible to see a broadening of the Pedestrian Association's horizons and outlook toward the cause of improving all aspects of utility walking. The Association of this period developed its campaigns in two noticeable directions. The traditional message of road safety and pedestrian protection was still an absolute priority for the organisation. However, the campaign to improve, develop and re-invigorate pedestrian life was beginning to be seen as a vital section of the Association's projects. Between 1990 and 1992 there is a clear example of this fact. The Pedestrians Association was taking part in a national campaign to lower driving speeds outside schools, while at the same time challenging MPs and Councillors to take the "Walking Challenge", a publicity campaign to educate legislators about the challenges and obstacles that pedestrians faced on Britain's streets.

These efforts led to the launch of a series of publications called 'Our Kind of Town', these were designed as a guide to councillors to show how towns and cities can regain their vitality through pedestrian improvement measures. All of this work represented a forerunner to Living Streets highly successful Community Streets Audit consultancy service, a process by which local community

areas are audited for their “walkability” from a pedestrian’s point of view. The early 1990s were however going to see a particular challenge to the country’s way of life, one which would grip and divide the nation, and firmly involve the Pedestrians Association.

The Pedestrians Association was rewarded for its tireless work toward the pedestrian agenda in 1992 when the Department of the Environment financed 50% of Walk’s publishing costs as well as a £10,000 grant awarded to the Walkways scheme. The Pedestrians Association has successfully combined the strengths and enthusiasm of its founding days with the campaigning ability of a modern charitable organisation. In 1992 the Association once again moved its headquarters, this time to 126 Aldersgate Street, London.

Throughout the early 1990s the government increased and continued its focus upon road construction as a method of increasing transport links and solving congestion problems. When in 1993 construction was due to start on Twyford Down the national conservation lobby decided that this situation was unacceptable. The Down represented an area of outstanding natural beauty but was adjudged a road construction necessity. The following protests and clashes between security officials and demonstrators were hugely visible through the national media and evoked a great deal of feeling on both sides. Many Pedestrians Association members contacted the Association for support and publicity about their involvement in the events that were unfolding. Over the next few years Britain witnessed a series of clashes between road constructors and those wishing to preserve various rural and urban environments. Locations such as Wanstead and Tower Hamlets, where the M11 Motorway Link was being constructed and Oxleas Wood, where there were historic rural settings being destroyed, evoked intense feeling among Association members. The Pedestrians Association organised publicity for these protests and the committee offered legal advice and legal support to members involved in the various campaigns.

Through the Journal “Walk” the Association highlighted the alleged illegalities of some of the road constructors’ and government’s methods and highlighted the personal stories of various members’ stories and injustices. Throughout the campaign against the M11 Link Road the Association confronted the idea that such a project was in the affected communities’ best interests. The Association published the statistic that over 60% of people in Tower Hamlets did not have or regularly travel in a car, showing the absurdity and injustice of the fact that some of these people were forced to give up their homes for motorway construction. The Association also highlighted the fact that two of its members who

were standing on the protest lines at these demos were handled very differently.

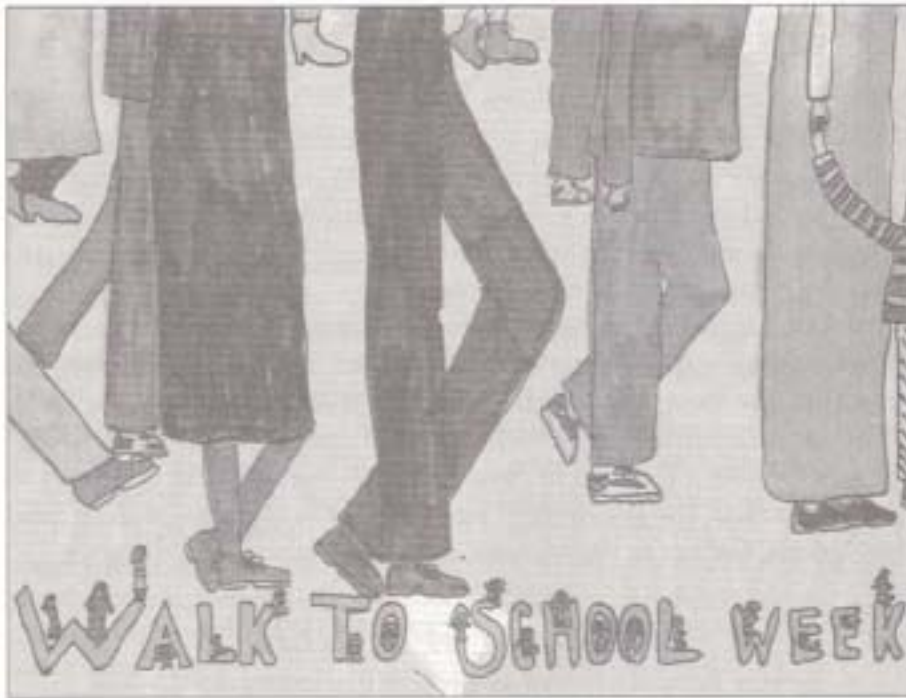


Rebecca Lush, aged 22. Sentenced to 28 days in prison for protesting at the destruction of Twyford Down, and threatened with two years in prison if she returns to Twyford. Undaunted, Rebecca has now joined anti-roads campaigners at the M11 Link Road site.

The story of a student called Rebecca Lush who was sentenced to two days imprisonment for trespassing at a protest site captured the imagination of the Association's members. The Association highlighted the fact that Liberal Democrat MP and pedestrian supporter Simon Hughes was taking part in the same protest but was not charged with any offence. At the same time the committee stepped up its pressure on government ministers by publishing the fact that serving Minister of the Environment (one Michael Howard) had been caught travelling on a train without a ticket. This period of pedestrian activity appeared to create a sense of enthusiasm and urgency throughout the Association.

Despite its involvement in and support of the protests, the Pedestrians Association was still at the forefront of pedestrian-related initiatives and legislation. Through its involvement in launch of 'Walk 21' the twenty first century walking initiative in 1994 the Pedestrians Association enabled the creation and launch of the 'Walk to School' project, an undertaking that encourages children to walk to school for health and social reasons. The Association had already played a major role in highlighting the use of cars in taking children to school as a major factor in pollution, congestion and therefore in road accidents. Living Streets still co-ordinates 'Walk to School' and this year, in partnership with Travelwise, has organised one of the most successful 'Walk to School Weeks' yet. In 1997 the Association was happy to report on and promote the first Virtual Buses, chains of children accompanied by adults who walked to school. At the same time the newly elected government's Transport Minister Glenda Jackson officially backed and commended the work of the Association and the Walk to

Walk to school



1997 Walk to School was bigger and better than 1996 and previous years. Approximately 4,000 resource packs were sent out – more than double the number we sent last year. More than 20,000 leaflets were used: the “happy



foot” was very popular. 130 schools and more than 200 local authorities made contact with PA about Walk to School. We also heard from Scouts and Cubs and numerous individuals including school governors and local councillors.

Some of the ingredients of this year’s success were the

Walk to School has come a long way since 1997. Today, two million children and parents take part.

School project. The massive strides in pedestrian issues that the Association had taken seemed to be reinforced by its membership of the 'World Squares Project' in 1997; the project officially demonstrated feasibility designs for the pedestrianisation of both Parliament and Trafalgar Squares. The broader scope of the project was to create pleasant and user-friendly pedestrian areas in major urban centres.

Throughout this period of progress it was the work of the highly energetic committee that created the policies and attitude for the Association and its members to move forward. Under the chairmanship of firstly Cyril Myerscough (1982-1991) and then Faith Lawson (1991-1997) the Association's profile and achievements thrived. Images such as Faith Lawson's crusades against pavement parking, and in the process tangling with and charming policemen, politicians and motorists in equal measure, spring out of members' stories and articles from this time. The tireless work of Felicity Rea should be mentioned; "Flick" Rea was involved and worked in everything that was good about the Association for many years.

The work of Alastair Hanton, who had been Vice Chairman since 1989 and was Chairman from 1997 until 1999, also was and still is invaluable to the organisation. It is reasonable to suggest that throughout the previous seventy years researching, representing and campaigning, the Pedestrians Association had only suffered from one major handicap. That handicap was a continual lack of resources to allow the pedestrian message to compete with the road lobby on an equal footing. The Association was about to make a great leap forward through a mixture of hard work, generosity and good fortune.



Launch of Living Streets, Broadway Market, Hackney, August Bank Holiday 2001

Exciting times

In 1997 the Pedestrians Association appointed Ben Plowden as its first Director. This move was a giant leap forward for an organisation that had been up until this point a largely volunteer organisation. As Terence Bendixon noted in his journal introduction,

'The Pedestrians Association is taking a giant leap forward. Long served by loyal volunteers and part-time secretaries, it is, with the appointment of a full-time director and a full-time administrator, about to expand ten to twenty-fold' .

In 1997, with new leadership and confidence, the Association took its Annual General Meeting away from London for the first time, the meeting in Oxford was designed to reinforce the Association as a national charity. This event was followed up in July of that year with the Association's first ever 'Local Activists Day', a policy designed to draw on the strength of the Association's national local membership. The Pedestrians Association was now in structure, as well as attitude, a thoroughly modern charitable organisation.

The expansion of the Pedestrians Association was due to some good fortune that occurred due to an extraordinary level of generosity. Enid Jeeves was a long-standing member of the Association and was also a close personal friend of Tom and Avis Foley, the founding family. The Association heard with sadness that Enid Jeeves had died in 1997; a sadness that was joined by shock when her executors informed the headquarters of the Association that Ms Jeeves had bequeathed the Association a £200,000 legacy for the development of pedestrian issues. This single act, in conjunction with the hard work and dedication of everyone concerned has been responsible for the development of Living Streets, a modern organisation capable of translating Tom Foley's original commitment into modern times. In conjunction with this, the Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust provided a three-year grant, which has been renewed twice since then. The Association was able to employ its first full-time professional staff, which included a full time office manager and a Fundraising and Marketing Officer. The Pedestrians Association began to go from strength to strength while at the same time the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott announced in the government's white paper on Integrated Transport that the government wanted to create 'streets for people'. The Association's rapid and dramatic growth meant it needed to re-locate to

larger offices, which happened in 1998 with a move to 31-33 Bondway, Vauxhall, the current headquarters of Living Streets.

The Pedestrians Association for Living Streets

The Pedestrians Association and then the Pedestrians Association for Road Safety had developed from an initially small group of committed individuals and one man's lifetime drive in the pursuit of pedestrian rights. Throughout its notable history the organisation has achieved some massive and notable achievements, but by the late 1990s it was clear that the entire history and expertise needed to be focussed and clarified. Either side of the millennium the Pedestrians Association, under the leadership of Ben Plowden and Fundraising and Marketing Manager Ian Oake realised that the works of the organisation were all really centred on one aim, making Britain's streets and living spaces more accessible and usable for pedestrians. Campaigns and achievements such as speed limiting, road crossings and drink driving, to walk to school and street auditing were all designed to improve the quality of life for any and all pedestrians in their environment, the roads and streets of Britain. Throughout the first few years of the first Blair government the Prime minister and his colleagues used phrases such as "liveability" and "sustainable transport", and so the climate seemed right for the Pedestrians Association to tap into such policy and enable a significant leap forward in the quality of life for Britain's street users.

On a sunny August Bank Holiday (31st August 2001) in Broadway Market, Hackney, the Pedestrians Association launched Living Streets as its campaigning platform and identity for future progress. With the idea that achieving living public spaces was the ultimate aim for pedestrians, Living Streets represented a synthesis of the Pedestrian Association's ideals throughout its previous 72 years.

Living Streets now represents and campaigns for the entire body of pedestrian rights and desires with the ethos that all pedestrian issues are interconnected and can affect people's quality of life. Living Streets work under the ideal of "Revitalising Neighbourhoods, Reconnecting People". The work of developing a complete Living Streets message has been developed since August 2001, a process that is really about developing and connecting the ideas and achievements of the Pedestrians Association throughout the last three quarters of a century. In 1931 Tom Foley said,

"We are not anti-car but by a gradual and subtle process the eviction of

the pedestrian from our roads and streets proceeds, streets are first and foremost for people.

and in 2001 Ben Plowden said

“We are trying to make streets places people can enjoy”.

As the solutions to congested and busy modern countries lies with the move toward fully integrated and affordable public transport, Living Streets is developing an integrated pedestrian campaign. Through its traffic reforms, street life ideas, child health and safety campaigns and promotion of walking as a way of life Living Streets now represents the initial reason for Tom Foley and Viscount Cecil joined forces in 1929 to create an organisation that would protect Britain's roads and streets as an environment for society's life. As Living Streets looks beyond its 75th Birthday in September there are grounds to be cautiously optimistic.

Central government is increasingly accepting that the quality of our streets and public spaces for pedestrians is vital to people's quality of life. Local authorities are understanding that residents judge their performance on the standard of their streets. The national concern about the rise in obesity is focusing attention on the need to encourage people to walk more. It is, certainly, fashionable to talk about 'liveability' and 'walkability' these days - and the Pedestrians Association/ Living Streets deserves credit for many of the positive changes which are taking place. But fashions can change - and the next challenge for Living Streets is to turn this fashion into a paradigm shift in the way that our streets and public spaces are planned and managed. The work that Tom Foley and Viscount Cecil started 75 years ago is not yet completed.

About the author

Jon Spray has studied History, Historical Research and International Politics. He has been Living Streets Historian since January 2004 and is currently training to be a secondary history teacher.

About Living Streets

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. We work with professionals and politicians to make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces.

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