

EDWARD ZOLLER

President Lothians District Association (1972)

In conveying to the Fife District Association sincere congratulations in its fiftieth anniversary year, one cannot but pay tribute to the one person without whom there would have been no Fife DA and indeed, possibly no Lothians DA, as we have known it during the same period.

When, as a completely inexperienced young cyclist, I risked five bob of my meagre office boy's pay on joining the CTC with a rather vague idea of what it could do for me, and made my first contact with local members at the AGM in the Spring of 1920. I was rather overawed to find myself sitting with a few - as they appeared to me - rather old gentlemen. They were, in fact, men who had been too old for the 1914/18 war. I sensed a rather defeatist attitude. Recreational cycling, we were told, was dying and soon everyone would be using motorcycles or cars. In such an atmosphere, a boy's still marginal interest in cycling might well have withered.

It was the advent of Walter Browne, offering to undertake most of the secretarial duties, and prepared to cross from Burntisland on the old 'William Muir', that was the turning point for the Lothians DA, and for me. How many today would face two slow ferry crossings to attend the Club runs, with the prospect of a long, lonely ride home via Stirling - no Kincardine Bridge in these days - if one missed the last boat, as Walter did from time to time.

It was undoubtedly Walter who fired the enthusiasm of myself or one or two other lads who had joined in Edinburgh, inculcating the Club spirit and showing us what was in effect, a new way of life. At the same time, he was gathering the nucleus of what was to be first the Fife Section of the Lothians DA, but strong enough by 1922 to stand on its own two feet as the Fife District Association. During the ensuing fifty years there must have been many who, did they but know it, had good cause to bless him.

For myself, I can only say a very inadequate "Thank you, Walter".