



A.G.M. & Social Evening

Notice is hereby given that the **Annual General Meeting** of

SPOKES South West Herts Cycling Group

will take place on **Tuesday 22nd April 2008**
at **The Pump House** (in the Charles Room),
Local Board Road, Lower High Street, Watford.

7.30pm for an 8.00pm start.

Fair Trade coffee and tea available.

After the business part of the evening we will repair to
the bar for a chat / listen to the live jazz session.

If you have any resolutions or nominations for
positions on the next committee,
please contact Roger Bangs.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Much time recently has been taken up planning for the Spokes Open Meeting which by the time you read this will be over. I hope it was successful in getting you to think how we can encourage our local politicians to make cycling a higher priority amongst the many issues they have to tackle.

Hertfordshire County Council has recognised that to get more people cycling they need to concentrate on improving the routes that are used for short journey to local amenities. We need to help them identify these and ensure the missing links in the local cycle network are made good.

Now that Spring is coming please identify from this Newsletter the rides you would like to join.

*Would you like to lead a ride in the Summer?
Plan it now & let Diane know when and where.*

Are you going to join us at the Rickmansworth Environmental Fair or Croxley Revels? Help is always required.

The Annual General Meeting will be at the Pump House on 22nd April. Do come along and ensure SPOKES is run in the way you want. After the meeting you can enjoy a drink at the Pump House bar.

Would you like to join the committee; there are a number of roles that need to be filled. Please let a committee member know.

If you would like to write a short article on any aspect of cycling for the next newsletter please do so and send it to Iain.

Enjoy your Spring cycling.

Spokes Weekend Away

We haven't had a weekend away since Pam's French trip in Spring 2006, so it's high time to venture out of the Herts/Bucks area again.

Come and enjoy the rolling Warwickshire countryside on the special Spokes Weekend Away.

Presently there are about 10 people interested, so please make the effort to join us for a great weekend.

When: **Friday 30th May to Sunday 1st June**

Where: **Stratford-upon-Avon Youth Hostel**

Why: Cycling - routes to Redditch & Ilmington,
theatre - possibility to see *"The Merchant of Venice"*,
Shakespeare's birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage,
Warwick Castle, history, culture, quaint villages, sunshine!*,
good pubs & companionship

For those getting up there early - possibility of a ride on Friday afternoon.

Aim to all meet up at 8.00pm on Friday evening at the Youth Hostel.

Probably leave late afternoon on Sunday.

Spaces at the hostel are limited so if you are interested contact Iain as soon as possible by **15th March** at the latest.

* *Not guaranteed*



CYCLING FOR THE CLIMATE #1

Roger and Mary Ann represented Spokes at the CTC/CCN cycle campaigns workshop in Oxford on 17th November, 2007. The conference theme was 'Cycling for the Climate', with talks and workshops looking at the importance of cycling in any plans to tackle global warming.

The main points:

- Mark Lynas, an Oxford cyclist who has written books about climate change, gave a talk outlining the scientific evidence that burning fossil fuels is causing global warming.
- Cycling emits zero carbon emissions, so any work to get more people cycling and to get improvements in cycle provision, automatically benefits the environment. It is important for cycle campaigners to be aware of this and to get cycling included on any climate change agenda.
- The image of cycling is not "cool", which discourages many from doing it, so the CTC's summer campaign on climate change made a cinema commercial which tries to improve the image of cycling.
- Not all cyclists are environmentalists, so it is important to spread the message about the importance of tackling global warming amongst cyclists as well.
- Tim Baster, the director of COIN, Climate Outreach Information Network, said that communicating the message about climate change requires skill, because there is a danger of making people feel guilty or frightened, which can then make them switch off. COIN offers training.

The conference also included talks about cycle friendly planning and urban design, an update about CTC campaigns and projects, a slide show (made by Warrington Cycle Campaign) about examples of poor cycle provision, and a description of the Sustrans Connect2 project (which subsequently won £50m from the Big Lottery Fund).

CYCLING FOR THE CLIMATE #2

“Cycle out of climate car-tastrophe!”

This was one of the slogans on the cycling wing of the international climate change protest last December 8th. The climate of the day in London was almost as bad as it could get – very cold and wet. About 200 intrepid cyclists, including Spokes (**Mary Ann**), braved the elements anyway.

She said: “The best thing about the ride was that we had an escort of about 30 police, on bikes of course. They took turns to ride on ahead to junctions to stop the traffic for us to sail through. We did a circuitous route around central London and over the river into south London and back again. It was much more fun than a walking march!



“Bikes were decorated with bright pennants and cyclists with t-shirts saying ‘One Less Car’. Two mad cyclists began the ride wearing only t-shirts and shorts. One bike sported a trailer rigged up so a series of pipes

turned as it cycled and sounded like a xylophone. It was called ‘Micro-generation’. Another was enclosed in an elegant contraption with gossamer wings. We certainly brightened up a dismal day.

“The cycling protest started before the main march and was due to join it in Parliament Square a couple of hours later. By that time, most of the wet and frozen band had fled. Even yours truly didn’t wait for the walking march.”



Velib' Overwhelmed by Transit Strikes

Use of the Paris Velib' cycle hire scheme rose from 90,000 bikes a day to almost 175,000 during the recent public transport strikes in the capital. The leap in demand created a double predicament: during the day, Velib' stands near offices and commercial areas outside the city centre were overcrowded so that users could not return their bikes and stop the charging mechanism, while in central Paris, near major Metro hubs like Chatelet and Republique, stands were empty. In the evenings, the reverse happened.

The difficulties led to "Velib' rage" as the record number of cycle commuters fought over limited bikes and cycle stands.

CCN News January 2008

£50 Million for Sustrans' Connect2

A huge thanks to everyone who voted for **Sustrans' Connect2** in the People's £50 Million Lottery Giveaway. Winning this public vote is a fitting conclusion to an amazing 30th birthday year for the charity.

The money will be used to create bridges, crossings, tunnels, paths and green spaces that will transform local travel in 79 communities throughout the UK.

Our ultimate ambition is to enhance the value of walking and cycling so that every town and city will become a Connect2 community.

John Grimshaw MBE
Founder and Chief Executive Sustrans

Cycle Ban in the City?

Possessing a bike is to be banned around St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London: this covers not only riding a bike but also wheeling or even carrying one.

The streets are to be designated as 'City Walkways' under a 1960s byelaw drawn up at a time when cycles did not feature in the City of London's vision of its future.

Time to change the walkways byelaws?

<http://www.citycyclists.org.uk>

CCN News January 2008

Tour de France Benefits

According to Transport for London, cycling rates in the capital rose a further 10 per cent from April to September 2007, in part because of the publicity for cycling generated by the London leg of the Tour de France. 48,000 more cycle journeys are being made every day. Tourism received a boost with two million people lining the capital's streets to see the race events.

An estimated £88million was spent by spectators, teams and race organisers in London and the South East during the Tour weekend. The Grand Départ generated an estimated £35million in media coverage for London and cycling.

Mayor Ken Livingstone said: "Bringing the Tour de France to London has been hugely successful, boosting cycling and showing Londoners' huge interest in watching and participating in sport that is growing as we approach the 2012 Games. As well as demonstrating that great sporting events can inspire people to take up physical activity, the success of the Tour de France also shows the economic benefits that these types of events can bring to London."

It is hoped that the Tour will return ahead of the 2012 Olympics.

CCN News January 2008

CCN/CTC Cycle Campaigns Conference

The Spring 2008 CCN/CTC Cycle Campaigns conference will be held in Cambridge on **Saturday 10th May 2008**.

Theme for the conference is 'Cycle campaigning – the next 5 years', and will ask how do we respond to the challenges of the future?

More details will appear in *CCN News* and on the CCN website as they become available. Reserve the date now.



London Bikeathon

Sunday 13th July 2008

Spokes have been going to the Bikeathon for a number of years now. It's great to see so many cyclists along the streets of London and raising money for charity too.

As you can see from the grid below great savings are to be made if we enter as a team before 31st March.

Entry Fees	Early bird offer 25% discount	Standard entry fees 1 April to 30 June	Entry fees 1 July – on day
Adults	£7.50	£10	£20
Teams of 10 or more	£3.75 per entrant	£5 per entrant	£10 per entrant
Children's Ride	Free	Free	

These are the choices from Royal Hospital Chelsea:

Ride	Description	Distance	Start	Code
Scenic	Less traffic & more trees	26 miles	Royal Hospital Chelsea	1
City	London central	26 miles	Royal Hospital Chelsea	3

You can go at your own pace so don't worry if you are too fast/slow. We will need to go for one of the above options (unless we have a 10:10 split) but some of us have previously swapped rides on the day, your tee-shirt will probably not be changed unless the organisers have a surplus.

Please contact Heather
with your choices,
team name suggestions
and cheques
ASAP.

SPOKES RIDES & EVENTS

MARCH / APRIL / MAY 2008

Remember to bring:

water, spare inner tube, lights & reflective / waterproof clothing as appropriate.

Disclaimer: Participants of rides must be over 16 unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Insurance is your responsibility.

Spokes cannot accept liability for you or your possessions.

It is your responsibility to follow advice and the **Highway Code** at all times.

Your participation is the acceptance of these terms.

*Please make sure you arrive in plenty of time at the start
so rides can leave at the stated time*

Saturday 1st March 10.00am

Ridge Ride

Meet at Watford High Street Station. Ridge is the highest point in SW Herts but worth the effort getting there! The ride goes through Radlett and Shenley and returns via Moor Mill. About 27 miles.

Contact Alan.

Sunday 9th March 10.00am Heronsgate

Meet at Watford High Street Station for a 25 mile ride along the Ebury Way and up Long Lane. Some steep bumpy tracks. Contact Dennis.



Thursday 13th March 8.00pm Spokes Social Evening

Meet in the Moon Under Water pub - High Street, Watford - for a drink, Curry Club or other meal, and chat. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Contact Diana.

Sunday 16th March 10.00am Aldenham and Elstree

Meet at the Garston Medical Centre (*in Sainsbury's car Park*), just off Cow Lane. Approximately 15 mile medium paced ride up to the Aldenham reservoir and around the Elstree area. Possible pub stop.

Contact Andrew.

continued

Thursday 20th March 10.00am

Black Jack's Mill

Meet at Watford High Street Station for a 20 mile ride along the Ebury Way and round the Aquadrome to the Colne Valley Trail. Easy ride.

Contact Dennis.



Saturday 22nd March 10.30am

Boxmoor Walk

Meet at Hemel Hempstead Station. Opportunity to take part in St. Luke's Hospice training walk (*not cycle*) with David Turner - approximately 15 miles across mixed countryside and woodland with lunch stop.

Start point may be changed to accommodate other participants so please check with David in advance.

Saturday 22nd March 2.00pm

North of Watford

Meet at Watford High Street Station for a moderate 18 mile ride exploring the lanes & tracks North of Watford.

Contact Roger.

Happy Easter



Friday 4th April

10.00am

St Albans

Meet at Watford High Street Station for a ride through Bricket Wood to St Albans returning via Gorhambury. About 26 miles.

Contact Alan Burden.

Monday 7th April

8.00pm

Committee Meeting

Contact Roger for more information.

Saturday 12th April 10.00am

Hockeridge Bottom

Meet at Watford Metropolitan Station for a hard, hilly 22 mile ride along some of the best lanes around here. Possible pub stop.

Contact Dennis.

Sunday 20th April

10.00am

Ebury Way & Grand Union Canal

Meet at Watford High Street Station for an 8-10 mile ride along the Ebury Way and back on the canal, flat and all traffic-free. A good way to get back to cycling or to include children in the ride. Back before lunch-time.

Contact Mary Ann.

continued

Tuesday 22nd April 7.30pm

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See front cover for details...

Thursday 24th April 8.00pm

Spokes Social Evening

Meet in the Moon Under Water pub - High Street, Watford - for a drink, Curry Club or other meal, and chat. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Contact Diana.

Saturday 26th April 10.00am

Elstree Airfield

Meet at Watford Metropolitan Station for a 25 mile ride along the Ebury Way and Colne Valley via Batlers Green and Letchmore Heath to sit outside the café and watch the aircraft.
Contact Dennis.

Saturday 26th April 10.30am

Folders Ride

Meet at Watford Metropolitan Station for a ride for **folding** bicycle owners in conjunction with Folding Bike Society in London. Approximately 25 miles on flat roads visiting some London sights including Hyde Park, The Mall and the Houses of Parliament.
Contact David.



Thursday 1st May before dawn

May Day Morris

Rise before dawn and see the Woodside Morris Men dance in Cassiobury Park as the sun rises.
Contact Roger.

Friday 2nd May 7.30pm

West Hyde

Meet at Croxley Green Station for an easy, but interesting ride including the Ebury Way, Canal, Aquadrome & West Hyde. Moderate pace.
Return to Croxley by about 9.30pm.
Contact Roger.

**Deadline for next newsletter is
Wednesday 7th May**

Saturday 10th May 10.00am

Ayot Greenway

Meet at Watford High Street Station. Ride to South Mimms, Great North Way, Ayot Greenway, Wheathampstead and St Albans. Lunch stop.
About 38 miles.
Contact Alan Burden.

continued

Saturday 17th May 10.00am Bridle Paths around Sarratt

Meet at the Harvester at the bottom of Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green for a 22 mile ride through Whippendell Woods, Penman's Green and Hollin's Hall. If it's muddy there is an alternative on the roads.

Contact Dennis.

Saturday 17th May 11.00am FA Cup Final Day - Wembley

Meet at Watford Metropolitan Station for the Fifth consecutive ride to coincide with the FA Cup Final at Wembley. This is a chance to meet some of the fans, buy a program, feel the buzz as well as to travel on some great cycleways and canal towpaths away from it all before returning via Harrow. About 28 miles

Contact David.

Sunday 18th May 8.25am St Albans Charity Ride

The Rotary Clubs of St Albans Annual cycle ride starts and finishes at Oaklands College (Smallford Campus). The route goes along quiet lanes of mid-Hertfordshire. We will lead a Spokes ride from St Albans Abbey Station starting at 8.25am (the train leaves Watford Junction at 8.06, Watford North at 8.08 and Garston at 8.11am). We will do the 20 mile route (total distance about 26 miles or 38 miles if you cycle to St Albans and back). We plan to stop for refreshments at one or two points along the route.



The first two people to contact us will be entered as part of a Spokes team, others will need to make up further teams of 4 (£50) or to register themselves (£15) by 1st May. See www.saccer.co.uk for details & entry form. Riders are also encouraged to raise sponsorship and donations in aid of local charities. Individual entries on the day are £20.

Contact Iain or Veronica.

Thursday 22nd May 8.00pm Spokes Social Evening

Meet in the Moon Under Water pub - High Street, Watford - for a drink, Curry Club or other meal, and chat. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Contact Diana.



continued

Saturday 24th May 10.00am Wigginton

Meet at The Harvester at the bottom of Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green for a hard, hilly ride through Belsize, Ley Hill, Ashley green and Champneys. 30 to 35 miles.

Contact Dennis.

Friday 30th May to Sunday 1st June

Spokes Cycling Weekend Away

Based at Stratford-upon-Avon Youth Hostel. *See article for details.*

Looking Forward...

Friday 6th June 7.30pm Commonwood Cycle

Meet at West Watford Fire Station, Two Bridges, for a moderate ride, with a few hills, to Commonwood & Belsize. Pub stop at Sarratt. Moderate pace. Return to Croxley by 10.30pm.

Contact Roger.

Saturday 14th - Sunday 22nd June National Bike Week

More details in the next newsletter

Thursday 26th June 8.00pm Spokes Social Evening

Meet in the Moon Under Water pub - High Street, Watford - for a drink, Curry Club or other meal, and chat. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Contact Diana.

Sunday 13th July London Bikeathon

Join the Spokes team(s) for a 26 mile ride in London. *See article for details.*

A tandem rider is stopped by a police car.

"What've I done, officer?" asks the rider.

"Perhaps you didn't notice sir,
but your wife fell off your bike half a mile back . . ."

"Oh, thank God for that," says the rider - "I thought I'd gone deaf!"

RAILWAY PATHS

If you have ever cycled on any of the paths beside the railway between Watford Heath and Carpenders Park Station, please contact Mary Ann).

It may be possible to get a restricted byway established along that route.

Spokes Circuit of St Albans



Heading towards London Colney on the Old Parkbury bridleway

On the morning of 26th January 2008 nine eager members set off from sunny Garston heading toward St. Albans. We passed through Bricket Wood, Colney Street, London Colney, Highfield Pak and along the Alban Way to The Plough at Sleepshyde. After lunch we continued through the grounds of Oaklands College and out towards

Jersey Farm and Sandridgebury. In this area we were travelling along fairly quiet lanes interspersed with a number of horse-riders. We came upon a small family run butcher's shop and several of us felt compelled to enter and stock up on sausages. After this we were soon back in civilisation and competing with the traffic to the North of St. Albans. One respite from the cars was Everlasting Lane which didn't live up to its name, but did cut off a busy corner. The ride finished with us pushing the bikes past the lakes in Verulamium Park then (*for most of us*) a train ride back to Watford.

Veronica & Iain



Spokes members (with sausages) outside the Sandridgebury butcher's shop

Biking Through Italy

by Pam

Flushed with success after our epic cycle ride across France in the summer of 2006, my sister Sue and I undertook another long distance trip in June and July last year, this time in Italy.



We decided to cycle from Pisa to Naples linking up a number of historic towns, including San Gimignano, Siena, Perugia, Assisi, Spoleto and Rome. Because we wanted to have time to visit all these historic places, we spent less time in the saddle on this trip, but nevertheless completed over 450 miles.

We planned to travel to Pisa by train, but this proved to be too difficult and too costly. We would have had to negotiate four train journeys and two taxi rides across London and Paris with our panniers and our bikes in bags! Why can't the train companies make it easy to travel with a bike? In the end we flew to Pisa with Easyjet and regretted our carbon footprint. Luckily for the following three weeks we didn't make much of one.

The scenery on the trip was beautiful, especially in Tuscany and Umbria. We cycled through wooded hills, past fields of golden sunflowers and olive groves. And yes, it was very hilly. We lost count of the number of picturesque hilltop towns we visited, but at least there was always a lovely long downhill when we left them!

Many of the towns we visited were also extremely beautiful and there was a lot to see. We were lucky enough to be in Siena for the *Palio*, a series of bareback horse races around the beautiful central Campo. In Assisi we saw Giotto's wonderful frescoes and in Spoleto we enjoyed a concert, which was part of the town's annual music festival. We visited churches and

continued

cathedrals in Rome, Pisa and Florence and climbed up many bell towers. While in Naples we went by train to Herculaneum, which was destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD79.

It was less easy to find our way in Italy than in France, because the maps were not always all that clear. On one occasion a small road marked in yellow on the map ended up as a cart track across a field! On another occasion we ignored a left turn as we approached the town of Terni, because it was signposted to the '*zona industriale*', only to find ourselves after a couple of kilometres on the main motorway to Rome! Rather excited Italian '*carabinieri*' told us to walk along the hard shoulder, but once out of their sight we cycled gingerly along to the next exit, rueing the fact that the road signs were clearly meant for car drivers and not cyclists.

We didn't have too many problems with the bikes, but I did have three punctures in one morning on the longest riding day, when we had 133 kms to do! Luckily we had set off on that day just after 6.00am, so as to get plenty of miles under our belt before it got hot. The only other problem was that, on



nearing Naples, Sue discovered that her front tyre was split in half a dozen places. We expected it to blow at any moment, and were a bit anxious, as we hadn't got a spare tyre, but we managed to ride gently to our hotel, thanking our lucky stars that it hadn't happened earlier in the day when we were still far from Naples.

It was all part of the adventure and we felt a real sense of achievement when we finally arrived in Naples. We rewarded ourselves with a couple of days on Ischia, a volcanic island in the Bay of Naples, where we swam and relaxed in the sun. We also visited the magnificent garden of William Walton, set high on the volcanic hills on the north side of the island. The return journey was first to Florence by train for more sightseeing. Florence was the first cycle-friendly town we visited. The terrain and

possibly the climate were more suitable for cycling than some of the places we'd been to, but it was good to see cycle tracks and cyclists and pedestrians co-existing quite amicably.

From Florence we took another train to Pisa to take the flight home after what had been a very memorable and wonderful trip!

Quarterly Quotations

"Just as the ideal of classic Greek culture was the most perfect harmony of mind and body, so a human and a bicycle are the perfect synthesis of body and machine." **Richard Ballantine**

"The bicycle, the bicycle surely, should always be the vehicle of novelists and poets." **Christopher Morley**

Surf the Web for Sustrans

everyclick.com is an internet search engine with a big difference - it donates half its revenues to charity.

By using

www.everyclick.com/uk/sustrans

as your search engine every search you make
can raise money for **Sustrans**.

It doesn't cost Sustrans, or you, a penny - so please give it a try.

How To Help

How did you find out about Spokes?

Why do you cycle?

Can you help with any of the following?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organising cycle rides | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning cycle schemes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying of routes | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartography / CAD | <input type="checkbox"/> Social events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter articles / artwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with local councils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merchandise / advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |



Be The Change

A book club which I belong to is advertising as ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK OF THE MONTH, "Be The Change" by Trenna Cormack quoting Ghandi's advice -

you must be the change you wish to see in the world.

The retail price is £12.99 but by ordering two or more I will pay £8.45 each. It contains inspiring articles about individuals including Jonathan Porritt, Satish Kumar, peace campaigners Scilla Elsworthy and Gill Hicks etc.



If you wish me to order one please contact Maureen.

How To Join

SPOKES membership is only **£8.00** per person per year, and just **£1.00** for each additional family member at the same address (*plus any donation you can afford*). For this amount you receive regular mailings on activities and actions and the satisfaction of helping us campaign for improved cycling conditions in the South West Herts area. We organise regular events and rides too. To join, complete form (*see other side too*) and send with cheque to:

Dara Godivala

6 Highland Road, Northwood Hills, Middlesex, HA6 1JT



Name(s)

Address

.....

.....

Post Code Telephone

Amount £

Donation £

Cheques payable to SPOKES please.

E-mail Address :



SPOKES DISCOUNTS

Show your **SPOKES** membership card
and get **10%** off repairs and spares at:

CyclePedia 01923 221901
70-78 Merton Road, Watford

Neale & Sons 01923 223916
26 Vicarage Road Precinct, Watford

Cycles UK 01923 243707
484 St. Albans Road, Watford

Thirteens Cycles 01923 234221
73 Chalk Hill, Oxhey, Watford