

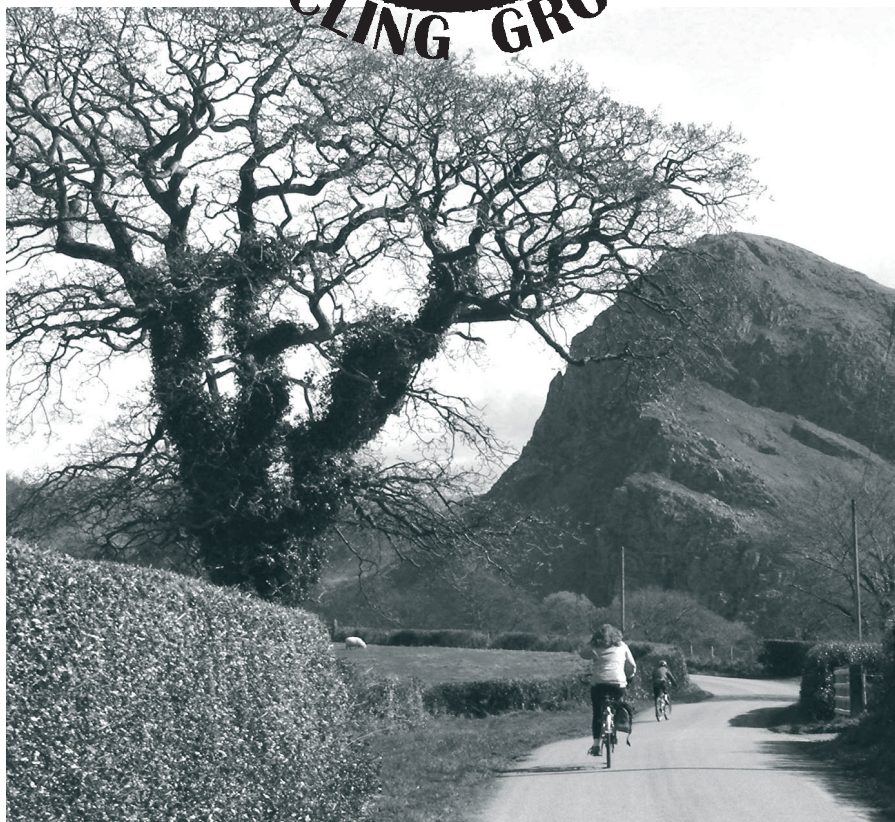
*Affiliated to : Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) and Cyclenation*



**cyclenation**  
...creating a nation of cycle-friendly communities

# SPOKES

SOUTH WEST HERTS  
CYCLING GROUP



**Spokes Weekend in Wales**  
**Bird Rock in the dramatic Dysynni Valley near Barmouth**

**SUMMER: JUNE / JULY / AUGUST 2009 ISSUE # 61**

# Barmouth Weekend

by Veronica & Iain

## Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March

The first two arrivals at Bryn Melyn, Iain and Janet, got to walk the dogs up to the Panorama Viewpoint behind the house. From the top they could see the train, bearing the next four arrivals, Linden, Peter, Mary Ann and Veronica, as it crossed the famous Barmouth bridge. The six of us then did an early evening walk into Barmouth via Dinas Oleu (*the first piece of land donated to the National Trust in 1895*). On our return Diana and Brian had arrived and, not to be outdone, set off on the same walk at breakneck speed so as not to be late for dinner.

## Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March

We awoke to an overcast and slightly damp morning, but decided not to let that deter us. Peter and Linden set off first down the hill to collect their hire bikes from the local garage, with the rest of us meeting them a few minutes later to set off across the Barmouth bridge (*as well as being the railway crossing, the bridge provides a direct route across the estuary for walkers and cyclists and we just missed out on having to pay the toll which is levied between April and September each year – 70p for walkers and an extra 30p for a cycle*). Once on the South side we headed along the



Mawddach Trail – a disused railway line running along the estuary to Dolgellau. Every now and then the sun came out between the showers and at one point a dramatic rainbow crowned the stunning scenery we were passing through. At Dolgellau we had a coffee stop in an old-fashioned hardware shop now converted into a tea room.

Next we headed along a quiet minor road to Coed y Brenin with its wealth of mountain bike trails. Our plan was to follow the family friendly route which ran alongside the river, but this was easier said than done when one started at the edge of the forest rather than the car park in the centre. Eventually we realised that we were on the correct trail so we continued to its end only to realise that the cafe was at the other end. One option was to retrace our steps and then continue along the other branch of the trail to

find the café, but Peter thought it looked shorter to take the most direct route to the café. This saw us pushing our bikes up a steep forest trail and then down the other side. Soon we found ourselves on the **black** (*severe*) rated trail called 'The Beast' – most of which we weren't able to cycle. We had to make way for the occasional mountain biker whizzing past us - but eventually we made it to the bustling café for a well earned break. After lunch, a breakaway group decided they had had enough of mountain trails and would make the return journey on the main road, whilst the rest of us followed the now easy to find signed route to complete the family trail. After this we returned along the minor road then back along the Mawddach Trail to Barmouth.



That evening we enjoyed a home made curry under candlelight (*as it was Earth hour*) and toasted with champagne the recent award of three stars to Bryn Melyn by the Welsh Tourist board.

### **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March**

We awoke to a wonderfully sunny day. As the clocks had gone forward overnight we had a slightly later breakfast then Peter set off on a mega walk North along the Cambrian Way and Linden returned to the bike shop to change her saddle (*and came back with a different bike!*). We then crossed the Barmouth bridge again, this time heading South along the coast



road. At Llwyngwril we turned off onto a very steep minor road which we all had to walk up, but gave us a marvellous view from the top. We continued along this gated road down to Llanegrin where we travelled along the beautiful Dysynni valley dominated by Bird Rock. We had a short detour to Castell y Bere (*the last stronghold of the Welsh, built in 1221 and*

*conquered by the English in 1283*) then stopped for lunch at Abergynolwyn, a former slate mining village.

After lunch we headed back towards the sea along the Dyfi valley catching a glimpse of the Talyllyn railway (*a narrow-gauge steam railway built in 1865 to carry slate*) and stopping to look at the Dolgoch waterfalls. We then picked up the coast road and followed this all the way back to

Barmouth. Although this was the main road there was very little traffic, probably because this was just before the start of the holiday season. We had ridden about 36 miles (*actually slightly shorter than the day before*) and several of us showed signs of having been out in the sun. On each day we climbed approximately 690m of vertical height (*and came down again*).

### **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March**

We said our goodbyes then whizzed down the hill to the station. Peter and Linden were travelling on a later train so had time for another walk first. The others were travelling by car which meant we only had two bikes to fit onto the train. This worked well (*we had booked them on in advance and had tickets to attach to the bikes*) but any more bikes on one train would have been a problem as it is only a two carriage train with only one cubby hole just big enough for two bikes.

Others who would like to experience the delights of this area for themselves will find a warm welcome at Bryn Melyn with facilities for cyclists (*see [www.brynmelyn.co.uk](http://www.brynmelyn.co.uk)*). In fact one long weekend wasn't sufficient to explore in all directions (*and Peter still has Rhinog Fawr to conquer*) so perhaps the area requires a return visit....

*Check the Spokes web-site for more pictures*

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## *Christmas Meal - a further postscript*

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In the last newsletter I wrote that we had been disappointed with the meal and the service at the Essex Arms on the occasion of the Spokes Christmas Meal last December. We had written to the Essex Arms and the owners of the chain, Mitchell & Butlers, but had not received a reply by the time the last newsletter was printed.

I am pleased to say that they have now replied and, wishing to make amends for our disappointment, have offered a free meal to all the 27 people, who attended the occasion in December. The stipulation is that we all attend together, so, as we have nothing to lose and the food and service can't fail to be better than last time, we have decided to take up their offer and will be organising a group meal in the Autumn. As soon as we know the precise date and time, I will be in touch again with everyone who came in December.

**Pam**



# SPOKES - Chairperson's Report April 2009

SPOKES has had another successful year with plenty of rides & activities.

The **committee** members have organised the production of the Newsletter, have ensured rides are organised, encouraged social events & campaigned for improved cycling facilities. Committee roles are always evolving. We welcome any member who wishes to come onto the committee.

Current paid up **membership** is around 192 consisting of approximately 118 lead members another 74 family members. A special thanks to the members who organise & lead the rides as this is often seen as the main activity of the club. I would like to see more members leading rides, so please consider leading a ride in the coming year, you just need to let the rides co-ordinator know what your proposed ride. I also wish to thank those who have organised social events during the last year, these events encourage members to meet & know each other allowing discussion on a range of issues.

Both the **newsletter & web-site** enable us to communicate to a range of people. We welcome ideas for developing the use of both for influencing better cycling.

Last year we organised our first **Open Meeting** aimed at influencing councillors to give a greater priority to the provision of cycling facilities. This year we decided to follow this up with an Open Meeting in February with the theme of Safer Cycling in people friendly Neighbourhoods. This meeting had interesting lively speakers & was well supported by councillors & cycling officers, but not as many members.

At the meeting many aspects of the default 20 mph limit in residential areas were discussed. This was not just about making cycling safer, but about improving the street environment, making it a better place for residents, pedestrians & others. Our society has become dominated by cars & lorries, which bring great benefits but also bring serious drawbacks.

All levels of government & many other organisations now recognise the benefits of cycling, as an effective mode of transport for short journeys, reducing congestion, improving the environment & a more healthy population, but implementing change to enable more people to cycle is a difficult issue to tackle.

The general view of the committee is that we should encourage & promote to councillors & the public the benefits of 20mph speed limits. But to be effective, residents need to be calling for 20mph limits in their streets.

The meeting has raised the profile of cycling amongst councillors & in the Watford Observer where cycling letters have appeared most weeks for the last two months.

There are several local & county council projects that are likely to be implemented in the coming year. These include the following:

- The NCR 6 crossing over the A41 at Garston
- Hartspring Lane, Bushey. Linking the shared use path by Queens School to the A41.
- A shared use path at the front of Watford Town Hall linking Cassiobury Park to the Subway.
- The Eastbury Road in Oxhey, improved crossing of Eastbury Road & better surface for the shared use path on NCR 6.
- Oxhey fields, Bridge over the River Colne

At Rickmansworth we are hoping to see improved signposting though the Aquadrome on NCR 61. We have also had discussions with the Three Rivers District Council on improved use & access to the Leavesden Country Park, to which we are organising picnic rides on 19 June.

We have also had discussions with Watford Council on developing the Colne Valley Park, particularly improving some of the awkward parts of the well-used cycle route passing through this area.

Of course we would like to see all the missing links in the local cycling network completed, but the two projects in **Watford** we wish to be given a high priority are the completion of the cycling route from the High Street to the lower High St. & linking the cycle paths in Cassiobury Park to the canal path.

Pam & I have attended the **Hertfordshire County Council** Cycling Forum, which provides the opportunity to discuss a wide range of cycling issues. I would like to see more footpaths by busy rural roads converted to shared use paths. These are often little used by pedestrians, but could be a significant benefit to cyclists.

We hope to see a greater determination by HCC to improve the cycling environment.

The future success of SPOKES depends on members participating & supporting the rides, having a social programme, and improving our campaigning ability to ensure that better cycling facilities are provided.

Cycling will help to provide better health for people living in a more pleasant & sustainable environment, and hopefully enjoying cycling.

**Roger**

***CYCLE RIDES FROM SOUTH WEST HERTS*** is a useful little book if you've ever said to yourself "Where can I ride today?"

It includes 21 circular rides starting from Watford or Rickmansworth and varying in length from 4 to 50 miles. Each ride is mostly on traffic-free bridlepaths or very quiet roads and has an Ordnance Survey map of the route with instructions.

I rode all 21 earlier this year—which turned out to be about 420 miles what with travel to the starts and the occasional getting lost. This is not easy to do (getting lost) but I managed it on several occasions.

I've been running and cycling local footpaths and roads for years but was delighted to find some new paths, especially in the "foreign country" between Harpenden and Shenley.

My favourite has to be the biggie—so-called "round Hertfordshire" ride. It's a bit unkind to Hitchin and Royston which are completely avoided but it's a pleasant outing. It's on a rectangle formed by three former railway lines and the canal.... Greenwood Park, [ST ALBANS], the Alban Way, [HATFIELD], the Ayot Greenway [HARPENDEN], The Nicky Line [HEMEL] and the Canal [WATFORD].

The rides weren't all uneventful birdsong and daffodils. In one on of the coldest springs for some time and I learnt why mountain bikes have no mudguards when my front wheel got chocked solid with mud. I fell in an icy stream dealing with the second of FOUR punctures and completed the 50 miles without a saddle when a bolt snapped. I've see Tour de France cyclists dancing on the pedals but it's very tiring on the arms.

So if you've never run out to Great Gaddesden / Ley Hill / Ridge / London Colney / Redbourne / Gorehambury etc etc there are lots of tracks and beautiful countryside waiting for you.

**Where do you get this magic book? Well you have a choice:**

A] Buy it from Watford Central Library or the Town hall (I think it's £3.97)

B] Join SPOKES and get one free

Oh yes—I didn't want to mention it but... my picture is on the cover lurking in the back row. I've nothing to do with the book as the photo was taken on what must be close to a perfect cycle outing—not much cycling; friendly people and free picnic food.

**Bob**

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**Paris Velib**

by **Mary Ann**

Curious about trying the Paris Velib bike hire scheme?

Here are some tips from my recent attempt.

- Get a Paris Velib bike map (2€ euros) which shows where cycle depots are, but is very large scale and not very helpful for finding your way around marked cycle routes.

- The electronic information kiosk at the depots has information in English and it will accept credit/debit cards.
- Check the bike's brakes etc before you take it out.
- If you get a day ticket (1€), you need its number for directions to get the bike out.
- The first half hour is free, the 2<sup>nd</sup> half hour is 1€, the 3<sup>rd</sup> half hour is 2€ and the 4<sup>th</sup> and future half hour are 4€, so you will spend a lot of money unless you plan a very short journey, or put the bike back after an hour or so and take another one (from a different depot).
- If you want to return your bike and a depot has no free places, the info kiosk will tell you where nearby places are and give you 15 minutes free.
- Some good segregated cycle paths exist, but might deposit you in the middle of a vast Paris square with no markings and full of rushing vehicles.
- Some areas have quiet back streets, but they might be blocked by bin lorries and the narrow pavements also blocked by bins.
- Parisian motorists treat cyclists with an extra *je ne sais quois...*



## FROM YOUR RIDES CO-ORDINATOR

This quarter the List of Rides has additional features in order for members to choose those rides most suited to their interests and capabilities.

- 🚲 There are some rides classified as **slow** that will be of a gentle pace of up to 8mph;
- 🚲 the **medium** or moderate paced rides will generate average speeds of between 9 and 12 mph and whilst welcome for faster riders, it will be expected that they will be understanding of other participants.
- 🚲 Faster riders are likely to enjoy the rides described as being at a **fast** pace even though these are limited in number.

Further opportunities will be provided in the next quarter for members to express their views in order to help create the right balance of rides and also for members who have not previously led rides to take the lead.

**David**



# SPOKES RIDES & EVENTS

## JUNE / JULY / AUGUST 2009

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.

Note: All telephone numbers without codes are Watford (01923).

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

**Friday 5th June**

**7.15pm**

**Commonwood & Belsize**

**Watford Metropolitan Station** Moderate ride, a few hills. to Commonwood & Belsize. Possible pub stop at Sarratt. Return to Croxley around 10.00pm. Please bring your lights. **Medium** Roger

**Saturday 6th June**

**10.00am**

**Black Jack's Mill**

**Watford High Street Station** Ride along the Ebury Way and through the Aquadrome to the Colne Valley Trail. **20 miles** **Medium pace** Dennis

### National Bike Week 13<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2009

**Saturday 13th June**

**9.30am**

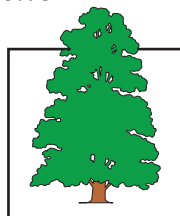
**London Open Squares**

**Watford Junction Station** Train to Euston then a leisurely ride through Bloomsbury visiting a variety of garden squares not normally open to the public. Tickets (*valid for the weekend*) are £8 on the day or £6.75 in advance from: **[www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org)**

To facilitate train travel bring a folding bike if you have one.

Bring a picnic / or refreshments available at some of the squares.

**About 10 miles** **Slow pace** Veronica



**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June**

**9.00am**

**Joint West Middlesex Henry VIII CTC Ride**

**Ickenham Pump near jctn Swakeleys/High Road**

From Ickenham to Syon Park, Lunch in the Hampton Court area and Tea somewhere on the way back. **60 miles** (or 30 miles with train return option) **Fast**

Ayman



**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

**7.00pm**

**Merryhill Greenway**

**Watford High Street Station** Easy ride on quiet streets and off road through the Merryhill Woodlands Trust site south of Watford.

**6 miles** **Slow pace**

Mary Ann

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June**

**2.00pm**

**Bike Week Day 2**

**Watford High Street Station** Cycle path ride down the Ebury way and round the Aquadrome. **10 miles** **Slow**

Dennis

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June**

**10.00am**

**Mayor's Ride**

**Bandstand by Watford Town Hall** A moderate ride with a send-off by Watford's Mayor. Based on Ride 4 from the Rides Book to Aldenham. Return due by noon. **9 miles** **Medium**

Roger

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June**

**1.00pm – 6.00pm**

**Croxley Revels**

**Croxley Green** Visit or help at the SPOKES stall at this annual celebration shared by local voluntary organisations and societies with carnival procession and arena entertainment. Lots of food stalls, including cream teas. Further details: [www.croxleyrevels.co.uk/](http://www.croxleyrevels.co.uk/)  
David

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June**

**from 3.15pm**

**Pick-up Picnic Rides**

Choice of joining *two* separate cycle rides, each with several pick-up points and a different leader:

**Paul's Colne Valley Ride**

**Watford High Street Station at** 3.30pm

**Radlett Rd, Rugby Club House at** 3.50pm

**Garston Station at**

4.00pm



## **Roger's Canal Ride**

**Watersmeet Theatre, Rickmansworth at 3.15pm**

**Between the Two Bridges, A412 Croxley Green at 3.40pm**

**Canal Bridge, Cassiobury Park, Watford at 3.50pm**

**Junction of Gypsy Lane & South Way, Abbots Langley at 4.20pm**

The rides will join up for a picnic in Leavesden Country Park.

If you prefer meet at Leavesden Country Park, North Side, Sports Area.

Bring your own picnic to eat from about 4.30pm.

**Slow paced, various distances.** Roger and Paul

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 8.00pm Spokes Social Evening**

**Moon Under Water** pub, High Street, Watford. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Meet for a drink/curry and chat. Diana

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 10.00am Great North Way**

**Watford High Street Station** Ride on cycle paths, roads and some bridle path. Some hills. Pub lunch **32 miles Medium pace**  
Alan

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2.30pm - 3.00pm for Staggered start**  
**Midsummer Murders Treasure Hunt**

**Café Nero, Watford High Street** Family Treasure Hunt based upon circular route using mainly cycle lanes around Watford Centre – Basic maps will be provided but a compass and carrying utensil may be helpful – Teams of no more than 2 adults – Prizes for winners **5 or 6 miles**  
David

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 10.00am Gorhambury**

**Watford High Street Station** Gorhambury via Bricket Wood and Chiswell Green **25 miles Medium pace** Dennis

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 11.00am London Colney**

**Garston Medical Centre next to Sainsbury's** Fairly easy going ride mostly off road to London Colney and return through Bricket Wood  
**12 miles Medium** Vince

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July**

**7.15pm**

**Mystery Evening Ride**

**Watford High Street Station** Mystery Ride but you will need your lights. Roger

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July**

**10.00am**

**Reservoir Cogs**

**Watford Junction Station** Train ride to Berkhamsted, then cycle through Aldbury, Marsworth and Wigginton. Pub lunch.



On road route with some steep hills.

**25 miles Medium/Fast** Iain

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July**

**10.00am**

**Chandlers Cross**

**Watford High Street Station** Quiet lanes and some off road. Back by lunch-time. **10 miles Slow** Mary Ann

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

**10.00am**

**Borehamwood Loop**

**Watford High Street Station** Ride along quiet roads and lanes skirting Borehamwood. Some off road tracks so a hybrid bike would be best.

Pub lunch. **24 miles Medium** Nigel

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

**10.00am**

**London Bikeathon**

**Euston Station** London Bikeathon in aid of Leukaemia Research.

**26 miles Ride at your pace** Team entry possible – please contact David ASAP if interested.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 10.30am Return to Windsor & the Jubilee River**

**Rickmansworth end of the Ebury Way by Travis Perkins**

Ride along tracks & roads using National Cycle Routes 61 & 4.

Colne Valley route to Uxbridge, then on through Eton to the River Thames and the Jubilee River. Returning via Burnham

Beeches. Bring a packed lunch to eat by the Thames, then

call in for a drink at a pub late afternoon. Return to

Rickmansworth around 6.30pm. **45 miles**

**Medium**

Roger



**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July**

**10.00am**

**Hatfield Special**

**Meeting point to be advised**

Joint ride with HAWOG covering the Alban Way. **32 miles Medium**

David

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July                      8.00pm                      Spokes Social Evening**

**Moon Under Water** pub, High Street, Watford. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Meet for a drink/curry and chat. Diana

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August                      2.00pm                      Maureen's Motivator Ride**

**Cha-Cha-Cha café in Cassiobury Park**

Ride to Cheslyn Garden and the canal towpath.

To encourage newer cyclists beginners to join group ride.

Suitable for beginners.    **4 miles    Slow pace**

Maureen



**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August                      10.00am                      Denham Country Park**

**Watford High Street Station**    Ride on Ebury Way, canal towpath and

roads. Tea & coffee stop.    **24 miles    Medium**

Alan

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August                      10.00am                      Hockeridge Bottom**

**Watford Metropolitan Station** A hard, hilly ride along some of the best

lanes around here. Possible pub stop.    **22 miles    Medium pace**

Dennis

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August                      10.00am                      Mill Green**

**Watford High Street Station**    Cycle through Bricket Wood and

St Albans to Mill Green via the Alban Way. Fairly flat. Pub lunch.

**33 miles    Medium pace                      Dennis**

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August                      10.00am                      St Albans Loop**

**Garston Medical Centre - Sainsbury's car park**    Ride along quiet roads and lanes skirting St Albans. Some off road tracks so a hybrid bike would

be best. Pub lunch.    **31 miles    Medium pace**

Nigel

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August                      11.00am                      Bricket Wood & Smug Oak**

**Watford High Street Station**

Quiet lanes and some off road.

Option of lunch at Old Fox pub in Bricket Wood.

**10 miles    Slow pace                      Mary Ann**





**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 8.00pm Spokes Social Evening**

**Moon Under Water** pub, High Street, Watford. We are normally in the dining area at the rear. Meet for a drink/curry and chat. Diana

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August 10.00am Apsley via Felden**

**Watford Metropolitan Station** Ride to Belsize via 'Under the Heavens', Flaunden and down to the canal via Felden. Possible pub lunch.

**20 miles Medium Dennis**

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August 9.30am assembly for 10.00am  
Poppy Appeal Bushey to Oxford Ride**

**Bushey British Legion Club - Melbourne Road**



On road with the majority on quiet country ones via Harefield, Marlow, Christmas Common, Watlington with Legion Club stops along the way. Return trip is likely to be via train from Oxford to Denham **60 miles Fast pace** Paul. Please register your interest in advance.

## Looking Forward...

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September Committee Meeting** at Paul's

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September Historic Churches Bike Ride**

Fund raising event for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust – great fun – more details at [www.bedshertshct.org.uk](http://www.bedshertshct.org.uk)

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September Tour of Britain – London stage**

More details at [www.tourofbritain.co.uk](http://www.tourofbritain.co.uk)

**Sat/Sun 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> September Open House Weekend**

Great opportunity to visit some of London's buildings not normally available to the public and to enjoy some of London's quieter areas.

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September Spokes Social Evening**

**Sunday ?? September Sky Sports London Freewheel 2009**

The date will be announced soon - see following web-site:  
[www.gopedal.co.uk/LondonFreewheel2009.htm](http://www.gopedal.co.uk/LondonFreewheel2009.htm)

# More cycling in the USA

BY FOLDING BIKE

by  
Mary Ann

My most idyllic cycle ride was on the Old San Pedro Mountain Road in the Santa Cruz Mountains in California. The day before, I cycled 25 miles south from San Francisco on the Pacific Coastal Route to Point Montara Lighthouse. Urban and suburban sprawl lasts until the town of Pacifica. Beyond that, the Santa Cruz Mountains rise up steeply, covered with thick scrub and firs. The only route on my map was Route 1. At Pacifica, I asked at the Visitor Center for local cycle maps. To my surprise, they had none.

They directed me to a concrete path that switch-backed up a steep slope, avoiding Route 1. However, at the top of the hill, the path ends and I had to re-join the main road. The next stretch was over the infamous Devil's Slide, where the mountains meet the ocean with an eroding headland subject to landslides. A tunnel is being built to bypass this section and, when it opens in 2010, the highway will be reserved for cyclists and hikers.



Meanwhile, the road is steep, busy and narrower than many American roads. I was prone to wobble and I didn't like the cars and trucks speeding past. I was relieved to get to the Point Montara Hostel. A couple arrived after me who were cycling the whole of the coastal route. I asked if they'd found the Devil's Slide scary. No, they'd thought the scenery was stupendous. Scenery? I was so preoccupied

flinching at the passing traffic that I hadn't noticed!

I had to return to San Francisco the following day, and my road map showed the only alternative to Route 1 and the Devil's Slide was to go a long way east to the built up Santa Clara Valley and more busy roads.

Luckily, staff at the hostel were much more knowledgeable than the Pacifica Visitor Center. They told me about the San Pedro Mountain Road.

Historically, this section of the coast has always been a barrier for travellers. It was first traversed by an Indian trail, also used by the Spaniards in the 1760s when they set up the missions. A road was built in 1849, then replaced by another in 1879, which was again replaced by a third road in 1914, all using different routes. The Coastside Boulevard lasted until 1937, when Route 1 was built. The abandoned highway is now called the San Pedro Mountain Road.

It is a gem. It hasn't been maintained since it was closed to cars, so although it is paved, sometimes it is only two to three feet wide because of wash-outs and encroaching vegetation. It winds its way around successive ridges, switch-backing up the gentlest of gradients to Saddle Pass at 980'. Tussocks of silvery grey pampas grass dot the roadside and the slopes are covered with pines and scrub oak. I had the whole landscape to myself, apart from a couple of mountain bikers coming in the other direction. I didn't see any rattlesnakes or mountain lions, which are occasionally spotted, but I enjoyed the views of the Pacific Ocean, the coast, and tiny Route 1 by the water's edge far below.



From Saddle Pass, the road winds down through even thicker scrub to the outskirts of Pacifica, where I faced the suburban sprawl back to San Francisco. As luck would have it, a local cyclist came alongside and we struck up a conversation. He guided me to a lovely bike trail that goes along the Pacifica waterfront and then suggested I go up to the Skyline Boulevard back to San Francisco. I was going to avoid that route because it has four lanes, but he said it was worth it for the views. I had visions of not noticing the scenery because of the traffic, but the road turned out to be almost empty, and the scenery was stupendous!

# *The Formation of a Bicycle Club*

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(Extracted from a chapter headed "Manly Games and Exercises"  
published by Cassel c1880)

*The Captain* is usually elected, though some few clubs still race for the distinction – a very faulty plan, as the fastest man is not always competent for the post, which requires a man who can be friendly yet firm, and who retains the friendship of his men whilst keeping a tight hand of discipline on them. The captain should be jealous of the club's honour, and curb at once any conduct likely to disgrace or degrade it. This is a difficult task, and not one to be trusted to the chances of a race. The captain's duties are simply to lead, choosing the route, and give orders to his men. On the road he usually rides at the head of the club, on the left, either alone, or with the bugler beside him. He regulates the pace and allows no one to pass him from the ranks, unless he gives permission.

*The Sub-Captain's* duties are most arduous. He rides last and looks after stragglers and novices. Should the pace be too great, he signals to that effect to the captain by means of a whistle or bugle, and an agreed code. He also informs him in case of accident or mishap.

*The Bugler* transmits the orders of either officer to the men.

*The Clubman's* duties are to ride with decorum, and obey the orders of his officers. Should any of these orders not meet with acceptance, the proper step for the aggrieved clubman to take is to obey them, and then bring the case before the committee or a general meeting of the club.

*The President* is supposed to preside at meetings, but is usually an honorary office. A club lucky enough to secure an amiable president with plenty of influence will be sure to benefit by its good fortune.

To all who practice our sport we say in conclusion AUDACES FORTUNA JUVAT.

Does anyone know what that means?

This was in the days of the 'Penny Farthing'.

submitted by Dennis

# Committee Members





# How To Help

## How did you find out about Spokes?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal recommendation | <input type="checkbox"/> Web-site                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On a cycle ride         | <input type="checkbox"/> Library                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CyclePedia              | <input type="checkbox"/> Cycles UK                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neale & Sons            | <input type="checkbox"/> Thirteen Cycles                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northwood Cycle Depot   | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bike Stall (Watford Market) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bikehut (Rickmansworth) | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Fair              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TravelSmart             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                           |

## 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                         |  |



## Quarterly Quotations

*"No other invention combines practicality and pleasure to such a profound extent as a bicycle."*

**Adam Opel**, the largest manufacturer of bicycles in Germany in about 1900

*"A bicycle is a vehicle for revolution."*

**Daniel Behrman**

# 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:

<b>CyclePedia</b> 01923 221901 70-78 Merton Road, Watford	<b>Neale &amp; Sons</b> 01923 223916 26 Vicarage Road Precinct, Watford
<b>Cycles UK</b> 01923 243707 484 St. Albans Road, Watford	<b>The Bike Stall</b> Watford Market thebikestall@aol.com or 07941 800029
<b>Thirteens Cycles</b> 01923 234221 73 Chalk Hill, Oxhey, Watford	<b>Northwood Cycle Depot</b> 01923 824174 118 Pinner Road, Northwood
 <b>Bikehut</b> 01923 776901 145-147 High Street, Rickmansworth 	