

Affiliated to: Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk)  
and Cyclenation [www.cyclenation.org.uk](http://www.cyclenation.org.uk)



# SOUTH WEST HERIS SPOKES CYCLING GROUP

WEB VERSION



London Open  
Garden Squares:  
One of the many  
garden squares visited.

For more information see  
[www.spokesgroup.com](http://www.spokesgroup.com)

# Open Garden Squares Weekend

by **Diana**

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June a group of Spokes members met at Watford Junction for a cycling trip to London. We managed to visit 15 Open Garden Squares! It was great arriving soon after 10am (*in sunshine even*), as so many of the Bloomsbury squares are near Euston.



We enjoyed a coffee break at the rather elegant café in Russell Square and admired the graceful Georgian buildings around Bedford Square, where I was quite taken with the Victorian Stumpery. I have since tried to create my own – have the ferns, but could do with more rustic tree stumps!

We braved our way along Shaftesbury Avenue to the Phoenix Garden – a gem of a wild life habitat with ponds and restful areas, planted by the local community on a car park.

What fun it was cycling up The Mall, visiting Marlborough House Gardens with the lovely Wren house and then on past Green Park, through Hyde Park to Cadogan Place Gardens for a late lunch stop. Some of us bought salads while listening to music from members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and, in Robert's case, even chatting to them!

I was just gently dozing on the grass when we were off again to take tea and to be tempted by gorgeous treats at Rococo Chocolates, which has a Moroccan tiled garden. My raspberry marshmallow samples were sublime!

We headed back towards Euston calling in at Park Crescent, connected to Park Square by the Nursemaids' Tunnel and almost locked in for the night but managed to escape back home!

Many thanks to Veronica and Iain for organising such a wonderful outing!

A special thanks to all those who have led rides over the summer months. SPOKES success depends on volunteers being prepared to organise and lead rides so it was good to see so many extra rides in the summer period. Thanks also to those organising and supporting the Rickmansworth Environment Fair and Croxley Revels.

In future we hope to see more specialised rides on a regular basis. This is starting with regular easy rides on the 1st Saturday of the month, at 2.00pm from Cha Cha Cha café in Cassiobury Park, Watford.

The festive season lunch will be on **Sunday 10 January 2010** at a venue yet to be decided.

Recent improvements in cycling facilities have included signs in the Aquadrome at Rickmansworth showing the route of the National Cycling Route 61. Very shortly work should start on the long awaited crossing of the A41 at Garston and the bridge over the River Colne at Oxhey Park.

**Roger**

## Bike Loving Bobby Is Scourge Of Thieves

The Manchester Evening News reports that a police constable patrolling one of the city's crime hotspots has become the scourge of bike thieves and the guardian angel of cycle owners.

In the last six months, PC Le Cheminant has seized 55 stolen bikes and arrested 15 people for theft and handling stolen goods. He caught one thief after he spotted him riding a bike and steering another - just five minutes after he'd stolen the £1500 road bike from a garage.

PC Le Cheminant, who has served for 29 years, said: "Sometimes searches of the offenders' properties lead to more stolen goods, drugs and weapons. We can trace the bike owners through crime reports on the police computers. It is very satisfying returning them to their owners, they can't thank you enough."

The 55-year-old officer has even returned bikes before they have been reported stolen, after tracking down their owners through manufacturers and retailers.

*From the **Cyclenation** web-site*

# OFF ROAD CYCLING IN EAST SUSSEX

by **Dennis**

In East Sussex there is an old railway track called 'The Cuckoo Trail'. This is fully paved and about 15 miles long.



It runs North from Polegate to Heathfield. There are benches at intervals all the way along and several villages with pubs and cafés. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) will supply a booklet of routes and also leaflets on several other routes in the county.

Yvonne and I spent a long weekend with 4 friends cycling in the area. On our way down we spent an afternoon cycling along 'The Forest Way' (*details supplied by ESCC*) and we stayed at the Innkeepers Lodge Hotel, Eastbourne, which was running a 3 nights for the price of 2 promotion.

This hotel was actually on an extension of the cycle path. I have never before stayed so close to the path I am about to ride along. There was a Toby Carvery adjacent to the hotel which served excellent meals at a reasonable price. There were cycle paths to take us down to and along the coast.

We had 4 days cycling on good paths with hardly any traffic together with good food and accommodation at a reasonable price. I recommend it to you all.

## *Twenty is Plenty*

by **Mary Ann**

As Roger wrote in the last newsletter, we had a successful meeting in February about the Twenty is Plenty campaign, which is trying to get 20mph as the default speed limit in residential areas. The Spokes Committee had subsequently agreed that it was more appropriate for campaigning to come from local residents rather than Spokes. Speed is relevant to cyclists, but also relevant to residents, pedestrians and motorists, so campaigning about it should be more broadly based.

It could be a member of Spokes or a committee member or anyone else who sets up a campaigning group. Who will take the first step? Why not YOU?! But if you are not that way inclined, you can still do a lot simply

by talking to friends and neighbours about Twenty is Plenty and getting them to consider that it might be a good idea. Talk or write to your local councillors too.



An article in the Aug-Sept issue of *London Cyclist* (*London Cycling Campaign*) explained why 20mph speed limits are a crucial step towards improving public health, safety and communities. Lowering speed limits in residential areas does two very important things: first, it reduces the number of killed and seriously injured road users by around half (45% according to Transport for London's latest figures, with collisions involving children down as much as two-thirds). And second, it increases the proportion of people who choose to walk and cycle instead of driving.

Yes, driving at 20mph does seem very slow – at first. But you soon get used to it and find that you have more time to look around and see what others are doing in the street. Nothing ahead of you comes as a shock. You can relax your grip on the steering wheel. It's really rather pleasant.

The impact on journey times is surprisingly small because urban trips involve so much time waiting at junctions.

Islington, Portsmouth, Norwich and Hull are already adopting the limit. The Department for Transport (*DfT*) sees 20mph as a major tool in its drive to reduce road casualties. The London Assembly's Transport committee endorsed 20mph in April this year.

So why isn't it happening everywhere? Because most Councils don't think the public is ready. It's our job to tell them we are – more than ready.

Further information on <http://20splentyforus.org.uk>

## Cambridge To Get 20mph Limit

Cambridge Council has approved plans to trial a 20mph limit for streets in Cambridge city centre. In line with DfT's circular 1/2006, Cambridgeshire has decided that a 20mph limit is acceptable where the average speed is already below 24mph. The policy could also be applied to the county's towns and villages.

*From the **Cyclenation** web-site*

# Free 'Christmas' Meal

In the last newsletter I reported that all those who attended the Spokes Christmas Meal last December at the Essex Arms would be entitled to a free group meal to make up for the poor food and service we received on that occasion.

The date and time of the group meal is:

**Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup> at 12.30pm**




All those who came to the meal in December are eligible to attend. The meal will be free, but of course drinks will be extra. So far I do not have details of the menu, but when and if I do, I will circulate them.

Please let me know as soon as possible by email or by phone on whether you are able to attend. If you are unable to come or do not wish to, you can nominate someone to come in your place, but *please* let me know!

**Pam**

## Speed Matters

A reminder of what sort of speed the rides may be:

-  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 **12mph** 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.



# SPOKES RIDES & EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 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*

### **Saturday 5th September 2.00pm Confidence Booster Ride**

**Cha Cha Cha Café in Cassiobury Park, Watford** An easy ride for inexperienced or rusty riders who want to try out cycling with support.

This ride scheduled - First Saturday of every month except Dec, Jan & Feb.

**5 miles Slow Mary Ann**

### **Saturday 5th September 3.00pm**

#### **Watford Central Recruitment Ride**

**Cha Cha Cha Café** Following on from above ride, existing members opportunity to distribute Spokes membership forms to local cyclists via a circular route to town centre.

**8 miles Slow David**



### **Sunday 6th September**

**9.00am**

#### **Peace Hospice Sponsored Ride**

**Cassiobury Park** Sponsored ride in aid of Peace Hospice Watford - entry fee £12 per person. [www.peacehospice.co.uk](http://www.peacehospice.co.uk) Events section.

**10 mile, 20 mile and 30 mile options** Please see web-site for details.

### **Sunday 6th September**

**10.15am**

#### **Joint Ride with CTC**

**Watford High Street Station** Ride to Aldenham Country Park for coffee and the Alban Way with lunch at the Plough.

**30 miles Medium Ayman**



**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm Committee Meeting**

*For more details contact Paul.*

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 10.00am Ley Hill & Whelpley Hill**

**Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green** A hilly ride through some of the best lanes in SW Herts. Possible pub stop in Sarratt.

**22 miles Medium Dennis**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September Beds & Herts Historic Churches**

**"Bike 'n' Hike"**

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)  
Entry details on website only.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 7.00pm Evening Ride**

**Kings Langley Station** Abbots Langley, Bedmond, Leavesden circular with pub food stop.

**10 miles max Medium Diane**

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

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

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 10.00am Open House Weekend**

**Watford Junction Station** Great opportunity to visit some of London's buildings not normally available to the public and to enjoy some of London's quieter areas [www.openhouse.org.uk](http://www.openhouse.org.uk)

Further details - Mary Ann

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September Expected around 9.00am**

**Mayor of London's Skyride**

**Harrow and Wealdstone Station** Marshalled ride into central London followed by a traffic free ride with 100's of cyclists along the Embankment and past St.Paul's.

Full details on: <http://new.britishcycling.org.uk/skyride/london>

Further details David



**Please note:** the Spokes Social Evening shown in the last newsletter  
for **24<sup>th</sup> September** is now to be on **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October**



**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 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 Dennis**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 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 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2.00pm Confidence Booster Ride**

**Cha Cha Cha Café in Cassiobury Park, Watford** For inexperienced or rusty riders who want to try out cycling with support. This ride includes a Golf course, woods and Rousebarn Lane. Tea and Scone stop included.

**5 miles Slow Maureen**

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 10.00am Black Jack's Mill**

**Watford High Street Station** Ride along the Ebury Way and Colne Valley Trail and try out a 'new' café. **20 miles Medium Dennis**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 10.45am Cycle to Whepley Hill to meet other cyclists**

**Watford Metropolitan Station** A ride mainly on country lanes.

Pub lunch at Whepley Hill where we hope to meet members from Brent and Tring & Berkhamsted cycling campaign.

**22 miles Medium Roger**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October 10.40am The Ayots and Wheathampstead**

**St Albans Abbey Station** Train from Watford dep. 10.20 arr. 10.36.

Out on Smallford trail to Ayot Green and pub lunch, back via Wheathampstead, choice of train or ride back from St Albans.

**18 miles (or 30 miles without train) Medium Phil**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 10.30am Apple Day Special**

**Watford Metropolitan Station** Ride based on Route 11 in the Blue book with a pub lunch and a visit to the very first Chorleywood Apple Day event.

**18 miles Medium Veronica / Iain**



**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October**

**11.00am**

**Route 6 on the  
National Cycle Network**

**Bushey Station** Sustrans NCN Route 6 from Ebury Way to Chiswell Green with lunch stop at pub or similar.

**27 miles Fast David**

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

**10.00am**

**Bride Paths Around  
Sarratt**

**Pump House, Local Board Road, Watford** Ebury Way, Common Moor, towpath, Whippendell Woods, Belsize etc. Could be muddy. Road alternative if *too* muddy. **28 miles Medium Dennis**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 11.00am Wheathampstead Meander**

**Garston Medical Centre in Sainsburys' car park** Alban Way ride to Oaklands and Wheathampstead back via quiet lanes to St Albans for lunch stop and Garston. **16 miles Slow Alan**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October 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 31<sup>st</sup> October 10.00am Hemel and Whipsnade**

**Top Golf, Bushey Mill Lane** Hilly-Undulating-Medium to fast paced ride past Buncefield-and the villages bordering Whipsnade -return around 3pm-possible pub stop. **35 miles Medium Andrew**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2.00pm Confidence Booster Ride**

**Cha Cha Cha Café in Cassiobury Park, Watford** An easy ride for inexperienced or rusty riders who want to try out cycling with support.

**5 miles Slow Mary Ann**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November 10.30am Aldenham Aerodrome**

**Excursion**

**Bushey Station** Some off road after Bushey to circle round Aldenham Country Park and coffee stop at Aerodrome finishing for lunch at the Toby Carvery. **12 miles Slow David**

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 9.30am**

**Hampton Court**

**Bushey Station** Hampton Court for lunch with a stop in Syon Park for coffee- return on train to Watford Junction.

**40 miles Medium Ayman**



**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November      7.45pm      Barn Dance**

**Francis Bacon School, Drakes Drive, St Albans, AL1 5AR** Dance to the music of **Fat Harry** with caller **Adam Hughes**. Finishes at 11.30pm. Tickets: £8 on the door or (£7 in advance - contact *Veronica*).

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November      11.00am      Letchmore Circular**

**Garston Medical Centre in Sainsburys' car park** Easy circular ride including Wall Hall, Elstree, Radlett and Letchmore with lunch stop.  
**12 miles    Slow      Alan**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November      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 28<sup>th</sup> November      10.00am      Gorhambury**

**Watford High Street Station** Ride via Bricket Wood, Verulamium and Chiswell Green. **25 miles    Medium      Alan**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November      7.30pm      Lovely Lasagne**

Come and partake of a variety of home-made Italian-style dishes. Please bring your preferred **drink** and a **£4** contribution.

Contact **Iain** by **24<sup>th</sup> November** if you intend coming.

## Looking Forward...

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December      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 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010      Festive Lunch**

Venue undecided at time of going to press...

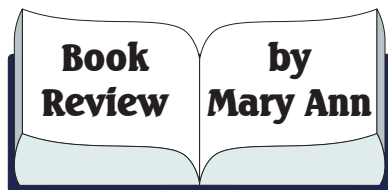
Because of the group meal in October we have decided on a post-Christmas meal in the New Year. Details will appear in the next newsletter.

Please contact **Pam** to book your place. Also check the website:

***www.spokesgroup.com*** for updates.

## 50 Quirky Bike Rides

Rob Ainsley, a cyclist/journalist from Bath, has come up with a guidebook called "50 Quirky Bike Rides" (£9.99).



It does exactly what the title says and the ride descriptions are very funny to read as well. He describes rides over unusual bridges, hills, canals, causeways, aqueducts, tunnels, ferries... and several are in London. A good Christmas present idea. As of writing (July) it was in stock at Watford Waterstones.

***www.bizarrebiking.com***

## *Guidelines for Cycling in a Group*

by **Dennis**

*The comments below are my views as a runs leader  
and not attributable to anyone else.*

All members of the group are adults (*unless a junior accompanied by a responsible adult*) and thus responsible for their own safety.

I, for my part, will behave in as safe a manner as possible and try not to place anyone in any danger.

It is very bad manners to crowd the pavement with ourselves and our bikes, forcing passers by to walk in the road. A little thought can prevent this.

When we stop, please bear in mind the safety of yourselves and others and do not spread out across the road.

Dogs can be a hazard and should be approached with care. Remember that sometimes the dog is one side of a path and the owner the other with an almost invisible line stretched between them.

Horses should be passed with care. Always warn the rider by ringing a bell or calling out.

Many elderly and almost all young people are 'deaf' and may need several rings on a bell to alert them to your presence.

Cycling on canal towpaths requires a permit which is obtainable free from ***[www.waterscape.com/things-to-do/cycling/permit](http://www.waterscape.com/things-to-do/cycling/permit)***.

Cyclists in the UK are not well regarded. It is important that we set a good example and behave in a responsible and courteous manner to other road users.

When cycling in a group it is important to follow certain rules in order to ride as safely as possible.

It is important that messages about road conditions and cyclists behaviour be passed back and forward in the group.

There are a number of standard calls:-

- ❖ “Car up” indicates that a car is approaching us from behind.
- ❖ “Car down” indicates that a car is approaching us from the front.
- ❖ “Easy” indicates that I am slowing down.
- ❖ “On the left” indicates that there are people, a vehicle or some other obstruction on the left or a rider is overtaking you on that side.
- ❖ “Single out” indicates that we need to ride in single file to allow a vehicle to pass.
- ❖ A hazard in the road can be indicated by calling out e.g. “pothole” or “brick” and pointing to it.
- ❖ If you are overtaking someone in the group it may be helpful to call out “On the left/right”.

In future, I shall require a back marker who will ensure that no-one is left behind.

Anyone leaving the group should inform the runs leader.

If I have left you behind I will always stop and wait for you or more than likely go back to look for you.

If you have gone ahead and taken a different route from the one I intend, I will not necessarily come and look for you.

If you aware that someone has dropped behind, call out to me or ring your bell.

I will never turn off a straight road without stopping and waiting for everyone in the group.

Everyone should have a toolkit and spare inner tube, water and a bell.

Riding without mudguards is very unsociable to the person riding behind you.

The **Deadline** for the Autumn Newsletter  
is **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009**



# 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"/> The Bike Stall (Watford Market) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northwood Cycle Depot   | <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 Quotation

*"Let a man find himself, in distinction from others, on top of two wheels with a chain - at least in a poor country like Russia - and his vanity begins to swell out like his tyres. In America it takes an automobile to produce this effect."*

Leon Trotsky

# 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>Northwood Cycle Depot</b> 01923 824174 118 Pinner Road, Northwood	

