

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



SOUTH WEST HERTS SPOKES CYCLING GROUP

Web-site
Version



WEB www.spokesgroup.com

FACEBOOK

on.fb.me/spokesfb

E-MAIL info@spokesgroup.com

TWITTER

[twitter.com@spokesgroup](https://twitter.com/spokesgroup)

WINTER: DECEMBER / JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2011-12 ISSUE # 71

RECORD NUMBERS ON SPOKES CYCLE RIDE

News Release - Spokes Cycle Group

Watford cycle group Spokes could not have anticipated the record numbers turning up on their last 'Less Experienced Cyclist' ride for 2011. Thanks to publicity in last week's Watford Observer, cyclists crowded at the meeting point in Cassiobury Park.

Young cyclists Verity and Victoria report:

'On the sunny afternoon of October 1st 26 cyclists set out with Spokes on a relaxing cycle. We travelled about 10 miles through the beautiful countryside of Hertfordshire, with people ranging in age from teenagers to the retired. It's only our 3rd ride with Spokes and we thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to many more adventurous outings.

'On this ride, we most enjoyed how relaxing it was, it was a beautiful sunny day that couldn't have been enjoyed any better than being outside and being active without knowing it! After the ride we all got to unwind by sitting in the Cha Cha Cha café's garden and munching our pieces of cake and sipping our drinks.

'I would highly recommend this less experienced ride to others, as it is a nice gentle way to ease yourself into, or back into, cycling with many existing cyclists there on hand and to give you helpful tips.'

Spokes Less Experienced Cyclists Rides on the First Saturday of the Month - 2011 Report

For many years now, Spokes members have been trying to encourage people whose bikes are underused to get back on their bikes with short friendly rides. These have been given a variety of titles. Last year a number of motivator and confidence booster rides were held and this year, running under the title of LEC (*less experienced cycle*) rides, these have been held every month between April and October.



Attendance has been as follows:

Month	Cyclists
April	14
May	9
June	10
July	14
August	7
September	10
October	26
Average	13

These rides have been between 5 and 8 miles and have all started from Cassiobury Park. Apart from advertising them through the newsletter and local Internet event web-sites, articles and pictures have been submitted every month for the Watford Observer. These have been relatively successful in promoting Spokes as a cycling group. However few people have attended as a direct result of the limited media coverage. Non-members have largely been encouraged to attend by seeing details on the Spokes web-site or from being given leaflets by cycle shops and from members advertising the LEC rides in the town centre and Cassiobury park. Spokes has benefited from many new members in the year as a result of this.

There remain many other lapsed or occasional cyclists in the area who would benefit from these rides but where are they? Perhaps most have not heard of what we are doing and others, despite seeing the benefits, have just not been able to add this to their own busy schedules. Can you help in your area? If you know people who do not ride their bikes much or at all, for whatever reason, why not invite them to one of these LEC events next year. Let a committee member know if you think this would provide extra encouragement. If each main Spokes member was able to encourage just one other person to join for one of these rides in the year, then the average attendance would be 36 rather than the average of 13 in the year.

Thanks to all Spokes members who have provided support throughout the year by turning up on these rides to encourage newcomers and to assist with bike problems. Thanks are due also to those who distributed leaflets in advance and to Cha Cha Cha café who have hosted LEC rides information, provided a great base to enable Spokes to advertise its services to all cyclists as well as providing excellent drinks and cakes.

by David T

Lone Rider to Chalfont

by Diana

It was a lovely morning as I cycled to the Harvester Pub to meet Spokes, unaware that I had mistaken the meeting place. No-one there, which seemed odd, so decided to attempt the trip alone, hoping to meet later. It was with some trepidation that I set off along the canal towpath.

A friendly boatman at Stockers Lock confirmed my suspicion that my rear brake wasn't working and warned me that it was at least 4 miles and all uphill to the Chiltern Open Air Museum from Maple Cross, 'That's nothing' I boasted and sped on undaunted, reassured by a jogger in Gorelands Lane that it was only a mile away — longer — I realised — actually!

On arrival, not a bike in sight except mine, looking lonely in the row of racks. No point in lingering, so in I strode, bought a ticket and entered a magic world of olden times.

The furnace was glowing in the forge, the blacksmith hammering away, the prefab was furnished in 40's style and the Victorian Toll House had a pump at the sink and a cosy coal fire.

I wandered past pastures of sheep and shire horses towards the barns and granaries of the farm. The gloom of the Iron Age House was chilling; contrasting with the sunny field of poppies I discovered nearby.

No one recognisable in the café — an ex-furniture factory from High Wycombe. Nothing for it but to cycle home along the trusty Ebury Way, after waving goodbye to the boatman, who looked relieved I'd made it back! I tried to look nonchalant, but felt quite proud of my adventure into the past.

Winter is a coming ! or so one wassailing song goes. Lights & high vis. gear can be very useful at this time of year.

Do you have any spare Watford Cycling Maps ? We have run out of them, and there is a definite demand for them. Hopefully the council will produce some soon.

Some of the committee have recently been involved in setting up “Cycle Herts” this will be a county wide organisation with federal membership from each of the cycling groups in Hertfordshire. Through this organisation we hope to present a stronger unified voice to the County Council gaining improved cycling facilities.

Hertfordshire County Council is promoting “ BIG HERTS BIG IDEAS”
www.hertsdirect.org.uk/bigherts

As part of its “Local Sustainable Transport Plan” which is now being prepared. In stage 2 starting next year Hertfordshire is bidding for £10.75 million. It is important that a large proportion goes into providing safe cycling routes if the objectives are to be met. Do have your say & contact councillors.

We have also been looking into how we can improve our IT facilities. SPOKES is now on “Facebook” let’s make use of it – Sign up.

We are considering a **g-docs** facility for planning rides & events, what ideas do you have for improving the web-site. Can you help with any of this ?

Another site to look at is: www.cyclenation.org.uk

Thanks to those who have helped with the “Less Experienced Cyclist” (LEC) rides in the summer. I believe these have been appreciated by those wanting to get into cycling.

I hope to see you at the Festive Lunch on Sunday 15 January.

Cycling Worth Almost £3bn to British Economy

August 2011 - Luke Walsh - www.edie.net

Cycling adds almost £3bn to the UK economy as well as cutting emissions and pollution, according to a new report from the London School of Economics (LSE).

According to the work almost a quarter of the British population are now cyclists and the industry is experiencing a huge boom.

LSE's academic Dr Alexander Grous says cycling is worth a staggering £2.9bn after he calculated a 'gross cycling product' by taking into account factors including bicycle manufacturing, cycle and accessory retail and cycle related employment.

The research claims 208 million cycle journeys were made in 2010 meaning there were 1.3 million more cyclists bringing the total UK cycle population to 13 million.

A 28% jump in retail sales last year led to 3.7 million bikes being sold at an average price of £439 each, followed by a further £500 million through the 23,000 people employed in the sector and the rest coming from the sale of accessories.

Dr Grous said: "The good news is that structural, economic, social and health factors seem finally to have created a true step-change in the UK's cycling scene.

"The growth in involvement we've witnessed in recent years feels like a sustainable trend for the first time. In order to build on this momentum and follow the lead, in participation terms, of countries like Denmark and the Netherlands, it's now essential that the industry focuses on converting the many occasional, lapsed and leisure cyclists into regular and frequent riders."

The study was commissioned and published by Sky and British Cycling.

Submitted by Andrew

Facebook & Twitter

by David C

To try and reach more members and potential new members we have started a Facebook Page (<http://on.fb.me/spokesfb>) and a Twitter account (@spokesgroup). Please Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to help spread the word. We'll be updating the pages with photos from recent rides, news of upcoming events and links to sites of interest. We'll also keep you up-to-date with the latest campaigns to improve conditions for cyclists in SW Herts and the surrounding area. Our web-site (www.spokesgroup.com) is still the central point of information for members so let us know if you would like to add anything to the site.

SPOKES FESTIVE MEAL

Our festive meal will be at **La Tasca** in the High Street Watford. Meet from 1.30pm to eat at 2.00pm.

We will eat from the "Tapas & Tinsel Menu"; vegetarian options available, with a starter followed by tapas & a desert. Cost including a tip (if we think justified) will be £18.50.

I may be able to negotiate an included drink, making the total cost £20.

If you wish to come to the SPOKES Festive Lunch please send a £5.00 deposit before **7 December** to Roger.

If more than 30 members wish to come we may have to limit numbers to those who apply first.

2.00pm
Sunday 15
January 2012

Cheques to be made out to Roger.

Letter in The Observer Sunday 6th November, 2011

on THE BIG ISSUE – The Economy

Plan-B promotes job-creation through new transport infrastructure, green investment and cycling. We need a massive extension of the cyclepath network, giving us local transport and green tourism options which are healthier, faster, cheaper, safer, fairer, more practical, more egalitarian and more sustainable than any alternative.

It's also a balance of payments issue, since cyclists don't require imported fuel. Path building can be started quickly, making this the fastest way to getting large numbers into employment, followed by employment in the associated service industries that will spring up along the path network.

In the form of Sustrans we have a very competent, national, path-building charity. It now needs the directive power of the state to help it give us those paths towards a happier and pleasanter land to live in.

Jim McGurn Chief Executive, Get Cycling CiC, York.

Submitted by Maureen



16th - 25th June 2012

On 2 wheels from Kigali, Rwanda to Lake Bunyonyi, Uganda.

Help to raise funds for nursery children and water projects with Edirisa UK.

This challenge straddles two of Africa's most fascinating countries. Rwanda is a beautiful country of rolling hills, mountains and grassy lowlands. Uganda, known as the pearl of Africa, is a country with fantastic natural scenery and a rich mosaic of tribes and cultures. During the ride you'll experience rural Africa at its best as well as having the opportunity to visit Edirisa projects en-route.

UK applicants pay £300 sterling registration fee (non-refundable) and are asked to raise a minimum of £3,000 in sponsorship which covers - flights, bikes, accommodation, food, back-up vehicles carrying luggage etc., technicians and medical support. The charity receives a minimum of £1,200 per applicant which goes straight to supporting our projects in Uganda.

For more information on this lifetime challenge: www.edirisa.org.uk

SPOKES RIDES & EVENTS

DECEMBER / JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2011-12

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

Thursday 8 December 10.00 Whelpley Hill

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green Rousebarn Lane,
Under the Heavens, Belsize etc. 20 miles Medium Dennis

Saturday 10 December 11.00 Chorleywood Common

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green

Circular ride around Chess river valley, pub stop at the Black Horse.
15 miles Slow Vince

Sunday 11 December 15.00 Wuthering Heights Film

Watford Palace Theatre Meet in the foyer to
see Andrea Arnold's raw and affecting adaptation
of the classic Brontë novel. Vince



Wednesday 14 December 10.00

Watford Metropolitan Station A short ride with a
break for a hot drink. Back about 12.30.
15 miles max Medium John

**Wednesday
Winter
Warmer**



Saturday 17 December

10.00

**Pre-Christmas Trip to
Battlers Green Farm Shops**

Watford High Street Station Short ride up to the
Traditional shopping complex at Battlers Green -
tea at the Bull Pen. Mostly on very quiet roads or cycle paths.
15 miles max Slow Andrew



Wednesday 21 December

10.00

**Shortest Day Ride
Colne Valley Park Centre**

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green Canal-side ride from the
Aquadrome to the Centre at Denham country park via towpath. Lunch at
café or nearby pub, with a possible visit to the White House on the way.
20 miles Slow Vince

Thursday 22 December

20.00

Spokes Social Evening

Moon Under Water, High Street, Watford A chance to have a chat while
enjoying a curry & drink. We are normally in the rear section of the pub.
Diana

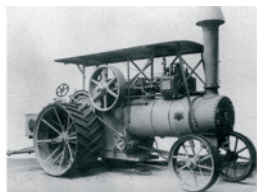
Boxing Day

10.00 to

**Annual Veteran Cycle Club
and Classic Vehicle Display**

Monday 26 December

14.00



Sarratt on the Green Classic cars, farm and
commercial vehicles along with Veteran Cycle Club
bicycles on the green near the Boot Pub. The
Woodside Morris Men will be at the Cricketers Pub at
1.00pm. Anyone want to lead a ride from Watford
and/or return? Please contact rides coordinator...

New Years Day 2012

Sunday 1st January

10.00

**Themed Joint Ride
with Ealing Cyclists**

Ealing Town Hall In 2011 this ride attracted some 60 cyclists and is a
good experience of the impact of bicycle volumes. This one will focus on
the hills of Harrow and Ealing; Northala Fields, Harrow Hill, Horsenden
Hill and Castlebar Hill. Details to be advised later...

Sunday 8 January

10.30

Spyride



with Central London CTC

Watford Junction Station Visit to places connected with real (*Burgess and Maclean*) and fictional (*George Smiley*) spies. The route will be on roads through Whippendell Woods, Belsize, Flaunden and Sarratt. 25 miles Medium Charles

Thursday 12 January

10.00

St Albans

Pump House, Local Board Road Bricket Wood, How Green and Chiswell Green. Stop for a cuppa at McDonald's. 20 miles Medium Dennis

Sunday 15 January

13.30

Festive Meal at La Tasca

See separate item...

Wednesday 18 January

10.00

Watford Metropolitan Station A short ride with a break for a hot drink. Back about 12.30. 15 miles max Medium John

Wednesday
Winter
Warmer

Thursday 19 January

20.00

Spokes Social Evening

Moon Under Water, High Street, Watford A chance to have a chat while enjoying a curry & drink. We are normally in the rear section of the pub. Diana

Saturday 28 January

10.30

Urban Ride

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green Easy Urban Circular Ride to Harrow Museum where there is an ancient Tithe Barn & Manor House. Small café on site. Possible meet up with Harrow Cyclists group. Back early afternoon. 15 miles Medium Roger

Monday 30 January

7.30

Committee Meeting

Watford Mencap, The Old Town Hall, 105 High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1AN
For more details contact Veronica C

Saturday 4 February

10.30

Plough Trip

Garston Medical Centre Off-road and country lanes to Sleafshyde for a pub lunch. 18 miles Medium Iain / Veronica



Wednesday 8 February 10.00



Watford Metropolitan Station

A short ride with a break for a hot drink.

Back about 12.30.

15 miles max Medium John

Wednesday

Winter

Warmer

Thursday 9 February 10.00

Elstree Airfield

Pump House, Local Board Road Wall Hall, Aldenham, Batlers Green,
Letchmore and cuppa in the café.

20 miles Medium Dennis

Saturday 11 February 10.00

Harpenden

Garston Medical Centre (Sainsburys car park) Long ride via Potters
Crouch and Gorehambury. Mostly cycling on quiet roads and shared use
cycle paths. Pub/Coffee break in Harpenden.

30 miles Medium Andrew

Saturday 18 or Sunday 19 February

from about 09.30

UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classic Olympic Velodrome

The UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classic, part of the London Prepares series of test events, will offer the opportunity to see world-class cycling in an Olympic venue. There are a number of events during the day with tickets. Further details of these and the travel arrangements for those interested will be made nearer the time. A walking and/or cycle tour of the Olympic site is likely to be an extra option.

Further details to be advised as tickets only available from 17 November.

Thursday 23 February 20.00

Spokes Social Evening

Moon Under Water, High Street, Watford A chance to have a chat while
enjoying a curry & drink. We are normally in the rear section of the pub.

Diana

Saturday 25 February 10.30

Country Ride

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green Country ride to Chipperfield
for coffee or late breakfast. Back at lunch time.

18 miles Medium Roger

Sunday 26 February

10.30

Dumb Bell Exercise Ride

Bushey Station Chalfonts via the Ebury way to the Dumb Bell at Horn Hill for lunch, returning via Chandlers Cross and Whippendell Wood. Some hilly off road sections. Pub stop for lunch with **MASSAGE CHAIR** to assist those in need of rejuvenation.

17 miles Medium David



Looking Forwards to the Spring Programme

Saturday in March

Olympic Site Visit

With only 5 months to go before the start of the Olympic Games, this is a chance for Spokes members to join up for a guided tour. If interested, please call David T

17 / 18 March

St. Patrick Day Special

St. Patrick's Day Parade in London is on Sunday 18 March (tbc) and would be worth a visit. Anyone with ideas? Please forward to Rides coordinator.

Thursday 22 March

Spokes Social Evening

Easter Saturday 7th April

**Restart of LEC Rides
for Less Experienced Cyclists**

The programme for Less Experienced Cyclists is due to start in April and being the Easter weekend, an Easter egg hunt would be welcomed by younger members in the Park.

Volunteers required to assist with leading rides and Egg hunt.



Tuesday 17 April

A.G.M.

Thursday 26 April

Spokes Social Evening

Saturday 5 May

FA Cup Final Ride to Wembley

Thursday 24 May

Spokes Social Evening

The **Deadline** for the Spring Newsletter
is **9 January 2012**

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"/> 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 | |



Sheffield in Rickmansworth by David C

Anyone who cycles to Rickmansworth town centre has probably noticed how the cycle parking facilities on Solomon Hill have become broken and useless over the past year. A much better alternative to the hooks that are there now is Sheffield Hoops placed parallel to the wall. A good example of this is the Tesco in Hardwoods Road in Watford (see <http://cycle.st/p30755>). Being parallel to the wall they are out of the way of pedestrians, but they are also one of the most secure forms of parking for bikes. If you agree, why not use the **writetothem.com** web site to contact your local councillor? The more people that write, the more likely we are to get a positive response. So please give it a go - it only takes a couple of minutes and the results could be useful for lots of people.

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



Title First Name

Surname

Address

.....

.....

Post Code Telephone

Amount £ Donation £ *Cheques payable to SPOKES please*

E-mail:



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

The Bike Stall Watford Market
thebikestall@aol.com or 07941 800029

Northwood Cycle Depot 01923 824174
118 Pinner Road, Northwood

10% off food & drink at the Café in the Park 08456 800835
The Aquadrome, Frogmoor Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB

Quarterly Quotation

"I read a study that measured the efficiency of locomotion for various species on the planet. The condor used the least energy to move a kilometre.

Humans came in with a rather unimpressive showing about a third of the way down the list. That didn't look so good, but then someone at Scientific American had the insight to test the efficiency of locomotion for a man on a bicycle, and a man on a bicycle blew the condor away.

That's what a computer is to me: the computer is the most remarkable tool that we've ever come up with. It's the equivalent of a bicycle for our minds."

Steve Jobs (Co-founder of Apple Computers)

THE LOIRE VALLEY PERFECT CYCLING TERRITORY

by Veronica C

Tim and I have recently returned from a wonderful cycling holiday in the Loire valley. We put the bikes in the car and took the ferry, but you can take the train and bikes are easy to hire locally.

We strongly recommend the Sologne, the forest and lake area south of Blois, for 'softies' cycling. It is almost flat and there are plenty of quiet roads and tracks with minimal traffic, and small villages and towns for coffees and lunch stops. French drivers are much more respectful of cyclists than the British, so it was a restful experience. In Autumn it was uncrowded – the Chateau of Chambord nearby was a pleasure to visit – and the colours magnificent.

We stayed in Bracieux, at the centre of several routes, in a small cycle-friendly hotel hoteldelabonheur.com/. Monsieur was happy to recommend local restaurants featuring the seasonal game and the local Cheverny wine.

The local tourist board has put together a map and signposting for about 15 rides of varying lengths, taking in some of the best scenery and sights. It also helpfully shows vineyards, hotels, bakeries and ATMs! You can download the map from www.chateauxavelo.com/index1024.htm or they will send you a paper copy.

Membership Secretary Required

We will need a membership secretary to take over from Dara as he is standing down from next April. He is willing to support any volunteer who takes up the post.

Duties include:

- Maintaining membership database
- Printing labels and letters for newsletter distribution / reminders
- Banking cheques; liaising with treasurer
- Occasional e-mails to members regarding change of event / breaking news

Please contact Roger or Dara if you are interested.

**The Plough at Belsize
Chilterns Ride
15 October**



**Marketing event,
Watford High St.
in June**





Aldenham Country Park
19 November



**Bridlepath alongside
College Lake Wildlife Centre**
29 October

