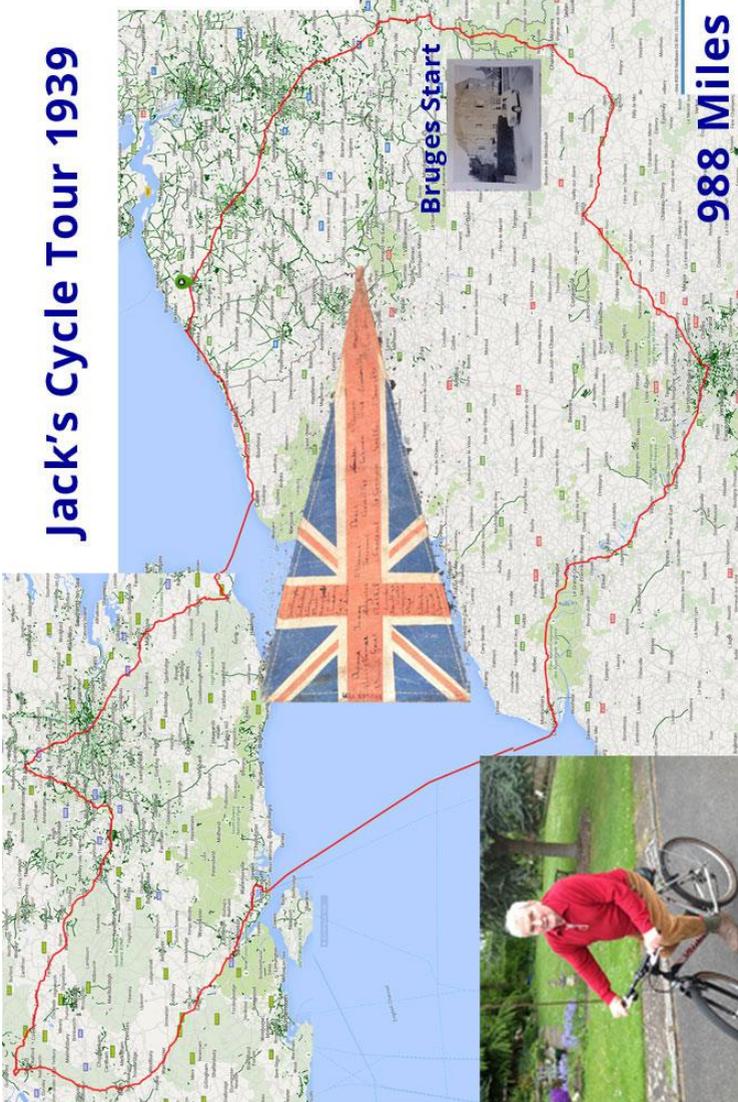


[www.spokesgroup.org.uk](http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk)

**Jack's Cycle Tour 1939**



# Jack's Cycle Tour 1939

David's father-in-law who is 90 years old this year recollects a bicycle trip he undertook 76 years ago:

“**August 1939**, just before the World War II and in the depression after World War I

In 1930 my father, mother, six year old sister and myself aged five all went to Bruges in Belgium to live. My father had secured the job of Orchid grower for 'Sanders Orchids,' who were well known & had three orchid nurseries. St. Albans (headquarters), Bruges (main production) and Russell's Nursery Watford where I still live today.

During that year in Belgium my mother, sister and I caught typhoid fever. Of which my mother sadly died. Polluted water was the cause and due to Belgium being mainly flat water pollution was a big problem. Hence it was also a great country for cycling! Of course there were problems, mainly tram lines which had to be crossed at right angles, cobblestones and horses dung everywhere. However there were very few cars.

At weekends we would cycle everywhere, Ypres, to collect bullets and shrapnel from the old battlefields; Ostend for fishing; Zeebrugge mole and Sluis in Holland. Then in 1939 my Dad planned The **Tour de France & Britain!**

We used to always visit my Grandad in Gloucester for two months every year using the night boat, boat train and GWR to Gloucester. This year was to be different, doing it all by bike and visiting some of the best Orchid growers en route. First stop Vacheran et Lecoufle in Paris a renowned Orchid grower. The Michelin maps were stuck to the wall months before, (my mother would not have approved) and the route of this great adventure was printed in my brain.

When we set off in August 1939 my sister was now 14 and I was 13. We both had Belgian tourers with panniers, 17 inch wheels, Schrader valves, 3 speed derailleur gears plus a dynamo. We were well advanced but a UK Raleigh or Dawes was out of reach price wise at that time. My Dad rode a Belgian Black Standard with one back pedal brake! We had no water bottles! Bottled water was non-existent in the Low Countries then and water had to be boiled before consumption. It was so much cheaper to drink wine from the barrel in the Estaminets and B&B hostels along the route. There were no menus in the accommodation en route, you simply ate & drank whatever they had.

Going up hills was easy, there were few lorries & they went very slowly. We used to catch hold of their side rails & hitch a ride talking to the driver as we went. Rheims to Paris downhill was easy; Paris to Le Havre was dead flat along the river Seine. We then took the night boat to Southampton. Gloucestershire was all hills. We carried a

pump, three tyre levers, puncture repair kit & spare chain links plus extractor but they didn't break much in those days.”

“My sister Joyce plodded along and I never ever heard her complain or moan. We took everything just as it came and absorbed the experience of a lifetime. After a few days at my Grandad's we set off back to St. Albans and then onto Cooksbridge and Mc Beans orchids where I was born in 1925. Then to Dover and the night boat back home to Ostend and finally Bruges. We arrived on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939.

War was about to be declared, so we stayed one night at home before my father, Albert John, sent us back to UK with his sister, my Aunt Nell. We travelled by train and war was declared as we arrived at London Victoria station at 11am on 3rd September.

Albert John (AJ) escaped by bike with a friend on the 10<sup>th</sup> May when Belgium was invaded. They rode up and down the Dutch coast looking for a way out and eventually threw their bikes on a British Destroyer at the Mole Zeebrugge”

Jack tells the story of how AJ would smoke a pipe whilst cycling along but before descending he would knock it off on his handlebars and put the pipe in his jacket pocket. Once he recalled seeing him descend a steep hill with his pocket on fire with his sister giving the alarm. (We don't see many pipe smokers on the roads these days!)

Jack carried a pendant on his bike in true patriotic manner. Here it is attached to his latest bicycle a hand me down from one of his grandsons in his backyard:



# Changing times for Spokes

A few members are working to ensure essential changes can be implemented enabling Spokes to continue as an effective cycling club.

We have to replace our membership system, so are investigating using one available from British Cycling. It will offer one database with all member details enabling printing of labels & easy payment of subscriptions. We do need to identify someone to run the system once implemented. Could this be you?

If we have your current email address you should now have received an occasional email, informing you about our activities & asking you to participate in a survey.

Feedback from members may help us to provide what is needed. These emails will be issued possibly monthly. They will inform you about events, including rides that members have offered to lead at short notice. You will can unsubscribe from these emails but remember to subscribe again you will need to contact us.

You could also be informed about topical campaigning issues, as many changes are likely to affect cyclists in the next few years, including development the Croxley Rail Link, the new road to the rear of Watford Hospital & the changes to Cassiobury Park. All these schemes should include improved safe cycle routes.

Please ensure we have the current email address for each member in your house hold & if you wish to be involved in organising our activities let Roger know.

# Spokes members Spring Survey results

**Date: 12th May 2015**

An email news briefing was sent to 111 subscribers (Spokes members with email addresses). In this email was an invitation to help us with a simple survey.

- 74 (66.4%) of the 111 subscribers opened the email
- 28 clicked on the survey invitation which is 38% of those that opened the email
- 15 clicked on the rides programme (web site) and 2 on the Ricky Fair

To see the all the results then go to: <http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk/survey/>

Here are some of the results of the survey of the 41 people who took part:

## **Q1: Newsletter: In future would you prefer to have our newsletters through the post or sent by email?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	
Sent to my email address	65.85%	27
Printed and posted	14.63%	6
Email and posted	19.51%	8

## **Q2: Riding: While you are out and about on your bicycle have you?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	
Joined a Spokes Ride in the last six months	67.74%	21
Cycled the canal path in the last six months	87.10%	27
Visited the Watford Cycle Hub in the last six	74.19%	23
Ridden any Blue Book Rides	28.03%	9

### Comments about Riding:

1. Would like them on a Saturday and possibly week evenings (during the lighter months). Happy to do anything between 12-35 miles ( although terrain is the decider for me... Hate hills!)
2. Half day rides, not too challenging.
3. Local and fairly low in mileage. These sorts of rides are suitable for everyone and get beginners out on their bikes.
4. On road 20 to 30 miles
5. Half day rides with coffee stop.
6. Medium rides, not too long.
7. A mix of rides.
8. Not lots of canal on the ride
9. Medium distance, medium pace social rides
10. Medium pace social rides (on and off road) of 20 - 40 mile length with pub stops. Medium pace to MEAN medium pace and not a fast slow pace.
11. Rides with pub lunches. 25-30 miles.
12. Medium speed and as flat as possible, around 20 miles or so.
13. At the moment because of health reasons I'm more interested in 5 - 12 miles
14. Sorry, I just don't like to do group rides, and my main use for my bike is simply for everyday transport, so this doesn't really apply to me.
15. Ones with lots of coffee breaks!
16. A variety like we do now, with perhaps more rides of 25+ miles
17. Longer, more challenging rides. Maybe starting out from surrounding areas
18. The one along Ebury way to the Aquadrome.
19. Any-- it's been busy six months which is why I haven't done any of above
20. At the moment unfortunately the Spokes rides often clash with my other activities, but I hope to be able to join more often
21. Medium speed, 20 - 30 miles
22. Medium speed, around 20 miles length
23. See answer for question 3.

### Q3: Why I am a member of Spokes

Response		Respondents
To support the campaigning for better cycling routes	62.86%	22
To enjoy the local rides with other Spokes members	77.14%	27
To support a local cycling organisation	80.00%	28
To receive the printed quarterly newsletters	34.29%	12

#### Comments about being a Spokes member:

1. If I have a choice I would like to receive the newsletter by email
2. It's nice to feel 'part of something' and to be with like-minded people.
3. To meet new people who like cycling.
4. I always attend the restaurant bashes !
5. Fitness and health
6. I am a Spokes member mainly to keep in touch with cycling developments in the neighbouring area. I actually live in Golders Green so I don't normally come on Spokes rides. I usually lead one ride for Spokes every year.

### Q4: Are you happy to answer these simple surveys to help us understand your needs?

Yes	100.00%	36
No	0.0%	0

#### Would you like to add any comments?

1. This is a good survey to do.
2. no
3. I would like to join more rides but work shifts, so often cannot make the rides
4. I appreciate everything you guys do, so keep it up. I will eventually go on some of the midweek rides when I can take time off work
5. In the summer, I would like to see a monthly (or fortnightly) social gathering with evening ride at the Cycle Hub
6. Unless phrased carefully multiple choice surveys can be misleading Spokes is a good cycling club.
7. None at present.

8. Very grateful for the organising and campaigning work of Spokes, but unable to help much practically at the moment
9. Spokes is a good thing - keep up the good work!
10. Regular news briefings by email are an excellent idea
11. Not currently but would like to see more done to help Spokes!

### **Thoughts:**

It is our first attempt at using an Internet based survey to get some idea of how some members are responsive to Spokes and to try and gauge what these members would like to see more or less of. I think Roger is of the opinion that the printed newsletter will remain, albeit it runs at a relatively high premium for such a small club. However we will endeavour to produce both email and website variants (always handy if you mislay the paper copy)

Clearly if we could get more like a 100% response to these surveys then that would be extremely pleasing and hopefully we could start to create a more vibrant and involved cycling club. With more of you involved.

You can draw your own conclusions from these results or you could simply contact us with your own ideas or suggestions. We would love to hear from you.



[www.watforcyclehub.org.uk](http://www.watforcyclehub.org.uk)

## **Bicycle Service, Repair, Parts and Hire**

Watford Cycle Hub is a social enterprise located in the King George V Playing fields and also are up and about in a modern purpose built vehicle.

## **We are professional bicycle engineers, qualified ride instructors and ...**

### **We**

Repair any bike

Service any bike

Help and instruct you to repair your bikes

Help you service your own bikes

Sell new and reconditioned parts and new accessories (**10% discount to Spokes members**)

Hire Bikes, off road, hybrid or whatever

Train and help you ride bicycles; organise rides and act as ride leaders for Sky Ride

### **We have**

- Sold over 300 bikes and regularly have a stock of 25+ bikes
- Serviced over 600
- And 800 people have joined rides with over 40% coming from outside the Watford area

We love cycling and love being with other likeminded souls.

Come and call on us or stop the van or just contact us. See if we can help you or you can help us!

# Spokes Rides & Events

**Remember to bring:** water, spare inner tube, lights, reflective and 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

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## Ride Speed Guide

**Slow** ----- Gentle pace up to 8 mph

**Medium** --- Average pace of 9 to 12 mph

**Fast** ----- Faster than 12 mph

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## JUNE 2015

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**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> 10.00 Tuesday Morning Ride Harvester, Baldwins Lane**  
A ride mainly on lanes via Wall Hall towards Park St. Then returning along NCR6.  
Medium 18 miles Roger 01923 720143

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> 10.00 de Haviland Museum Garston Medical Centre**  
A ride and visit to the de Haviland Museum, London Colney. Mostly on roads with some gentle tracks. Touring or hybrid bikes.  
Medium 30 miles Charles Harvey 020 8455 5174  
07961 194771 on day

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Croxley Sportive Watford Cycle Hub**  
Sorry.... No further information given.

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> 18.00 Steve's Evening beer search Watford Cycle Hub**  
A slightly more challenging ride on tracks, trails, towpaths and lanes to Harefield, Chalfont St. Peter, Heronsgate and back. 50% off road. Bring lights but anticipate being back before dark.  
Medium 20 miles Steve 07973 305152

## JUNE 2015 (Continued)

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**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> 20.00 Spokes Social Night Moon Under Water, High St. Watford.**

Come down and enjoy a drink and meal and chat with other Spokes members. Come and share your experiences with other cyclists. Wide selection of beers to choose from. Thursday nights at the Moon Under Water are Curry Nights. Non-members are also very welcome. Parking for bikes is available but do bring good padlocks.

Diana 01923 221955

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> 10.00-15.00 Get Fit & Cycle Rickmansworth Aquadrome**

Three Rivers District Council are sponsoring this event for Bike Week encouraging the community to get on their bikes. Spokes will lead a slow and gentle 6 mile ride for all the family to join starting at 11.00am at the Cafe in the Park.

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> 19.30 Space for Cycling Campaign Meeting Moon Under Water, High St. Watford**

Discuss our cycle campaigns, plus enjoy a drink and or meal. Wide selection of beers to choose from. Parking for bikes is available but do bring a good padlock

Peter 07910 694832  
01923 712655

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> 19.00 Evening Ride Watford Cycle Hub**

A ride on quiet roads and lanes through Heronsgate and Flaunden, includes hills.

Medium 18 miles Roger B 01923 720143

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 10.00 Radlett via Elstree Aerodrome Bushey Station**

Gentle ride to Aldenham Country Park and Elstree Aerodrome for late breakfast then out to Radlett and Letchmore Heath.

Slow 12 miles David 020 8429 2882  
07745 018288 on day

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> 10.00 The Valley & The Hill Watford Cycle Hub**

A ride along the Ebury Way and canal towpath and through the lovely village of Denham, then up to the outskirts of Chalfont St. Peter. Back down the canal following the towpath to Watford. Lovely scenery and mainly easy riding.

Medium 24 miles Brian 01442 832588  
07400 772113 on day

## JULY 2015

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### **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> 18.00 Steve's Evening beer search Watford Cycle Hub**

A slightly more challenging ride at a faster medium pace on tracks, trails, towpaths and lanes to The Boot at Sarratt. Mostly on roads but some rough tracks. Bring lights but anticipate being back before dark.

Medium 20 miles Steve 07973 305152

### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> 20.00 Spokes Social Night Moon Under Water, High St. Watford.**

Come down and enjoy a drink and meal and chat with other Spokes members. Come and share your experiences with other cyclists. Wide selection of beers to choose from. Thursday nights at the Moon Under Water are Curry Nights. Non-members are also very welcome. Parking for bikes is available but do bring good padlocks.

Diana 01923 221955

### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> 10.30 Sustrans Route 6 to St Albans Lower High St Station, Watford**

Heading out on NCR6 via the River Colne to Bricket Wood and Chiswell Green to St. Albans for lunch stop and returning via the River Colne cycle ways.

Medium 22 miles David Turner 020 8429 2882  
07745 018288 on day

### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> 10.00 Chilterns Day Ride Watford Cycle Hub**

A day ride into the Chilterns, passing Flaunden and Wiggington, then along part of the Ridgeway. Lunch at a country pub. The easiest climb into the Chilterns. Aim to be back mid afternoon.

Medium 39 miles Roger B 01923 720143

## AUGUST 2015

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**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>      Tuesday Morning Ride      Harvester, Baldwins Lane**  
Chiltern Hills – Cycling on lanes towards Flaunden. Cafe stop at Chipperfield.  
Medium              18 miles              Roger B              01923 720143

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>      20.00      Spokes Social Night      Moon Under Water, High St. Watford.**

Come down and enjoy a drink and meal and chat with other Spokes members. Come and share your experiences with other cyclists. Wide selection of beers to choose from. Thursday nights at the Moon Under Water are Curry Nights. Non-members are also very welcome. Parking for bikes is available but do bring good padlocks.

Diana              01923 221955

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>      18.00      Steve's Evening beer search      Watford Cycle Hub**  
A slightly more challenging ride at a faster medium pace on tracks, trails, towpaths and lanes to Merlins Cave at Chalfont St. Giles. Mostly on roads but some rough tracks. Bring lights but anticipate being back before dark.  
Medium              20 miles              Steve              07973 305152

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>      10.00      Ride to Dunstable Downs Garston Medical Centre**  
Cycling on roads and lanes to Dunstable Downs. Some Hills. Stopping for lunch at a cafe or bring a picnic. Day trip.  
Medium              50 miles              Andy              07533 003227

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**Join Spokes Today**  
**Only £10 per annum**  
 £2 for each additional family member at the same address

You will receive regular details of our cycle rides, social events & other activities. You will also be helping us campaign for improved cycling conditions in the South West Herts area. When joining you agree to become a member of SPOKES on-line Forum and Cyclescape, unless you opt out by ticking the spaces below.

Title		First Name	
Surname			
Address			
Post Code			
Telephone		Mobile	
Member Email			
Second Family Member Name			
Second Member Email			
Other Family Members Names			
Amount £		Opt out of Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donation £		Opt out of Cyclescape	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total £			
Signature		Date	



**PTO**

Please also indicate below if you would like to contribute to the following SPOKES activities:

Publicity <input type="checkbox"/>	Campaigning <input type="checkbox"/>
Assisting at Events <input type="checkbox"/>	Leading Rides <input type="checkbox"/>

**Please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to:**

Richard Bulgin 82 Beacon Way,  
Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 7PD

You will receive a Membership Pack, including a SPOKES Membership Card, entitling you to discounts of 10% on repairs and spares at these locations:

<p><b>CycloPedia</b> 70-78 Merton Road, Watford, WD18 0WY 01923 221901</p> <p><a href="http://www.cycleopediawatford.co.uk">www.cycleopediawatford.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:shop@cycleopediawatford.co.uk">shop@cycleopediawatford.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>The Bike Shop</b> 66 Queens Road Watford, WD17 2LA 07941 800029</p> <p><a href="mailto:thebikeshop66@outlook.com">thebikeshop66@outlook.com</a></p>
<p><b>Cycles UK</b> 484/486 St. Albans Road Watford, WD24 6QU 01923 243707484</p> <p><a href="http://www.cyclesuk.com">www.cyclesuk.com</a> <a href="mailto:watford@cyclesuk.com">watford@cyclesuk.com</a></p>	<p><b>Northwood Cycle Depot</b> 118 Pinner Road Northwood, HA6 1BP 01923 824174</p> <p><a href="http://www.norhwoodcycles.com">www.norhwoodcycles.com</a> <a href="mailto:northwoodcycles@tiscali.co.uk">northwoodcycles@tiscali.co.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Watford Cycle Hub</b> Holywell Community Centre Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD 01923 223994</p> <p><a href="http://www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk">www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Café in the Park</b> Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Frogmore Ln. WD3 1NB 08456 800835</p> <p><b>10% discount, meals and drinks</b></p>



Spokes is the local cycle club for South West Hertfordshire, formed to encourage cycling by organizing rides & campaigning for better & safer cycling routes.

Spokes campaigns both to get better conditions for cycling in SW Hertfordshire and to encourage more people to enjoy cycling. You are welcome to join our rides or help us out with campaigning.

You do not have to be a member. If you choose to join it is only £10 a year. Benefits include a Newsletter four times a year & discounts at local cycle shops.

## **Come on get on your bike and join us!**

If you want to join us on a ride then just turn up at the stated start point, have a look at the up and coming Rides. We have rides most weekends, some weekdays & summer evenings, they start at several places around Watford like the Harvester in Croxley, Morrisons, Watford Cycle Hub.

Our riders come from Watford, Bushey, Garston, Oxhey, Rickmansworth, Croxley, Chandlers Cross, Pinner and other areas in SW Hertfordshire.

## **Contact Our Committee Here:**

**[www.spokesgroup.org.uk/committee](http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk/committee)**

**Or simply visit our web site to catch the latest news and information:**

**[www.spokesgroup.or.uk](http://www.spokesgroup.or.uk)**