



## AUTUMN 2016 - No 90

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

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Spokes-Group-South-West-Hertfordshire/131301626965607>



*Spoke 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ride to the first ride venue of the Cart & Horses*



*One wasn't invited in for tea, was one?*



*A couple of photos from Pete James  
London Ride 15 May*

## **Chairman's Chat – Roger Bangs**

### **SPOKES urgently needs your help**

The role of membership secretary is vital to keeping the group going. Dara has been performing this role on a temporary basis but has now to step down.

The role is not demanding and no specialist skills are required. If you can use a computer then you can help SPOKES with this critical work. British Cycling provides the membership database and the membership secretary receives applications for new members and maintains this database. Four times a year address labels have to be printed for the newsletter and membership renewal letters printed or emailed.

Please consider if you are able to support Spokes in this important role, contact Roger at [info@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@spokesgroup.org.uk) or *removed*.

### **SPOKES is now 20 years old**

We had two rides this summer celebrating 20 years since SPOKES was formed by local cyclists wanting to improve cycle routes & organise rides. Each ride had around 20 members, one retracing the route of the first ride to the Cart & Horses the other a picnic ride to the Aquadrome in Rickmansworth. Both rides were short but enjoyable with good summer weather. It was good to meet members some of whom were on the early rides.

#### **Membership Secretary**

In recent years many of the original committee members have had to move on. We have experienced difficulty in replacing them on a long term basis. You will see from another item we now have an urgent need for a membership secretary. Dara filled this role twice with a break of around three years between them. But he now has to retire. We thank him for his conscientious work & wish him well for the future. We now need a new person for this important but not too demanding role.

### **Campaigning for better cycling routes**

Over the last year there has been a number of changes to cycling routes in Watford, mainly improvements, but sometimes the changes are not always as good as they could be. The saga of market stalls in the High St. goes on causing confusion for pedestrians, cyclists, disabled & stall holders.

In the lower High St the long needed contra-flow lane has been provided, but an issue has arisen with fast traffic turning into the High St. just before the ring road. We believe traffic engineers are now looking into this issue.

Major changes are taking place in Cassiobury Park where we look forward to the cycle routes being extended to the bridges over the canal & river.



*Brian`s ride to Rowans Cafe*



*Roger`s Redbourne Ride*

# Membership

**Save a cheque, an envelope and a stamp!!**

You can now pay your Spokes membership subscription renewals by Bank Transfer!!

If you use electronic/internet banking just go on to your account and go on to 'Payments and Transfers' (or whatever your bank calls them) and set up a payment to a 'New Payee'.

The details you will need are :-

1. Name of Payee – SPOKES SW Herts Cycling Group
2. Sort Code – 20-91-79
3. Account Number – *removed*

## **AND MOST IMPORTANTLY**

4. A Payee Reference – This is your Spokes Membership Number

If you omit your Spokes Membership Number the Membership Secretary will not know you have paid, you will not get your new Membership Card and your payment may be treated as a donation! To avoid this situation please email Dara (address below) as soon as you have paid to confirm payment.

If you have any questions or problems please email the Membership Secretary at [dara@godivala.com](mailto:dara@godivala.com)

PS You can also go into any branch and pay using the same details but remember to add your Spokes Membership Number in the Payee Reference!!

## **Planning a Cycle Route - *Brian Johnson***

### **Why plan a route?**

Why would you want to plan a route? If you ride in an area you know well you'll just get on your bike and ride. Any planning needed will be in your head. But if you want to explore your local area further then it can be very enjoyable to wander through the area on a map and see where you haven't ridden before. You may want to lead a ride. Even if you know the area, it is useful to plan the route. This allows you to advise participants how far they will be riding and provide at least an estimate of how long, incidents such as punctures excepted, the ride may take. It also reduces the risk of embarrassment of you making a wrong turn.

If, like me, you want to explore areas of the country further afield, planning the route is almost essential. If you need to book accommodation you'll need to have a good idea where you'll need it.

### **Tools that you can use**

#### ***Sources of information***

There is a huge amount of information available that will allow you to find new routes. There are books such as the Spokes' Blue Book. A favourite of mine is Lost Lanes by Jack Thurston which is accompanied by GPX files that can be loaded into a bike GPS to help you ride the routes.

There are web sites that contain a large number and variety of routes suitable for all levels and in some cases, these are also accompanied by GPX files.

Some of these are:

- **[routes.goskyride.com](http://routes.goskyride.com) - Routes created by British Cycling for its Skyrides.**
- **[www.cycle-route.com](http://www.cycle-route.com) - Routes for every level uploaded by the public.**
- **[www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map) - Details of the national cycle network.**

A search of the internet will also provide newspaper and magazine articles about routes as well as articles from members of groups such as the CTC who have posted stories of their own rides. These can be useful providing practical information on prospective routes.

#### ***Planning Tools***

There are free and easy to use web tools available that help you explore an area and produce a route. You will normally be able to print turn by turn instructions that allow you to follow the route as well as GPX files that you load into a bike GPS. There are a number of these tools available and they each tend to be aimed at a different type of user.

Some of the sites that I've used are:

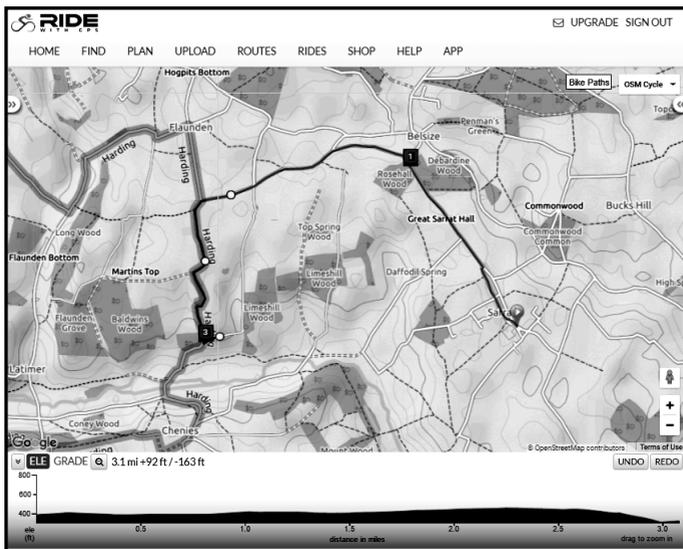
- [Ridewithgps.com](http://Ridewithgps.com) - This is the main tool I have used for several years. It does everything I need to plan routes.
- [bikeroutetoaster.com](http://bikeroutetoaster.com) - This was the site originally preferred by British Cycling for planning Skyrides. I found it much less flexible than Ridewithgps.
- [www.runningfreeonline.com](http://www.runningfreeonline.com) - The first site I used regularly but I haven't used this for some time and found it less easy to use than RidewithGPS.

British Cycling also offers a mapping tool to its members.

### ***Planning Features***

I normally use RidewithGPS for route planning. The following screen shot shows a route being planned. The map is the Open Street Map Cycle route view. As I mentioned this does everything I need to plan a route. I can see the distance, height climbed and height profile at the bottom of the screen. I can look at a number of different types of map and views and switch between them to give different information about the area that I am looking at. These include:

- **Map view** – This gives a typical Google map view.
- **Open Street Map Cycle view** – This is the map shown in the screen shot below and shows national cycle routes and bridle paths and is the most useful map for planning the route.



***Open Street Map Cycle View***

- **Streetview** – Great for checking the scenery, how busy a road may be and, particularly useful when leading rides, how difficult road junctions may be.
- **Satellite view** – This allows me to see the countryside around my prospective route and is useful for zooming in on off-road tracks where Streetview isn't available.

If the gradient looks too steep it is always worth considering reversing the route. Another tip I have is to select the 'yellow person' for Streetview once you have planned your route. The roads and tracks for which Streetview is available come up in blue. Look for any parts of your route that aren't in blue. These will usually be off-road. If these parts are intentional then great but sometimes the mapping tool will select an off-road track or even a private road when joining points that you have selected.

You can build up a library of routes and make any of your routes available to anyone and also search any of the routes shared by other users.

### ***Following the Route***

Once you have a route, you can print out turn by turn route instructions, print out the map (is a chargeable upgrade on RidewithGPS and not a feature I have used) and download a GPX file to load into a bike GPS. RidewithGPS also has an app that allows you to view the route and the turn by turn instructions on your phone. For the first year of planning routes and leading rides I either memorised the route or used printed route instructions. However this was such a pain that I invested in a bike GPS, in my case a Garmin Edge 800. I can't recommend using a GPS highly enough, it takes the effort out of following a route which then becomes a pleasure.

### **Planning the Route**

I'll pull these steps together using as an example a short cycling tour I did in Wiltshire earlier this year.

### ***The duration and logistics***

In my case I was cycling with a friend and we were going for three days. We usually travel by train and therefore need start and finish points convenient for stations.

## *Where*

I looked at possible routes across the south of the country where the travelling time wouldn't be too great. After reviewing routes in '**Great British Bike Rides**' I went for the Wiltshire White Horses route as this was in an area where we hadn't ridden before. A GPX route was available which I uploaded into RidewithGPS. This allowed me to look through the route which started and finished in Marlborough, was 109 miles and involved climbing almost 5000'. The route was convenient for Swindon station and achievable in the three day window we had.

## *Planning the Route*

After removing the travel time we had 2 days of riding. We didn't particularly want to see the white horses and this allowed me to reduce unnecessary climb. We could either ride from Swindon to Marlborough at the beginning and end of which would extend the distance or incorporate Swindon station into the circular route. We chose the latter option.

We use b&b or hotels for accommodation rather than carrying tents, and the next step was to identify overnight stops. The first night was easy as Devizes was on the route and approximately ½ day in, both accommodation and an evening meal and drink were easily available.

The second night was a problem as there was no accommodation available anywhere close to what would be the end of the second day. Eventually Wootton Rivers was chosen as the overnight stop. This involved lengthening the second day, which I did by including the Vale of Pewsey, and shortening the final day. I then identified several possible lunch stops for the second day, depending on how fast a pace we managed, and modified the route to include these.

The end result was a lovely three day cycling tour, great scenery and nice places to stay.

## **Conclusion**

Not only have I found that using the mapping tools has enabled me to find new routes to ride, even locally, but the planning process is a joy in itself. It is very satisfying to ride a route and see what I have planned on the computer come to life.

*Chris's Dunstable Downs ride*



The group picture was taken next to the ventilation shaft which supplies the visitor centre with fresh air ( an energy saving device ) and overlooking a lovely view of the Vale of Aylesbury and beyond

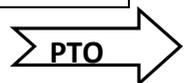




**Join Spokes today  
Only £10 per annum  
£2 for each additional family  
member at the same address**

You will receive regular details of our cycle rides, social events and 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                  |                          |



Please also indicate below if 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"/>                       |
| <sup>1</sup> Get Newsletter by email <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>1</sup> Get Newsletter by post <input type="checkbox"/> |

<sup>1</sup> To help in reducing Spokes expenditure

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

Dara Godivala 6 Highland Road,  
Northwood. HA6 1JT

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><br/>70-78 Merton Road,<br/>Watford, WD18 0WY<br/>01923 221901<br/><a href="http://www.cycleopediawatford.co.uk">www.cycleopediawatford.co.uk</a><br/><a href="mailto:shop@cycleopediawatford.co.uk">shop@cycleopediawatford.co.uk</a></p> | <p><b>The Bike Shop</b><br/>66 Queens Road<br/>Watford, WD17 2LA<br/>07941 800029<br/><a href="mailto:thebikeshop66@outlook.com">thebikeshop66@outlook.com</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Cycles UK</b><br/>484/486 St. Albans Road<br/>Watford, WD24 6QU<br/>01923 243707<br/><a href="http://www.cyclesuk.com">www.cyclesuk.com</a><br/><a href="mailto:watford@cyclesuk.com">watford@cyclesuk.com</a></p>                                       | <p><b>Northwood Cycle Depot</b><br/>118 Pinner Road<br/>Northwood , HA6 1BP<br/>01923 824174<br/><a href="http://www.northwoodcycles.com">www.northwoodcycles.com</a><br/><a href="mailto:northwoodcycles@tiscali.co.uk">northwoodcycles@tiscali.co.uk</a></p> |
| <p><b>Watford Cycle Hub</b><br/>Holywell Community Centre<br/>Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD<br/>01923 223994<br/><a href="http://www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk">www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk</a></p>   | <p><b>Café in the Park</b><br/>Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Frogmore Ln.<br/>WD3 1NB<br/>08456 800835<br/><b>10% discount, meals and drinks</b></p>  |

# Spokes Rides and Events Programme

As well as the list of rides in this newsletter, Spokes' rides are published on the following web sites:

- Spokes - [www.spokesgroup.org.uk](http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk)
- Sky Ride - [www.goskyride.com](http://www.goskyride.com) - we are the SPOKES – Watford group
- Facebook - [www.facebook.com/www.spokesgroup.org.uk](http://www.facebook.com/www.spokesgroup.org.uk) - like our page

Rides may be added, changed or cancelled and details will be emailed to those in the group who have provided email addresses and posted on Facebook.

## Spokes Buddy Rides

If you are planning to go out for a ride why not invite other Spokes members. Email [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk) or ring Brian on *removed* with the details of your ride. These will be emailed to Spokes' members and posted on the Spokes' web pages. Please provide

- Contact details, allows participants to contact you about the ride
- Start location
- Approximate distance
- Where you will be riding, including whether the route is particularly hilly or flat
- Type of ride and bike advised (on road, off-road, suitable for mountain bike, road bike or any)
- Pace (slow 8mph, medium 10mph, fast 12mph)

## Remember to Bring

Water and snack; spare inner tube; pump; appropriate clothing for the forecast weather and road conditions – reflective, waterproof and warm; and lights if appropriate

## Disclaimer

As a participant of Spokes' rides you must be over 16 unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Insurance is your responsibility. Spokes cannot accept liability for you or your possessions. Your well being is your responsibility and it is your responsibility to follow the Highway Code at all times. Your participation in the rides is 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 up to 8mph

**Medium** ----- Average of 9-11 mph

**Fast** ----- Average over 12 mph

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### SEPTEMBER

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> 8pm Spokes Social Evening & Curry Night**  
– **at Moon Under Water, 44 High St,  
Watford WD17 2BS**

A social evening to discuss cycling issues with a drink & a Wetherspoons' curry.  
Diana *removed*

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> 9:30am All Around Herts Blue Book Ride**  
– **from Watford High Street Station WD17  
1LU**

The ride will follow the "All Around Herts" route from the SPOKES blue book. It's a mixture of road and off road; cycle path, bridle path, towpath. There are some hills, but nothing too strenuous. There will be a lunch stop but the location hasn't been fixed yet. Suitable for Hybrid and Mountain Bikes. Unless the tow paths are not too muddy, bikes with narrow road tyres might get away with it but ....

50 miles Medium David *removed*

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> 10am Tuesday Morning Ride**  
– **from Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**

Into the Chilterns mainly on road, calling in for refreshment at Blackwalls Cafe on the return

18 miles Medium Roger *removed*

- Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> 10am**      **Meander to the Aquadrome**  
 – **from Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**
- A leisurely short ride along the Ebury Way to the Rickmansworth Aquadrome. Enjoy refreshments at the Cafe and return via the Ebury Way. Road bikes may find the Ebury Way rough but no problem for any other type of bike.
- 8 miles                              Slow                              John *removed*
- 
- Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> 10am**      **Ride to Redbourn**  
 – **from Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**
- A ride to Redbourn making use of the open countryside around Hemel but with a few hills to test your lungs. Refreshments in the Cricketers and a shorter return. On road and suitable for any type of bike.
- 35 miles                              Medium                              Brian *removed*
- 
- Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> 11am**      **Easy Ebury**  
 – **from Watford Cycle Hub, Holywell  
 Community Centre, Tolpits Lane  
 WD18 9QD**
- A short slow paced easy ride along the Ebury Way suitable for families. Refreshments at the Cafe @ Lock 81. Will suit touring, hybrid and mountain bikes.
- 5 miles                              Slow                              Brian *removed*
- 
- Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> 10am**      **Breweries By Bike**  
 – **from Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**
- A lovely ride that will also take you to sample the products of three breweries. Ride along the canal towpath to Berkhamsted and the first stop at the Berkhamsted Brewery shop. Then, after a bit of a climb, across to Chesham and the Chesham Brewery shop. The final leg (assuming you can still stand) is to Sarratt and the Paradigm Brewery before returning to the Harvester. Products available for purchase at all stops and snacks available at the Berkhamsted and Chesham shops. Should last 5-6 hours. Towpath and off-road tracks so suitable for mountain, touring and hybrid bikes.
- 30 miles                              Medium                              Mick *removed*
-

## **OCTOBER**

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> 10am**                      **Canal Ride to Hemel**  
– **The Cha Café, Cassiobury Park Ave,  
Watford WD18 7HY**

A gentle ride along the canal to Apsley, almost all along the canal, but there is a stretch along the A41, happy to ride on to Berkhamstead if riders fancy it, although the canal gets a little bumpy after Hemel. Its a lovely ride, and Woodies is a super cafe - definitely one to recommend. Suitable for touring, hybrid and mountain bikes.

16 miles                                      Slow                                      Lorreine *removed*

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> 10am**                      **Tuesday Morning Ride**  
– **from Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**

Cycle to Shenley on road & tracks, calling for refreshment at the Orchard Cafe.

20 miles                                      Medium                                      Roger *removed*

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> 8pm**                      **Spokes Social Evening & Curry Night**  
– **at Moon Under Water, 44 High St,  
Watford WD17 2BS**

A social evening to discuss cycling issues with a drink & a Wetherspoons' curry.

Diana *removed*

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> 10am**                      **Flying Bikers**  
– **Outside Garston Medical Centre, 6a  
North Western Avenue, Watford, WD25  
9GP**

A day out for those looking for a lovely ride or with an interest in aviation history. You'll take in Radlett (80 Signals Wing RAF), the De Havilland Museum at Salisbury Hall (admission charge), the former London Colney airfield (56 Squadron RFC) and the former works of Handley Page back at Radlett. Should be back around 17:30. Much of it is off road. Suitable for mountain, hybrid or touring bikes.

30 miles                                      Medium                                      Charles *removed*  
and *removed* on the day

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> 10am**

**Ride to Studham**

– **from Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**

A ride to the Red Lion in Studham. Lovely scenery and a few steep hills.  
On road and suitable for any type of bike.

46 miles

Medium

Brian *removed*

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> 11am**

**Cassiobury Special**

– **The Cha Café, Cassiobury Park Ave,  
Watford WD18 7HY**

This gentle route takes place entirely within Cassiobury park. The route is mainly flat and is ideal for families and anyone looking to boost their confidence on a bike. Suitable for any type of bike.

4 miles

Slow

Brian *removed*

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**NOVEMBER**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> 8pm**

**Spokes Social Evening & Curry Night**

– **at Moon Under Water, 44 High St,  
Watford WD17 2BS**

A social evening to discuss cycling issues with a drink & a Wetherspoons' curry.

Diana *removed*

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> 11am**

**Back on Your Bike**

– **The Cha Café, Cassiobury Park Ave,  
Watford WD18 7HY**

A mainly off road ride for those looking for a short scenic ride. It will take you along the towpath, through Whippendell Woods, past the Grove and back long the towpath to the start. Suitable for mountain, touring and hybrid bikes.

6 miles

Slow

Brian *removed*

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> 8pm**

**Space for Cycling in SW Herts**

- **at Moon Under Water, 44 High St, Watford WD17 2BS**

A campaigning meeting. We will be meeting in one of the alcoves at the back (on the right). See the Cyclescape website for details: either look at [spokesswherts.cyclescape.org/threads/2682](http://spokesswherts.cyclescape.org/threads/2682) or, for future updates, sign up with Cyclescape at [blog.cyclescape.org/guide/](http://blog.cyclescape.org/guide/) and follow the thread.

Peter *removed*

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> 10am**

**Day Ride**

- **from Watford Cycle Hub, Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane WD18 9QD**

Cycle on road & good tracks to Gorhambury then along the Alban Way to Sleapshyde for a pub lunch. Return via London Colney. Suitable for any bike.

36 miles

Medium

Roger *removed*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> 10am**

**Valley and Hills**

- **from Watford Cycle Hub, Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane WD18 9QD**

A gentle ride along the valley to Denham and then a climb past Denham Golf Course to get some great views as we come back down to the valley for the return to the start. Route includes towpaths and tracks so will suit mountain or hybrid bikes.

22 miles

Medium

Brian *removed*



## Watford Cycle Hub

01923-223-994 / 07818-047-838

[office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk](mailto:office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk)

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

|           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| Monday    | CLOSED       |
| Tuesday   | 9:00 – 5:00  |
| Wednesday | 9:00 – 5:00  |
| Thursday  | 10:00 – 5:30 |
| Friday    | 9:00 – 5:00  |
| Saturday  | 9:00 – 5:00  |
| Sunday    | 9:00 – 4:00  |

### **We love & do all things cycling:**

- Fix bikes
- Sell fully re-conditioned bikes
- Sell new accessories
- Sell new and recon parts (10% discount for Spokes members)
- Security tag and register bikes
- Teach you about bikes
- Train you to ride bikes & help build confidence
- Guide you on bike rides
- Hire bikes
- Accept your unwanted bikes
- If we can't help direct we'll signpost or introduce you to someone who can!

### **Regular events** *(see the website for details):*

- "Go-Ride" Club every Friday 6-7:30pm for 6 to 16 yrs
- Maintenance Modules – Thursday evenings
- Volunteers Day – last Thursday of the month

### **Summer Kids courses** *(see the website for details):*

- "Learn to Ride"
- "Bikeability"

**Lots of free parking, kids playground and warm welcome guaranteed!**



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



**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 and summer evenings. They start at several places around Watford, like the Harvester in Croxley, Morrisons or Watford Cycle Hub.

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

**Visit our web site to catch the latest news and information:**

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