



2020 Autumn Newsletter - No. 105



Peter Gibbs leading his first Spokes ride on 1st July 2020

Where can you go with Spokes?



Spokes members on a ride in July, led by Leslie Keddy - you see some amazing sights whilst cycling:-



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Chat from the Chair - Autumn 2020

The new normal for cycling - lots of chat, but what will it all mean?

The corona virus has changed our lives. It has increased the number of people cycling, so hopefully, it will bring an improvement in the cycling environment.

Local authorities are still developing their Walking and Cycling Policies. Are you influencing what will be in them?

The proposed Watford Green Ring



For me, the current main issue in Watford is promoting the proposed Watford Green Ring. This is something that can easily be done. It is already in place, it just needs to be recognised, promoted and signed. Yes, it needs minor improvements and maintenance, but it would encourage more utility and recreational cycling.

Ebury Way

Many of us cycle along the Ebury Way, a local route, which is a real gem. Over the years, I have often seen cars parked on the track by the Moor Lane crossing. So, earlier this year, I was pleased to see bollards placed to stop motorists gaining access. Well



done TRDC. This demonstrates what a bit of constructive complaining can do.

An issue where TRDC have not done so well, is around the old Travis Perkins site at the Rickmansworth end of the Ebury Way. Here was a planning opportunity to

enhance an interesting area, but instead we now have a bland building, with no enhanced public benefit, and the Ebury Way made more dark and narrow. The paved surface is badly damaged, unsuitable for cycling, and dangerous for less able persons. The Ebury Way now ends in a dark narrow track.



So, for the future, we need a better, safer environment for recreation and for local utility journeys. Government appears to realise this, and is slowly changing. The county councils and district councils say they will promote active travel, but are reluctant to make radical changes. People who want change need to put pressure onto their local councillors to relocate resources. Watford Council have been good in introducing the Cycle Forum which provides an opportunity for the public to influence change. If you can attend a future meeting, it may help to demonstrate the need for better cycling routes.

In late July the Government published the following two documents you may find interesting.

Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

DfT Local Traffic Note 1/20 *Cycle Infrastructure Design*.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904088/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf

Due to the health crisis, this Autumn newsletter will have fewer rides than usual. However, additional rides and activities can be added by contacting either myself or Peter, our Rides coordinator. Peter is keen for more Spokes members to lead rides. Please contact him if you have ideas for future rides. He will put them onto the website, Facebook and the Lets Ride website.

SPOKES will continue to organise rides and campaign for better cycling facilities, but it would be good to have more members involved, so do come forward with suggestions for the future.

Stay in touch with Spokes

Spokes Web Site: www.spokesgroup.org.uk

Information about Spokes, its ride events and links to its campaigning.

Spokes Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/

Keep up to date with what other Spokes' members are doing, find details of forthcoming rides both from the Spokes' ride programme and ad hoc rides added by Spokes' members and discuss or share issues you are passionate about. Invite others to join you on a ride you are doing.

Spokes Campaigning Site: spokesswherts.cyclescape.org

Spokes' campaigning activity for cycling.

Spokes Letsride Group: www.letsride.co.uk/groups/spokes-watford

Sign up to Let's Ride and join the Spokes' Group. Keep up to date with Spokes' rides and invite others to join your rides. Spokes Members may, but do not need to, book on Lets Ride. Members can just turn up on the day.

Spokes Strava Club: www.strava.com/clubs/Spokes_SW_Herts

See where other Spokes' members are riding and, if you're competitive, see how your cycling activity compares with theirs.

Spokes Rides and Events - Information

Spokes Rides.

Spokes' members put together a varied programme of social rides. Ride descriptions normally include speed, distance and hills information to help you find rides that suit you. We ride in a group that chats and enjoys a sociable break en route or at the end of the ride. If you are struggling on the day you will not be left behind. Spokes' rides tend to be smaller sociable group rides. Rides may be added to the programme and details will be added to the web sites and Facebook.

Disclaimer

As a participant of Spokes rides you must be over 16, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. You need to be capable of riding in a group on the highway. Spokes cannot accept liability for you or your possessions. Your safety and well being is your responsibility. It is your responsibility to follow the Highway Code at all times. Your participation in the rides is acceptance of these terms.

What to bring on a ride?

Please come to rides with appropriate clothing for the weather, and with water, snack, spare inner tube and pump. Bring lights if appropriate. Please carry something that gives your name, address and emergency contact details and note the phone number of the ride leader.

What If the weather is bad?

If bad weather is forecast, or in other exceptional circumstances, the ride may be cancelled or changed. Unless the change happens at the very last minute, notice of the change or cancellation will be posted on our web site and our Facebook page.

Therefore, please contact the organiser before you travel to the start of a ride, if the weather looks bad, but try checking Facebook first.

Rides leave on time!

Please turn up at the start location for a ride, ready to leave at the scheduled time.

Ride Speed Guide

Slow ----- Gentle up to 8mph

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

Fast ----- Average over 12 mph

Spokes Rides and Events Programme - Autumn 2020

Important changes:-

We will no longer be publishing **Ride Leader telephone numbers**. Please email rides@spokesgroup.org.uk or message on the ride "Lets Ride Conversation" with any ride queries.

For now, all Spokes Members need to book on Let's Ride, if they wish to join a ride.

Refreshment arrangements may well change, but we will update booked riders.

In order to book on Lets Ride, you also need to be a Member of the 'Spokes SW Herts Let's Ride group'. No fee is involved, simply go to: Lets RideGroupsFind GroupSpokes SW HertsJoin Group.

September

Tuesday 1st **10.00am** **Tuesday Ride**
Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX
Cycle with **Roger** along the canal path to Hunton Bridge, then to Bedmond and the lanes beyond. Return via Leavesden Country Park.
20 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

Saturday 5th **09.30am** **Redbourn Cycle Hub**
Outside Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Rd, WD24 4LL
(free public car park nearby)
Ride out with **Chris** through Bricket Wood, Potters Crouch, on to Hemel, where we join the Nicky Line (disused unpaved railway line) to Redbourn for refreshments. Back a more direct way through St Albans, with an optional stop at the Redbournbury Watermill, where bread is made and sold (also flour and yeast). P.S. bring a rucksack!
28 miles **Medium to Fast** Suitable for any Bike, but not slick tyres

Wednesday 16th **10.00am** **Studham Loop**
Riverside Park, Riverside Road, Watford WD19 4HU
(Street parking nearby)
Ride with **Peter**, out via Chandlers Cross, Chipperfield, Studham. Return via Redbourn, Gorhambury Estate (if open) and Bricket Wood. Mainly quiet roads with some cycle ways and a short stretch of the busy A5183. 2136 feet of climbing, some challenging.
47 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

September

Monday 21st **9.30am** **Saunter to Sandridge**
Public car park off Abbots Road, behind the shops on Gallows Hill Lane, Abbots Langley (shops at WD5 0AW)

Ride out with **Katherine** via Potters Crouch, around St Albans to Sandridge. Back around the southern side of St Albans to Chiswell Green, for a stop at new café. Then back to Potters Crouch / Bedmond.

21 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

Thursday 24th **10.00am** **Thursday Short Ride**
Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride out with **John** via Two Bridges and Ebury Way to the Aquadrome, then the canal towpath to Springwell Lake, cycle path to Mill End, and Springwell Lane to Aquadrome Café for take-out or bring your own picnic. Return via the Ebury Way. Mostly off road.

12 miles **Slow** Suitable for any Bike

Wednesday 30th **10.00am** **Green Ring and Tasty Bean**
Outside Cha Cafe, Cassiobury Park, Watford WD18 7HY

Ride with **Peter** on towpath, quiet roads and cycle path. Out via canal path to Grove Mill Lane, Cassiobury Estate, back through Cassiobury Park, High Street and Waterfields Park. Then Colne Valley Cycle route to the new Tasty Bean Cafe in Oxhey park for refreshments. Return via Croxley and canal towpath. This route incorporates the SPOKES proposed Watford Green Ring.

11 miles **Slow** Suitable for any Bike but not slick tyres

October

Tuesday 6th **10.00am** **Tuesday Ride**
Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Cycle with **Roger** on roads & tracks to Shenley. Return via Letchmore Heath.

20 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

Wednesday 14th **10.00 am** **Autumnal Burnham Beeches**
Outside The Cafe in The Park, The Aquadrome, Frogmoor Lane, Rickmansworth WD3 1NB

Ride out with **Peter** via Chorleywood, Gerrards Cross, Hedgerley to Burnham Beeches for café stop (or BYO picnic, to be agreed with riders before the day). Return via

November

Tuesday 10th **10.00am** **Tuesday Ride**
Outside The Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX
Cycle with **Roger** into the Chiltern Hills i.e. Bovington. Returning via Chipperfield, where we may have a refreshment break.
20 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

Wednesday 18th **10.00am** **Black Park**
Riverside Park, Riverside Road, Watford WD19 4HU
(Street parking nearby)
Ride with **Peter** via Loudwater, Chorley Wood, Gerrards Cross and Hedgerley to Black Park. Return via Gerrards Cross, Chalfont Common, Harefield and Moor Park. 1799 feet climbing, some challenging. Mainly quiet roads and cycle ways, but a few busier roads and major junctions to cross. Probable lunch stop at San Remo Café, Black Park with BYO picnic option.
40 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

Thursday 19th **10.00am** **Thursday short ride**
Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX
Ride out with **John** via Two Bridges and Ebury Way to the Aquadrome then the canal towpath to Springwell Lake, cycle path to Mill End and Springwell Lane to Aquadrome Café for take-out or bring your own picnic. Return via the Ebury Way. Mostly off road.

Your club needs you!

More ride leaders are urgently needed!

**To find out more, please contact Peter, the
Spokes rides coordinator:-**

rides@spokesgroup.org.uk

The drive to Suffolk took a couple of hours, our first ride was an afternoon circular route to the wool town of Lavenham. The weather was typically British; overcast with the odd spot of rain. We arrived in Lavenham with light drizzle, but to our delight there was a bakery open on Market Square. As there was no queue, I was straight in to get a warmed Cornish pasty. A short walk along the road led us to a traditional tea shop, also open with no queues! Due to the restrictions, we were expecting to have to do a takeaway standing in the street next to our trusty steeds. How wrong were we? The ladies serving invited us in to a table for two, the first time I had a hot drink served in a proper mug! No cardboard here! The homemade cakes were divine!

Lavenham is a wonderful olde worlde place to visit, with a National Trust shop and the historic Guild Hall, which is normally open to the public on selected dates. As you can see from our photo, even the outside of it is quite remarkable.



Guild Hall, Lavenham (National Trust)

Day two was a forty mile circular ride to the Suffolk village of Debenham, north east of our starting point. Once again the summer weather was playing hard to get, so jackets were the necessary clothing choice. Our first destination was Needham Market, a pretty place that happened to have a much needed bike shop! I had an irritating clicking noise every time my crank went around. So nothing ventured, nothing gained, we stopped and found a small bike shop down a back alley. Turning on the charm to the man on duty, explaining we were on holiday and could he have a quick look to see what the annoying click was? Ten minutes later, with a couple of bolts tightened, we were on our way once again. He declined any offer of payment for his time, nor a coffee &

cake, so thanks to him, my bike was once again quiet.

The route took us through many picturesque hamlets and villages before our furthest destination, Debenham. I'm not sure if there is any connection with the similarly named department stores? The light drizzle was a constant theme, so lunch was taken at a take away bakery, sheltering under the eaves of the timber houses.

Our final day was a ride due south to Hadleigh and Polstead. Hadleigh is a very charming village, made even better as the rain had actually stopped. It is another of the wool trade towns, so lots of reference to sheep farming and to the wool textile

Cycling after lock down ended. Suffolk Cycling Holiday

12 miles

Slow

Suitable for any Bike

I was booked on the Spokes cycling holiday to the Netherlands that Peter had meticulously organized. Sadly the trip was not to be this year, so I had a week off work with nowhere to go! Luckily Nicki, a friend I'd met through Dunstable Breeze, was able to get a few days off work, so we headed off to Suffolk. Two NHS key workers with a love of cycling, who hadn't had any time off work since February.

As I haven't cycled away from the Chilterns, we were keen to use a travel company to organize our trip, providing the routes and booking suitable accommodation. Andy and Mike at www.cyclebreaks.com came up trumps. Our trip was one of their first to take place after the July 4th lifting of lockdown rules that affected the hotel / hospitality industries.

The Crown at Bildeston was to be our base for the 3 day trip. We were among the first



Katherine enjoying some well earned refreshments during her trip



Typically beautiful Suffolk countryside

guests to stay in this historic coaching inn, so the staff were finding their feet in the post-lockdown era we now find ourselves in.

Andy and Mike tailored the routes to our requirements and the GPX files were loaded onto my Wahoo, so we were all set to go. Road bikes were the chosen mode of transport. Backup was available at the end of the phone, should we encounter any problems, which was reassuring in an unfamiliar area.



Little Hall in Lavenham is a late 14th Century hall house on the main square. It's story mirrors the history of Lavenham over the centuries. First built in the 1390s as a family house and workplace, it was enlarged, improved and modernised in the mid 1550s, and greatly extended later. By the 1700s it was giving homes to six families. It was restored in the 1920s/30s, then in the 1960s and 70s it was an outpost of

Kingston (Surrey) College of Art. In 1975 Surrey County Council offered it to the Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, together with two cottages. Before selling the cottages, the Trust was able to restore Little Hall. This late C14 hall house containing the Gayer-Anderson collection of pictures and artefacts was opened to the public in 1978 and now operates as a museum.

trade. Polstead was a small hamlet, which had a great village shop with café, and we were able to sit outside to eat our cake, washed down with coffee.

Suffolk is a great place for a cycling break, the roads are much quieter than our local area, and are generally well maintained. Although East Anglia is known for being a flat county, there are certainly hills, but plenty of rolling country lanes that you'll love. There are scores of hamlets and villages to stop and explore, even despite the covid-19 restrictions.

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ie Deaney



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CYCLINGUK.ORG/HIGHWAYCODE

Could you be a SPOKES ride leader?

What skills does a Spokes Ride Leader need?

I have picked up from some members that they are put off offering rides, as their perception of the skills needed is greater than the reality. In fact, I would argue that any member who is a safe, competent cyclist and who knows their way around a route, can lead a ride. My own personal approach is to only lead rides well within my capacity, so although on



my own rides I can happily manage a 12+ mph average ride, I only lead 'Slow' and 'Medium' pace rides. This means I can lead in full confidence and I am able to complete the ride at the advertised pace.

As we offer Social Rides, you do not need qualifications, or a first aid certificate, as would be the case with Guided Rides or Breeze rides.

Perhaps you ride safely and confidently at say about 9 mph average. In that case, if you have a favourite route, why not offer it for others to join you at 'Slow' pace? Forget the word 'Leader', it's just a label. Spokes are social rides, where we ride together, following someone who knows the way, with the possible bonus of knowing a good refreshment stop! Similarly, if you ride at 10 mph plus, you could consider offering 'Medium' pace rides.

More Ride Leaders mean more Spokes Social Rides. An obvious statement, but at times our Leader numbers are low due to illness, other commitments etc. A few more Members adding a ride to each quarter's programme would fill gaps, increase variety and be much appreciated by fellow members and potential members (our rides are a good member recruiting aid). Above all, those offering rides add to their own riding experience and enjoyment.

Please join our ride leading Members, **we need you!** Email any questions to me at rides@spokesgroup.org.uk

Peter Jackson

October

Beaconsfield, the Chalfonts and Maple Cross. Mainly quiet roads but major roads to cross and short stretches of major road. 1519 feet of climbing, some challenging.

33 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

Thursday 15th **10.00am** **Thursday Short Ride**
Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride out with **John** via Two Bridges and Ebury Way to the Aquadrome then the canal towpath to Springwell Lake, cycle path to Mill End and Springwell Lane to Aquadrome Café for take-out or bring your own picnic. Return via the Ebury Way. Mostly off road.

12 miles **Slow** Suitable for any Bike

Monday 19th **7.30pm** **Committee Meeting**
Provisionally Watford Cycle Hub, The Pavilion,
Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford
WD18 9QD

A committee meeting, but open for all members to attend. Any ideas for the future welcomed.

Tuesday 20th **10.00am** **Apsley Ride**
Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley, WD3 3RX

Ride out with **Chris** using the canal tow-path to Hunton Bridge, up to Abbots, along the Bedmond Rd, through Bedmond village to Pimlico, then dropping down to Apsley. Returning out of Apsley up Featherbed Lane (a challenging climb) to Chipperfield, Sarratt, then home to Croxley. Refreshments will either be in Apsley (takeaway or sit down) or at the Chipperfield Garden Centre (sit down cafe), depending on how we feel.

22 miles **Medium to Fast** Suitable for any bike

Saturday 31st **10.00am** **Chiltern Adventure**
Outside The Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Cycle with **Roger** on lanes though Belsize, Ashley Green and Cholesbury to Swan Bottom for possible pub lunch. Return via The Lee & Amersham to finish at Rickmansworth.

32 miles **Medium** Suitable for any Bike

The new reality.....



Social distancing for tandem riders



Nan Millette took this panoramic picture of the socially distanced lunch stop during Peter's ride to Burnham Beeches in June. Lets hope it won't be long before we can return to "normal" - see below:-



Happier memories - Spokes members on one of Roger's Tuesday morning rides in March (pre lock down)

How to pay for membership?

To pay your subscription please set up an annual standing order payable on the 1 July. This will save administration for you and us. Alternatively you can make a bank transfer.

Payment should be made to SPOKES, sort code **20-91-79**, account **63401626** giving your surname as the reference.

When you have paid, please inform the membership secretary by email: membership@spokesgroup.org.uk

You will receive a Membership Pack, including a SPOKES Membership Card, entitling you to discounts of 10% on bike repairs and spares at the locations shown below.

Any queries please contact the Membership Secretary.

<p>Cycles UK 484/486 St. Albans Road Watford, WD24 6QU 01923 243707 www.cyclesuk.com watford@cyclesuk.com</p>	<p>Northwood Cycle Depot 118 Pinner Road Northwood , HA6 1BP 01923 824174 www.northwoodcycles.com northwoodcycles@tiscali.co.uk</p>
<p>Watford Cycle Hub Holywell Community Centre Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD 01923 223994 www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk</p>	<p>The Bike Shop 66 Queens Road Watford, WD17 2LA 07941 800029 thebikeshop66@outlook.com</p>
<p>CTH Cycles 97 Old Watford Road Bricket Wood, St Albans AL2 3UN 01923 674555 www.cthcycles.co.uk sales@cthcycles.co.uk</p>	

Where can you go with Spokes?



Spokes members on the Jubilee River ride led by Peter Jackson in July





Join Spokes today
Only £12 per annum
 £3 for an additional family member at the same address

Benefits of membership?

You will receive regular details of our cycle rides, social events and other activities in our quarterly Newsletter. You will also be helping us to campaign for improved cycling conditions in the South West Herts area.

Our membership year is from 1 July to 30 June.

If you would prefer to receive an electronic rather than posted paper copy of our Newsletter, please inform the Membership Secretary.

To join, please complete the form below and email a scanned copy to the Membership Secretary: membership@spokesgroup.org.uk.

This information is kept for membership purposes only. It will not be given to other organisations.

1 st Person Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Phone Number	
1 st person mobile	
1 st person email	
2 nd person name	
2nd person mobile	
2 nd person email	
Total subs due £	
Donation £	
Total £	
Signature	
Date	



Watford Cycle Hub

The Pavilion Holywell Community Centre,
King George V Playing Fields, Tolpits Lane, WD18 9QD
Tel: 01923 223 994 Mob: 07818 047 838

We're your local cycle recycle centre and do all things cycling

- Fix Bikes
- Sell new accessories
- Sell new and reconditioned parts
- Security tag and register bikes
- Teach you about bikes
- Train you to ride bikes
- Guide you on bike rides
- Accept your unwanted bikes
- Sell fully reconditioned, warranted bikes
- Hire you a bike



The BIG BIKE Revival.



Standard Cycle Hub Opening Times:

	Opening Hours	Regular Bookable Activities
Monday:	CLOSED	
Tuesday:	9:00am – 5:00pm	
Wednesday:	9:00am – 5:00pm	
Thursday:	9:00am – 5:00pm	
Friday:	10:00am – 5:30pm	Kids Go-Ride Club 6pm (sharp) to 7:30pm
Saturday:	9:00am – 5:00pm	
Sunday:	9:30am – 4:00pm	Rides meeting time from 9:30am

www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk

01923-223-994

office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk

