



## 2022 Spring Newsletter - No. 111



Bedmond and Nash Mills ride in December

## Out and about with Spokes.



*Above: Making tracks to Stockwood Park in January*

*Below: Exploring villages around Chesham in December.*



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## Chat from the Chair - Spring 2022

SPOKES has performed well over the last few years with a good selection of rides and campaigning for better cycling routes. This has been possible by more members actively supporting our activities. Last year we celebrated our 25th anniversary with some special rides, particularly the gathering rides at Chipperfield Common, when around fifty cyclists arrived on a beautiful summers day.

Some members have been involved in setting up “**SPOKES Rides For All**” (SRFA) on the SPOKES website [www.spokesgroup.org.uk](http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk), where more than sixty local routes are now available.

At this year’s AGM I will be standing down as Chair, a role I have had since 2006. I hope to carry on leading rides and to continue campaigning for safer, more usable cycling routes. Many people now accept that cars are not the answer to all our transport problems, and they do want a healthy, safe lifestyle.



*Above - Peter Taylor, the Mayor of Watford trying out the Watford Green Ring route.*

Two years ago we developed the idea of the **Watford Green Ring**, a 6.5 mile circular route around the centre of Watford. The route already exists, but it needs to be recognised and promoted. The Green Ring would link together several cycling routes identified in Watford council’s Sustainable Transport Strategy. I believe Watford Council now support and will develop the Watford Green Ring.

A project we hope to see completed this year is the crossing of Wiggshall Road by the Sustrans cycle route (NCR6). The plan is to widen the cycling and walking route making it safer and less congested.

This year I am hoping Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) will be active in resolving the issues at the Rickmansworth end of the Ebury Way (NCR6/61) where tree roots have badly damaged the surface making it dangerous for cyclists. At this point, the track has also been made dark and dismal due to the high fencing around the adjacent new warehouse. The route could be realigned on TRDC land to provide a safer but slightly longer route.

## Chat from the Chair - Spring 2022

SPOKES has a good local relationship with SUSTRANS with occasional working parties clearing growth and vegetation. This year SUSTRANS and SPOKES hope to have stands

at the Rickmansworth Festival on 21st and 22nd May, where we hope our members will visit and help to promote local cycling.



*Above - The 'dark and dismal' end of the Ebury Way in Rickmansworth.*

I wish to thank all committee members and other active members who have promoted our activities over the years. I hope you enjoy good cycling in the future.

Roger Bangs

## Stay in touch with Spokes

**Spokes Web Site:** [www.spokesgroup.org.uk](http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk)

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

**Spokes Facebook Group:** [www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/)

Keep up to date with what other Spokes' members are doing, find details of forthcoming rides, 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](http://spokesswherts.cyclescape.org)

Spokes' campaigning activity for cycling.

**Spokes Letsride Group:** [www.letsride.co.uk/groups/spokes-watford](http://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 Let's Ride. Members can just turn up on the day.

**Spokes Strava Club:** [www.strava.com/clubs/Spokes\\_SW\\_Herts](http://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 ride arrangements

**Booking Rides.** Members and Non-Members need to pre-book ride places on Lets Ride.

## **Ride Categories on Let's Ride**

**Easy Going.** SPOKES Slow Pace rides, up to 15 miles, flat and no busy roads.

**Steady.** SPOKES Slow Pace rides over 15 miles with some easy climbing and SPOKES Medium Pace rides which are 30 miles or less with some easy climbing.

**Challenging.** Any ride with challenging climbs, any SPOKES Fast Pace ride and Medium Pace rides which are over 30 miles.

**Mountain Bike.** Off Road rides on unsurfaced trails.

## **Tips on Use of Let's Ride**

If the ride is full, do register on the **Waiting List** as cancellations happen, even at the last minute. If you also email [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk) we can sometimes find a volunteer to lead a second group or raise the ride limit to meet the demand. As we cannot view the waiting list, your emails are the only way we can identify an oversubscribed ride. Once a ride is full, searching for it on Let's Ride is not straight forward, but it can be accessed using the link in the ride description in "Rides and Events" on the SPOKES web site.

**Messages to the Ride Leader.** Only the ride creator can see messages in Let's Ride "Notifications", which in most cases is me, not the Ride Leader. So, delays can occur in replying to you, if I first have to consult the Ride Leader. The Leader can see messages in the ride "Conversation" so, if you are booked on the ride, that is a good place to ask your question, the answer to which is often useful to others booked on the ride.

**Choosing Rides to join.** We want to welcome as many Members as possible but recognise the importance of rides being within each rider's limits. Hopefully the "Pace", "Time" and "Ride Category" information will assist you in selecting rides, but it is the responsibility of each of us to do our best to book on appropriate rides.

**Unable to do a ride you have booked?** Please remember to cancel your Let's Ride place at the first opportunity and even if you need to cancel at the last minute please do so. This gives opportunity for those on the waiting list to join the ride and informs the Ride Leader you will not be taking part. If unable to ride at the last moment, put a message in the Lets Ride "Conversation" immediately before cancelling, to hopefully alert the Ride Leader.

Peter Jackson- Rides Co-ordinator

## 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 - Spring 2022

Pre-booking on Let's Ride is required for all SPOKES rides.

We would love to offer more rides and route variations, but to do that we need more **Members willing to lead rides**. Please speak to or email Peter Jackson if you are interested in others joining you on your favourite route/s. The SPOKES "Rides for All" collection on our website has great routes you can use.

**Let's Ride** Web Site. "Social Rides" will no longer exist as a Let's Ride group after 31 March. From 1 April our rides will still be posted on Let's Ride but in "Community Groups". It is not just a change of name it is a change of where the rides are posted. March rides will have appeared as normal, before you receive this newsletter, but there may be a few weeks' delay in posting the April/May rides on Let's Ride and the SPOKES website.

### March

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> 9.30am King of the Castle in Bedfordshire**

**Active Dacorum Hub, Redbourn Rd. Hemel Hempstead HP27BA**

Ride with **Katherine** on this circular route, half of which is on traffic free trails/paths. Out via Harpenden and Luton. Short detour to see Someries Castle before heading to Dunstable town centre. Back via Dunstable Downs, Studham and Gaddesden Row. A few big hills to challenge you! Coffee at Priory Tea Rooms. Lock required to secure bike outside café. Route at: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/38354510>

33 Miles

**Slow/Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Spyride**

**Outside Daisy in the Park café, Cassiobury Park WD17 3AR**

A ride, with **Charles**, to places visited by a real spy (Guy Burgess) and a fictional one (George Smiley). Lunch at the Green Dragon at Flaunden. Gentle pace, but the route out to lunch is largely uphill. The return trip is largely downhill and easier going. Ride is on tarmac roads and park cycle ways so suitable for any bike tyres.

Rousebarn Lane may be muddy with flooding in places.

16 Miles

**Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Tuesday Morning Ride**

**Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Cycle with **Roger** up Rousebarn Lane then along lanes through Bovington to Chipperfield for refreshment. Return via Sarratt and Loudwater to Croxley Green

20 Miles

**Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

# March

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **University Way**  
**Addison Howard Park, Bedford Road, Kempston. MK42**  
**8PN. Off M1 junction13. Free car park on the edge of**  
**Bedford.**

Mainly traffic free ride with **Katherine**, along the former University Way railway line to line to Sandy. Follow the River Ouse out to Sandy for coffee and cake. No major hills!

Route at: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/37028049>

23 Miles                      **Slow/Medium**                      not skinny tyres

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Apsley Ride**  
**Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Ride out with **Chris**, along the canal towpath to Hunton Bridge, up Gypsy Lane to Abbots, along the Bedmond Rd, through Bedmond and Pimlico. Then dropping down to Nash Millson to Apsley for a breather before the challenging climb up Featherbed Lane, over the A41 dual carriageway, on to Chipperfield, where we stop at Blackwells Café. Home through Sarratt to Croxley for the final leg.

20 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Thursday short ride**  
**Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Out with **John**, via Two Bridges and Ebury Way to the Aquadrome, then the canal tow path to Springwell lake, cycle path to Mill End, Springwell lane to Aquadrome Café, return via the Ebury Way to Two Bridges.

12 Miles                      **Slow**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Saturday 19th**                      **9.30am**                      **Stanborough Lakes**  
**Outside Leverstock Green Library, Leverstock Green Way,**  
**Hemel HP3 8QG**

Out with **Katherine**, via Gorhambury Estate (assuming it is open!) to St Albans. Alban Way to Hatfield and onto Stanborough lakes. Outside café. Back via Marshallswick and Potters Crouch.

Route at: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/36319747>

27 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Gorhambury**  
**Outside Leavesden Cycle Hub, Leavesden Country Park,**  
**College Road, Abbott's Langley WD5 0GN**

SPOKES Rides For All ride 048. **NB:** Date will change if Gorhambury Estate is

## March

closed on this date. Out with **Peter** via Garston and Bricket Wood to Verulamium. Return via Gorhambury Estate Potters Crouch and Bedmond. Refreshment stop to be decided, probably St Albans.

19 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Burnham Beaches**  
**Outside The Café in The Park, The Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB**

Cycle with **Roger**, on roads and tracks though Chalfont St. Giles and Hedgerley to the café at Burnham Beaches, return via Fulmer. 1300ft. ascent.

30 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Bovingdon along the Lanes**  
**Outside The Café in The Park, The Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB**

Out with **Philip**, via Chorleywood, Sarratt, Flaunden, Bovingdon, to Chipperfield refreshment stop. Return via Belsize, Chandlers Cross and Croxley Green. 881ft climbing.

19 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

## April

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Tuesday Morning Ride**  
**Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Cycle along lanes and good tracks with **Roger**, to Bedmond and Chiswell Green for refreshment. Return along NCR 6

18 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Ashridge Estate - Spokes Rides For all**  
**Ride 076**  
**Blackwells, 10 The Common, Chipperfield, WD4 9BS**

Ride with **Peter** through the Ashridge Estate and lovely Chilterns countryside. Refreshment venue to be decided. Out via Chesham, Aldbury and Ashridge Estate to Ringshall. Back via Potten End and Boxmoor. 1,986' of climbing, some challenging.

38 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Searching for the Easter Bunny**  
**Small car park at the start of Heath Lane, opposite main drive into Hemel Leisure Centre (Everyone Active HP1 1JS).**

# April

Council car park on Park Road or park on Beechfield Road, both nearby.

Off road challenging ride with **Katherine** to Bovingdon, Bourne End and back to Boxmoor. A number of steep climbs. Not suitable for beginners. Coffee near the end at Fishery Wharf Café. Route at: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/3606972>  
12 Miles                      **Slow/Medium**                      MTB / Gravel. Not skinny tyres

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Chiltern Hills, Latimer, Flaunden**  
**Outside The Café in the Park, The Aquadrome Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB**

Out with **Philip** via Chorleywood, Latimer, Flaunden to Chipperfield for a refreshment stop. Return via Sarratt and Croxley Green. 965 ft. climb.  
18 Miles                      **Medium**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>**                      **10.00am**                      **Thursday Short Ride**  
**Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Out with **John**, via Two Bridges and Ebury Way to the Aquadrome then the canal towpath to Springwell lake, cycle path to Mill End, Springwell lane to Aquadrome Café, return via the Ebury Way to Two Bridges.  
12 Miles                      **Slow**                      Suitable for any bike.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup>**                      **7.30pm**                      **SPOKES SW Herts AGM**  
**Holywell Community Centre, Chaffinch Lane, Watford**  
**WD18 9QD**

All members are encouraged to attend, participate in a review of the past year and guide SPOKES future activity. The AGM will be chaired by **Roger** who intends to step down at this AGM.

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>**                      **7.30pm**                      **Campaign Get together**  
**The Red House, Watford Rd, Croxley Green,**  
**Rickmansworth WD3 3DX**

Join **Roger** and other Members for a sociable chat about local Cycling provision and support SPOKES in campaigning to improve local cycling infrastructure.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>**                      **Time tbc, train times dependent**                      **Brampton Valley Way**  
**Train from Watford Jct./Hemel/Berkhamsted to**  
**Northampton**

A day out with **Katherine**, riding from Northampton train station along the Brampton Valley Way which is a former railway line to Market Harborough in Leicestershire.

## April

Option to go to Foxton Locks on the grand union. This is a day ride, lunch will be in Market Harborough. We will travel as a group on the same train, group save tickets can be bought. Each rider to pay for their train ticket. **Good lights needed for long dark tunnels.** Route at: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/37207714>

40-48 miles

**Slow/Medium.** Not skinny tyres. Gravel/mountain/hybrid best

## May

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>**

**3 day event**

**Isle of Wight Randonee**

**Contact Peter by 7 March**

Travel down together Saturday (32+ mile ride plus train) ride Randonee (60 mile tour of island) on Sunday, return Monday. See "Some SPOKES 2022 Dates and plans" article in this News Letter for details.

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**10.00am**

**Tuesday Morning Ride**

**Outside The Café in The Park, The Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB**

Cycle with **Roger** through Swillett and Chalfont St. Peter to Denham Country Park for refreshment. Return along tracks and via Harefield.

20 Miles

**Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>**

**10.00am**

**Burnham Beeches Spring Ride**

**Outside The Café in The Park, The Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB**

Out with **Peter**, on Spokes Ride For All Ride 058, out via Chorleywood, Chalfont St. Giles and Beaconsfield to the Burnham Beeches Café for refreshment. Return via Farnham Common, Gerrards Cross, Chalfont St Peter and Maple Cross. 1370 feet of climbing.

29 Miles

**Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>**

**10.00am**

**Bovingdon and Chiltern Hills**

**Outside The Café in The Park, The Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB**

Out with **Philip** through Chorleywood, Flaunden, Bovingdon and Kings Langley to Chipperfield refreshment stop. Return via Chandlers Cross, Cassiobury, Croxley Green, Loudwater, Rickmansworth. 1,728 ft. climb

30 Miles

**Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

# May

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>**

**10.00am**

**Thursday short ride**

**Outside the Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Out with **John** via Two Bridges and Ebury Way to the Aquadrome, then the canal tow path to Springwell lake, cycle path to Mill End, Springwell lane to Aquadrome Café, return via the Ebury Way to Two Bridges.

12 Miles

**Slow**

Suitable for any bike.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> &**

**9.30am**

**Rickmansworth Festival**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Environment Marquee, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Frogmoor Lane WD3 1NB**

We seek Volunteers to staff our stand in 2 hour slots on Saturday and Sunday. An opportunity to meet interested members of the public, promote cycling and SPOKES Membership. Members visiting the Festival are encouraged to meet fellow members at our stand. See the "Some SPOKES 2022 Dates and plans" article in this News Letter for details. To volunteer Email **Peter** at [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk)

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>**

**10.00am**

**Tasty Bean to Bean Here**

**Outside the Tasty Bean Café, Oxhey Activity Park, Wiggenhall Road, Watford WD18 OHZ**

Out with **Peter** via Colne Valley Cycle Route and Balmoral Road to North Watford and Harebreaks to the Bean Here Café at Hunton Bridge. Return via Langlebury, Cassiobury Park and Watford High Street. Bit of climbing on the return trip but not challenging and can be walked. Route at: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/38293982>

12 Miles

**Slow**

Suitable for any bike.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>**

**9.30am**

**Ace Café Ride**

**Watford High Street Station, Lower High St., Watford**

Heading out, with **Chris**, down Oxhey Lane, Hatch End, North Harrow, through Rayners Lane, on to Greenford where we pick up the Grand Union Canal towpath (hard surfaced) for the remainder of the journey, which runs about 1/4 of a mile from the café, which is situated on the North Circular Road at Stonebridge Park, probably returning the same way, but decide on the day.

28 Miles

**Medium**

Suitable for any bike.

## Some SPOKES dates and plans for 2022

### **Members Cycling Holiday**

Would you like to join a **SPOKES Cycling Holiday in England** this year? I would be happy to organise one. My initial ideas are to use Lincoln, the Fens, Norfolk or the New Forest as a base, but I am open to suggestions. Perhaps a part ride, part rail travel day to and from the chosen location then three days of cycle/sightseeing trips. Probably early July in School term time.

If you are interested, please **email me** at [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk) **by the end of March** and I will arrange a mutually convenient date and venue for a planning meet.

### **Special, day out, Rides in the Spring Programme**

Thanks to Katherine for offering two rides outside our usual riding area in the Spring programme. See the Rides and Events pages for her University Way (Bedford start) ride on Sunday 13 March and her Brampton Valley Way Ride (train to and from Northampton) on Thursday 28 April .

### **Isle of Wight Randonnee - 1 May 2022** (travel down 30 April and back 2 May)

The Randonnee is a signposted 100K circuit of the Isle of Wight organised by Wayfarers Cycle Touring Club. If you would like to join me to ride it this year please let me know by email to [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk), and register for the ride at <https://www.cycleisland.co.uk/>. The choices are to travel there and back independently by car, bike or train, or cycle with me to Woking (32 miles each way to and from Tasty Bean Café, Oxhey Activity Park) and then by Train to Portsmouth for the Ryde ferry. I have provisionally booked Hotel accommodation in Ryde, 3.5 miles from a Randonnee start point at Wootton. If you wish to join us, to ensure a bed, **contact me by 7 March latest** [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk). Medium Pace Ride.

Gender mix and availability permitting, there will be a choice of single or shared room.

### **Rickmansworth Festival – Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 May - Your Help is Needed**

We will have a SPOKES Stand in the Environment Tent at the Festival as in previous years. **Volunteers are needed to staff our stand**, ideally two Members on the stand for 2 hour slots. Saturday first slot is 9:30 to 11:30, assisting to set up, then staff the stand from 10.30 a.m. Stand staffing slots after that are 2 hours each starting at 11.30, 1.30 and 3.30. The stand closes at 5.30 p.m. Sunday slots start at 10.30 a.m., 12.30, 2.30 and 4.30. The stand closes at 5.30 p.m. on Sunday but I request that the Member on the stand with me for the last slot assists in packing the stand away. We will be clear by 6.00 p.m. latest.

What do we want you to do on the stand? Just be happy whilst you welcome and chat to people. It might be about cycle routes in the area, the benefits of cycling, SPOKES rides programme and campaigning on local cycle issues. If someone wishes to join SPOKES, Membership is £12 pa (£3 per additional Member in the same household). Reference material will be available on the stand to assist in answering questions. Our

## Some SPOKES dates and plans for 2022

stand is next to Sustrans and we cooperate by ensuring our stands are covered, if either organisations' volunteers are away for a short while.

Please let me know what you are able to do, by emailing [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk). I will maintain a rota and, once some slots are booked, I will copy it to those who seek to volunteer, so they can see where they are most needed.

Coming to the festival but unable to help? Please call in to see us on the stand. It is a good meeting point for Members.

### **SPOKES Gathering in Bike Week (Cycling UK) Saturday 11 June 2022**

National Bike Week is Monday 6 to Sunday 12 June. The Queen's Birthday is 11 June and SPOKES plan a gathering on Saturday 11 June. What a momentous week!

Following the success of last year's Anniversary Gathering, we plan to offer a similar event, but open to all local cyclists and cycling groups. The format will be rides from various locations led by SPOKES and hopefully other cycling groups. The gathering will be on Chipperfield Common from about 12.30 to 2.30 p.m. with a photo call at 1.30 p.m. Cyclists are invited to meet up at the common either via a group ride or by their own means of travel. Bring a picnic or buy refreshment from one of the catering venues on the common. It would be great to involve diverse groups such as veteran cycling enthusiasts or tricycle clubs and any cycle club/group within cycling distance of Chipperfield leading their own group rides.

So far, we have invited Willesden Cycle Club, Cycleherts members, Thames Valley Tricycle Association, The Chiltern Association Cycle Section, Breeze and, of course, the Watford Area Cycle Hubs. Do you have contact with a cycling group or club who may be interested? If yes, your help in inviting those organisations would be appreciated. Please email me: [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk).

Based on last year's gathering we anticipate a lot of interest and so we will need plenty of volunteers to lead rides from various SW Herts locations. If you are able to help with this, please email me: [rides@spokesgroup.org.uk](mailto:rides@spokesgroup.org.uk).

### **Viking Trail Wednesday 22 June**

In the Summer Programme I will offer a repeat of last year's successful Viking Trail Ride. This will require pre-booking and pre-payment of rail fare. Details nearer the time, but meanwhile a date for your calendar. From Watford and Hemel Stations about 9.30 a.m. train to Euston, short quiet road ride to St Pancras, train to Ramsgate then a 33-mile coastal cycle way, quiet roads and country lanes ride with dinner in Ramsgate before returning home. Back about 9.00 p.m. Numbers will be limited to 12, travelling

## Some SPOKES dates and plans for 2022

in two groups of 6 to Ramsgate. Any Member able to assist with one of the groups on the train down would be appreciated, please contact me:- rides@spokesgroup.org.uk.

### **Cycling Day Out**

In the Autumn programme, I intend offering a ride from Gerrards Cross to Oxford (about 55 miles) with a few hours to explore the city then return by train to Gerrards Cross. Optional led ride to Gerrards Cross from Watford and return in the evening. At some stage during the summer I will invite a limited number of Members to join me in trying out the route.

Peter Jackson

## SPOKES Rides Coordinator – Vacancy for part of the role

At the 2021 AGM Roger announced his wish to step down from the Chair at this year's AGM but continue as a Committee Member. It has been suggested that I stand to fill the vacancy as Chair, which I am willing to do but, if that is the wish of members, it will only happen if we first find a replacement Rides Coordinator. The plan is to reduce the individual time commitment by splitting the Rides Coordinator role in two. I am pleased to say that a member is seriously considering the "**Web Site Postings**" role so we are seeking a second member to cover the "**News Letter Listings**" role. The duties of these two posts are outlined below:-

### **News Letter Listings.**

- Set up the calendar on Google Sheet for each quarter, transferring the prior quarter to the history sheet;
- Email all members requesting rides for the quarterly programme;
- Prepare the quarterly programme for the News Letter;
- Make any required changes to rides related News Letter information e.g. update "SPOKES Ride Arrangements" article.

### **Website Postings.**

- Put the quarter's programme on SPOKES and Let's Ride websites;
- Schedule Facebook posts and pin the Facebook posts to "Featured" when it is posted;
- Update Lets Ride on ride numbers when the ride is complete.

That leaves one or two small but necessary Member emailing tasks which could fit in with either role, but that can be decided between the two Post Holders.

Can you help by taking on the "**News Letter Listings**" Role? You won't be dropped in at the deep end. We will agree an adequate hand over and support.

Peter Jackson

# Spokes (SW Herts Cycling Group) AGM

*Agenda for Annual General Meeting 7.30 on Monday 25 April 2022 at the Watford Cycle Hub, by Holywell Community Centre, Chaffinch Lane, (Off Tolpits Lane) WD18 9QD.*

1. Welcome
2. Present –
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of 2021 AGM held on Zoom.
5. Reports for the year up to March 2021  
Chairman  
Treasurer  
Membership  
Rides Coordinator
6. Election of future committee members (the roles may vary):- -  
3 x Officers: - the roles may vary  
*Chairman*  
*Vice chairman/Secretary*  
*Treasurer*  
  
Up to 9 other committee members (the roles may vary):-  
*Membership secretary*  
*Meetings secretary*  
*Newsletter*  
*Information – Web Manager*  
*Rides co-ordinator*  
*Publicity & Promotion*
7. Spokes Rides for All – (SRFA)
8. Affiliations: Cyclist Touring Club, British Cycling, CycleNation, CycleHerts.
9. Resolutions:- Please notify the Chair at least one week before the meeting.
10. Summer – Cycle gathering at Chipperfield – Saturday 11 June.
11. Other Business - Please notify the Chair at least one week before the meeting.

Following the AGM there will be a short Committee Meeting - open to all followed by an Informal Discussion on cycling issues.

Watford Cycle Forum  
Local Government Walking & Cycling Plans,  
Watford Green Ring,  
Future rides program  
Ebury Way, Wall Hall.

## Drift Ghost XL camera review

Whilst I've never been involved in an accident when cycling, others have, and have benefited from the evidence of a video. I have wanted a camera for some time as insurance, but hadn't found one with a battery life sufficient for my rides, which would need to be at least 6 hours. Recently I came across the Ghost XL from Drift Innovation with the strap line of "Designed in the UK and Made in China"! I've now used the camera a few times on my rides and I'm very impressed with it.

It was described in reviews as a good basic camera. It probably lacks the features, such as image stabilisation, that are necessary for making movies of your rides. However my requirement was for a camera able to catch details of an incident, such as car



number plates and people's faces. I've not researched the features available on other cameras so I'm not qualified to comment on what might be missing. The battery life is claimed to be 9 hours. I've not timed the battery life but it lasted three rides before needing to be charged so I'm comfortable it meets my 6 hour requirement.

I hadn't come across the camera during the time I've been looking for one, which is surprising, as Drift cameras have been around for some time. When I did search for reviews, the ones that came up were from motorbike retailers and from the mounts supplied with the camera, this may be the target market. This might explain how well the camera looks to have been built.

I chose to mount the camera on my helmet. The helmet fastening is secure and rigid and works fine on a MIPS helmet. My reason for going for the helmet mount was that it would remain with me whenever I left the bike, as often I forget to remove my GPS when I disappear into a pub. Perhaps ignoring two gadgets would be too much for some criminals. It also avoids the need to buy handlebar mounts for all my bikes. It weighs 5oz and I don't notice it when riding. I'm not sure whether helmet or handlebar mounted is the best for capturing an incident. On balance I think that I might turn my head towards any problem, even at the last minute, so might catch something useful on the video.

## Drift Ghost XL camera review

A helmet mounted camera isn't a viable option, if you want to watch or share videos of your rides. I don't have image stabilisation for my head, which bobs around continually whilst riding. Before watching one of my videos, I need to take a sea sickness tablet and have a paper bag handy. Two other considerations for male riders with helmet cameras are to consider switching it off before entering a toilet and if you are using a public toilet behind a tree, don't look down! Also remember that you are taller with a camera on your helmet!

The video quality is excellent. I can obtain good quality still photos from the video. Perfectly adequate for obtaining any detail required for an accident. On one very windy day, there was a lot of wind noise on the audio. However my other rides have been on less windy days and the wind noise was not noticeable. The sound on my heavy breathing on hills is captured perfectly well!

The camera doesn't come with detailed instructions – fine for me as I never read them anyway. However I didn't find the camera intuitive to use. It has different modes – video, photo, time lapse, photo burst and, with the video mode, an optional dashcam mode. It starts recording automatically when external power is switched on – another indicator that it is designed for motorbikes. Video in dashcam mode is required for use on the bike. The ride is recorded as a series of 5 minute (as set up for my camera) video clips. When the card is full, it overwrites the oldest clips. Don't assume that you have set it up correctly until you have tested it on a short ride.

The camera also has event detection when, in the event of an impact, the current video recording will be protected from deletion and moved to another folder on the SD card. It is clearly very sensitive to the movement of my head as over half the clips from my first long ride were treated as impacts! I have switched off this feature.

The camera can be connected to the computer via a USB port and is treated as a SD card. It is also charged through a USB port. It can also be connected to your phone via an app using its own wi-fi connection. From the phone you can review any of the videos or have a live stream. The settings can also be adjusted from the phone, something which is much easier than changing the settings using the camera.

So far I'm very impressed with the Drift Ghost XL camera.

Brian Johnson



**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](mailto:membership@spokesgroup.org.uk).

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

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

# 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](mailto: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><b>Cycles UK</b>          484/486 St. Albans Road          Watford, WD24 6QU          01923 243707  <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  <a href="http://www.northwoodcycles.com">www.northwoodcycles.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  <a href="http://www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk">www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk">office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>The Bike Shop</b>          66 Queens Road          Watford, WD17 2LA          07941 800029  <a href="mailto:thebikeshop66@outlook.com">thebikeshop66@outlook.com</a>  <i>(N.B. discount discontinued)</i></p>
<p><b>Ride St Albans</b>          318 Watford Road          Chiswell Green, St Albans          AL2 3DP          01727 614778  <a href="http://www.ridestalbans.com">www.ridestalbans.com</a>  <a href="mailto:mike@ridestalbans.com">mike@ridestalbans.com</a></p>	



bike registration

advice

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# Your One Stop Cycling Shops

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**OPEN NOW - COVID-19 SAFE OPERATIONS**



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In the Community, for the Community



**Watford Cycle Hub**



**Leavesden Cycle Hub**

01923 223994

<https://watfordcyclehub.org.uk/>

07340 866123

# Out and about with Spokes.



*Above: Ride to the Chiltern Open Air Museum in January*

*Below: At the Lazy Lama in November*



# Out and about with Spokes.



*Above: Tuesday ride to Shenley in January*

*Below: Seer Green and Jordans*

