



2022 Autumn Newsletter – No. 113



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membership@spokesgroup.org.uk

SPOKES Summer Cycle Gathering

Chipperfield Common - Photos by Steve Blood



SPOKES Summer Cycle Gathering



SPOKES Summer Cycle Gathering



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Welcome to this bumper edition of the Newsletter. Plenty of photos of the successful 'Gathering' on Chipperfield Common and a new Campaigning News section that we hope will encourage members to become involved and help SPOKES make an impact on local cycling. There is also a new Volunteering Opportunities at SPOKES section, showing where SPOKES needs your help, and articles on rides away from our area that might inspire you to cycle further afield, including France, or join future SPOKES events.

Hopefully, something interesting, possibly inspiring, and maybe educational. If you have something other members will benefit from you sharing with them, please email newsletter@spokesgroup.org.uk – areas you enjoy cycling in, challenges you've participated in, interesting routes, skills and equipment you recommend.

Your Resources

SPOKES WEBSITE

SPOKESGROUP.ORG.UK

RIDES and EVENTS

Join one of our community rides and support our events

ROUTES FOR ALL

Use one of our fully checked out routes

MEMBERS' ROUTES

Try out one of our members' routes or share one of your own

CAMPAIGNING

Support our efforts to improve cycling in South West Herts

SPOKES FACEBOOK GROUP

www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/

Find out about what other members are doing, forthcoming rides and ad hoc rides and post your cycling news and discuss issues you are passionate about.

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 STRAVA CLUB

www.strava.com/clubs/Spokes_SW_Herts

Sign up and see where SPOKES' members are riding, how your activity compares with theirs and how you are progressing.

Your Committee

Chair	Peter Jackson	chair@spokesgroup.org.uk
Treasurer	Pam Mann	treasurer@spokesgroup.org.uk
Campaigning	Roger Bangs Clive Jones	campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk
Membership	Heather Harris	membership@spokesgroup.org.uk
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Web Master	Graham Phillips	webmaster@spokesgroup.org.uk
Publicity	Lorreine Kennedy	publicity@spokesgroup.org.uk
Watford Cycle Hub Appointed Attendee	Fiona Timme	office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk
Other Members	David Edmondson Katherine Deaney Philip Gibbs	dme@dme.org kldeaney@hotmail.com philip.gibbs2@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AT SPOKES

Get involved and help SPOKES make an impact on local cycling. We need volunteers for the following roles, any of which can be filled by any Member, including current Committee Members:

Campaigning Team

If you are interested in encouraging our local authorities to improve and provide safer cycling routes, or if you have a particular concern about safe cycling locally, please contact Roger at campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk

Meetings Secretary

Arranging Committee Meetings and the AGM. Producing and retaining notes of meetings, just 5 each year. Ideally the role will expand into the SPOKES Secretary and include such matters as recording and maintaining a register of our display equipment, financial reports etc, and their location. Contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk

Membership Secretary

Heather has fulfilled this vital role admirably for a number of years but will be standing down at the 2023 AGM. So, a good opportunity to come forward now, find out more about the job and arrange a planned handover period. The job of enrolling and informing new members, maintaining the Excel Membership List, and managing the annual renewal process has been made much easier over time. Annual renewal on a common date, no cash or cheque payments and an automated online joining form have resulted in a much-reduced workload.

Contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk

Ride Leaders

To lead our Rides no formal qualification is needed. You may have routes you enjoy, and it is simply a case of inviting other cyclists to join you via our Rides programme. You can use "Routes For All" and "Member's Routes" on our website as a source of routes. Contact Pam at rides@spokesgroup.org.uk for more information or simply ask our Ride Leaders when out on a ride.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AT SPOKES

Vice Chairperson

This is more about future proofing the Chairperson role. I have found my time working alongside Roger and fellow Committee Members as Vice Chairperson and Rides Coordinator has helped me in taking on the Chairperson role. I am not intending to be a short-term Chairperson but who can foresee the future, so if you are interested give me a call, Peter Jackson, on 07715 107957, email chair@spokesgroup.org.uk or chat to me whenever we meet.

Chat from the Chair

Peter Jackson

I wrote last month that SPOKES is in very good shape. This has been reinforced by the fact that by early July our Membership numbers had reached 196, a healthy growth. By now all have hopefully renewed. I would urge all Members, who have not already done so, to switch to paying by standing order. It saves you having to remember and reduces the Membership Secretary's work.

We have been enjoying a good cycling Summer programme, although I am writing this on the Tuesday of our July heatwave and do not want to ride today. Members have offered a comprehensive programme of rides including Katherine's successful days out. The Viking Trail Ride and Fens holiday were enjoyed by all who took part. Thanks to all the Members who lead rides for yet another comprehensive and varied rides programme.

On the Campaign front Roger and Clive have been continuing to urge local authorities to improve our infrastructure. Their work includes Roger arranging a Councillor ride around the proposed Watford Green Ring, which will now include the completed cycle way and crossing between Riverside Park and Oxhey Activity Park. Clive has continued with the somewhat frustrating task of trying to get Hertsmere Councillors interested in improving cycling provision. Please feel free to let Roger or Clive know your issues or dreams for Cycling Infrastructure in South West Herts.

Next year? Hopefully, the SPOKES Netherlands Holiday will be back on the agenda as part of a comprehensive year of rides and, let's hope, a budget and plan of action by Watford and Herts Councils to put the Green Ring in place. We

plan to have another “Gathering” and have started talks with Watford Councillors about holding it in Watford. Watford are planning a Cycle Forum Meeting in September, which all Members are welcome to participate in. The date will be notified to all Members once known.

Enjoy your Cycling and if you are willing to help SPOKES, look at the “Volunteering Opportunities” piece in this Newsletter and offer your services. Your help would be welcome.

Campaigning News

Roger Bangs

Campaigning for a better cycling infrastructure has always been part of SPOKES objectives. In 1996 supporters of Sustrans and Friends of the Earth got together to form SPOKES, hoping to influence our local authorities in providing better safer cycling facilities. Some progress has been made but we still have a long way to go.

The need to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions is now agreed by most responsible bodies, but changing the way we live only happens slowly on a generational basis, unless there is a major crisis.

Most of us cycle because we enjoy it. Cycling keeps us healthy, it develops a sociable community, and it allows cheap transport for short journeys.

Cyclists can be classified into three categories:

Utility cyclists: Those who cycle as a means of transport, as was done by many people prior to cars being available. Cycles are good for short journeys if not carrying much luggage.

Recreation Cyclists: Those who cycle as a pastime as in SPOKES group rides. These cyclists keep fit and healthy and enjoy visiting places often using quiet scenic routes.

Sporting Cyclists: The fast-racing cyclists and those who enjoy group competition and strenuous exercise fall into this category.

The Government recognises **Utility Cyclists** as the key group to promote and encourage as utility cycling will reduce traffic congestion, reduce pollution and increasing health.

So, what is being done in South West Herts by SPOKES and others?

Active Travel Plans: Local government can bid for funds from central government for improving cycling routes. Currently I believe the changes being made to the crossing of Wiggshall Road and widening the cycling/walking path on the bridge are through this programme.



Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)

Central Government requires local authorities to produce LCWIP. Future funding for cycling will only be given if the proposed scheme complies with the LCWIP.

Watford and Three Rivers Councils joined together to produce a LCWIP for their areas. Watford Council agreed their part many months ago and submitted it to Herts County Council. Three Rivers delayed their submission, I am not sure of its current status.

I am not aware of Hertsmere preparing a LCWIP.

In Watford two issues I suggest as a high priority affecting cycling on highways are:

1. Hempstead Road. Provide a cycle route on the west side from Grove Mill Lane to the subway at Hunton Bridge Roundabout.
2. At the junction of Radlett Road and Bushey Mill Lane (NCR6/61) provide a safe crossing for cyclists and walkers.



Watford Council intends consulting SPOKES on Cycle signage in Watford. If you know of locations, in Watford Borough, where signage needs improvement, please email campaigns@spokesgroup.org.uk with details.

Topical projects that will influence cycling in SW Herts

Watford Green Ring

SPOKES has been promoting this 6.7-mile circular route around central Watford for the last two years. It is mainly off-road linking interesting places. It would provide a safe cycling/walking route, linking all other routes into Watford.



Ebury Way

A very attractive route (Part of NCR6/61) linking Watford to Rickmansworth.

A part of this route requires a surface dressing to provide a smoother ride. Most of the route is attractive and in a reasonable condition. There is a serious problem at the Rickmansworth end where the adjacent site has been redeveloped. The track is now dark due to the new building and overhanging trees, with tree roots obstructing the surface making it dangerous for all users. We have made proposals to rectify this problem.

Wall Hall site

This site was sold by HCC to a developer around 20 years ago. Public access on the track and road had always been available but two years ago security guards started preventing access to cyclists and horse riders. The British Horse Society has made an appeal for the legal status of the access road to be reconsidered.

Ascot Road Housing development

The new residential developments affecting the cycle track linking the Ebury Way to Two Bridges have caused disruption for cyclists and walkers. A member has been informed that all the issues will be resolved in the near future. A member has proposed a useful link from Ascot Road to Sydney Road should be made as part of the development.

Last of All - But Important - 20s plenty



If a Cyclist or Pedestrian is hit by a vehicle travelling at less than 20mph - High chance of living.

If a Cyclist or Pedestrian is hit by a vehicle travelling at over the 30mph – High chance of death.

20's Plenty



Where People Live

SPOKES Bike Week 2022 Gathering

Peter Jackson

Following the success of last year's SPOKES 25th Anniversary Gathering, we repeated it this year, as part of National Bike Week, with other Cycling organisations invited. So, on Saturday 11 June members of SPOKES, Breeze, Chiltern Society, and other cycling groups set off from various places on led rides to Chipperfield Common. These and independent riders arrived from 12.30 onwards for a gathering of more than 70 cyclists.

A sociable few hours were spent on the common, chatting and picnicking. There was a good deal of meeting up with old friends and acquaintances and making new ones. The Common cafés and pubs also gained business. The bonus was a great set of photos by Steve Blood of the Gathering and arriving cyclists – photos on pages 1 to 4.

For two years running we've organised an event enjoyed by all. We are now talking to Watford Council about the possibility of holding the Gathering in Watford next year.

SPOKES Adventure on the Viking Trail

Peter Jackson

This was originally planned for June but was postponed due to the rail strike. So 12 of us enjoyed the SPOKES Viking Trail day out on 6 July. Unfortunate for some, as the new date did not work for them, but good fortune for others, who could now join us on this fully booked ride.

The St Pancras to Ramsgate train journey to Ramsgate was a bit stressful at the start with one train cancelled due to a mechanical fault. This meant 9 of us and a wheelchair user had to travel on one train, which could have created a

problem. However, with help from TFL staff at Pinner and SE Rail staff at St Pancras, we completed our journey without problem and to plan. Not a jobsworth in sight, well done rail employees!



The group in front of Reculver Towers

We enjoyed a dry day with a seaside ride up the coast to Reculver, then an inland loop on quiet lanes and bridleways to Ramsgate. This is the 33 mile Viking Trail, a brilliant cycle route. Traffic free promenade and cycle way most of the way up the coast

with some quiet road sections. A coffee stop on the outskirts of Ramsgate and lunch in the Waves Beach café, Minnjs Bay, the same café we used on this ride last year. Very friendly staff, good range of food and outside seating with a sea view, gorgeous.

Some of us even managed a paddle during and after our Ramsgate Pavilion (large harbourside Wetherspoon pub) evening meal together. Then the train home, with the only mishap being my wrecked derailleur discovered at Bushey, probably a clash of bikes during the train ride from Euston.

The Viking Trail is suitable for families, and it is easy to do short sections - between railway stations on the coastal stretch. The High Season anti-clockwise route we used is in Members' Routes on the SPOKES website. Access it on the Members' Routes page by clicking the SPOKES icon under the start location 'Other' against the distance 30-40 miles. Out of High Season (May to October) the route has more promenade and less road riding.

SPOKES Fens Adventure

Peter Jackson

What a great week, 8 SPOKES' Members enjoying each other's company and cycling in glorious weather. What more could we want? Some hills maybe?

This Member's only cycling holiday was initially just a consolation prize for the Netherlands Holiday cancelled due to Covid. But consolation prize it was not. Cambridgeshire provided us with some great cycling and was enjoyed by all.

On Monday 11 July, 3 of us set off from Watford to cycle about 72 miles to Huntingdon. Couple of errors by yours truly. I had planned a coffee stop in

Emily's of Whitwell, not realising they were closed on Mondays, but the local General Store was an excellent alternative. Then my route took us down a steep downhill unsurfaced track with gulleys and gravel, much enjoyed by Janet Marshal, but Mick Leonard and I were not so keen! Two locked gates on the trail resulted in a busy road diversion but then the reward of Pecoro's in Sandy, great cycling refreshment stop. Otherwise, a lovely ride with just one puncture, albeit a spectacular one with a large nail through the tube.

At our Huntingdon Wetherspoon hotel, we were joined by other members making 8 in all. Bikes in our rooms so no security concerns and I found mine made a great overnight clothes horse, aired shorts every morning! The hotel was liked by all, and the air con was much appreciated. Our rides for the 3 days in Huntingdon featured a distinct lack of hills.

On Tuesday, after fixing another puncture, we set off on our 25 miles each way ride to Ely. After a couple of miles at Wyton, Ann joined us. Ann is a friend of Chris Kinsey, one of our group, and had been a great help to me in the route planning (an expert on cake stops in particular). A very welcome "Honorary Member" for the day and her first ever Group Ride - she enjoyed it so much it will not be her last. This was our trickiest route with



some unavoidable "A" road and quite busy "B" roads, but all went well. We did our own thing in for a few hours in historic Ely and back to Huntingdon for dinner together in the pub.

Wednesday, and a 25-mile morning ride including a 9-mile traffic free circuit of Grafham Water. Very scenic with a lovely harbourside café stop. A 'do as we each

please' afternoon was followed by a lovely Thai evening meal in a local restaurant. Recommended by a local woman we met in the street, very good fortune. We then walked to nearby picturesque Godmanchester looking for a Sterling Bomber Crash War Memorial which we eventually found.

Thursday and a 21-mile each way ride to Cambridge. The route was probably the most picturesque ride of the week and included about 14 miles traffic free on the busway path from St Ives to Cambridge. We all shared an enjoyable punt tour of Cambridge on the River Cam. Next to the punt pier was a pizzeria we



chose for our evening meal. Then in various groups we did our own thing for the afternoon. A great final dinner was followed by a puncture fix (the third) then a lovely ride back to our hotel on a cool evening, arriving back before dark.

Friday morning was hugs and farewells as we each went our separate ways. So, a cycling

holiday much enjoyed by 8 friends together. I will do my best to put the Netherlands holiday back on the agenda in 2023.

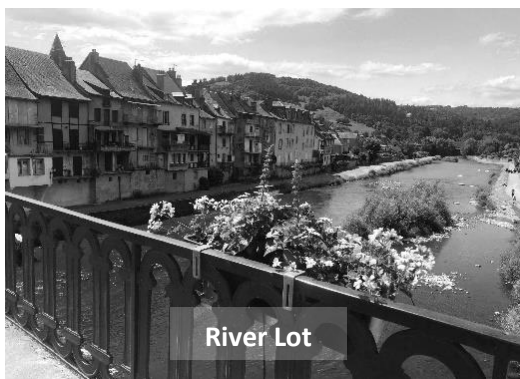
St Raphael to St Malo

Rob Hopkins

To celebrate our 60th birthdays my school friend John and I decided to cycle across France. We were aware of the St Malo to Nice route, a friend who rode the route had highly recommended it, so we decided to have a go. We bought the book and purchased the GPX files <http://franceenvelo.cc/>. I also bought a Michelin 1/200 000 France road atlas, cutting out the necessary pages as a backup, I love a paper map!

We decided that cycling the route in reverse was preferred, sending our bikes to the lovely and helpful Hotel Excelsior in St Raphael on the Mediterranean with a courier called SendBike (who did a good job) and taking a train to St Raphael via Lille and Marseille on the Eurostar and TGV. It was then a simple matter of cycling home with the sun behind us and not in our eyes, a benefit of reversing the route. We travelled pretty light with a saddlebag and handlebar bag. It's easy washing and drying clothes overnight so minimal stuff required.

We planned to do the ride in 14 days. No rest days was a risk if we had problems, but I had limited holiday available. We averaged 120 km (80 miles) per day which, with an early start at 7am each morning, meant we usually reached our destination mid-afternoon with time for some exploring. The early starts were well worth it, grabbing coffee and



a pastry after a couple of hours, and getting good mileage in before the heat got going. In fact, it was surprisingly cool, even in the south, first thing and several layers and gloves were needed. By lunchtime it was usually around 30°C. The route used River valleys to reduce gradients where possible. We followed the Ardeche, Lot, Dordogne, and the Vienne, giving lots of opportunities for swimming en route.

The real pleasure of the ride was the almost constant peaceful and beautiful countryside, mountainous in the south and gently rolling further north. Also being very fond of the natural world, it was a joy to hear birdsong through the whole journey – nightingales (who also sing during the day), Golden Oriole, Turtle Dove, Bee Eater, and many more. Wildflowers covered the verges, often with orchids in profusion. There was an excellent choice of interesting historical small towns to stay in on the way, the most pretty being off the tourist trail. I



really enjoyed Castellane, Parthenay, Vitre, Brantome, Sault, and Vaison la Romaine, off the route as we cycled up the magnificent Mount Ventoux. Vaison la Romaine is an absolutely gorgeous town with medieval and beautifully preserved Roman remains.

For people not familiar with cycling in France, it is considerably more pleasant and

easier than cycling in the UK, usually with silky smooth pothole-free roads, polite motorists giving 1.5m passing space (frequent road signs remind motorists to give cyclists plenty of room), clear road signs at every junction and the virtual

absence of litter on the verges. Accommodation was never a problem using the booking.com app on our mobile phones. We always found a hotel booking a day ahead. Typically, 90 euros for a room with twin beds.

We arrived at fantastic St Malo at 4pm on our planned final day (so fortunate to keep our schedule throughout with no mechanical problems or bad weather) leaving time for a wonderful swim, mussels and chips. A comfy hotel in the beautiful Intra Muros area of the city, and ferry home early the next morning.

Vital statistics of journey:

16 days away - 14 days cycling- 1000 miles - cost £1500 each including rail travel, bike courier, hotels, ferry home, delicious food, drinks, ice cream, etc.

I used my Aluminium Rondo Ruut gravel bike, John rode a carbon Boardman racer, both with tubeless tyres.

If you get a chance, I very highly recommend this wonderful adventure and I am contemplating doing it again, maybe (all being well), when I celebrate my 65th!

SPOKES Routes For All

The Routes For All collection has 61 routes offering over 1,000 miles of rides ranging from around 3 to 46 miles. From the SPOKES website you can see a map of each route, download the GPX file, download narrative route instructions and see details of points of interest and refreshment stops. Everything you need to enjoy your bike ride. There is a 'How To Use The Route Maps' link from the 'Routes For All' page that explains how to use the maps and download information. Check out www.spokesgroup.org.uk/routesforall/.

Of the 61 routes, 53 have been checked by members. This leaves 8 to be checked. If any of you would like to reccy any of these routes or if you have a favourite route that you would like to see in the library, please email routes@spokesgroup.org.uk.

If you are a ride leader or would like to lead a ride but are stuck for a route, try one from Routes For All. There are several in the Autumn Rides Programme.

Featured Routes

Hoping the warmer and drier weather extends into the Autumn, we'll look at route 036 Eastern Triangle, a route, with off-road sections, that will take you to parts of our area that you may not visit by bike very often.

This is a lovely 34-mile route, no challenging hills and just under ¾ of the route is off-road. It heads off to the northwest of Watford. It skirts London Colney, then

onto North Mymms, round to Bullen's Green, along the Alban Way and back through Bricket Wood. There are many points of interest along the route, and these are described in the ride description. For fans of the Watford or Arsenal football clubs, the route passes their training grounds. There is a sign forbidding hunting for autographs, but you should be able to kiss the turf the players' boots have trodden on.

To find this route, select the Rides For All page on the SPOKES' website, check VISIT: Alban Way in the feature list and then click on show rides. Scroll through the rides and select Ride 036 Eastern Triangle.

If you'd prefer your tyres firmly planted on tarmac, you could try route 078 Caddington. Peter did include this in the Summer ride programme so some of you will have experienced this route.



This 41 mile ride has two challenging hills, which can be walked. It heads north from Chipperfield towards Luton. Plenty of open countryside and you get to visit Flamstead. Dominated by the parish church of St Leonard, with its characteristic "Hertfordshire Spike" spire, Flamstead has 65 listed buildings including the Three Blackbirds pub, partly built in the 16th century. Opposite are alms-houses build in 1669.

To find this route, select the Rides For All page on the SPOKES' website, check START: Chipperfield in the feature list and then click on show rides. Scroll through the rides and select Ride 078 Caddington.

SPOKES Members' Routes

There have been new routes added to Members' Routes and there are currently 20 available. From the website you can see a map of the route and download the GPX file. There is a 'How To Use Route Maps' link from the 'Members' Routes' page. Check out www.spokesgroup.org.uk/membersroutes.

If you have a favourite route that others will enjoy, then please send the GPX for the route or sufficient description to allow a GPX to be created to

routes@spokesgroup.org.uk. Any additional information that will be helpful to other riders such as points of interest and refreshment stops, will be welcome.

Featured Route

The featured Members' Route for this quarter is the Garden City route from Marylebone Station. You can take your bikes to the start on the train, but it is also very convenient to hire a Santander Bike from Marylebone Station.



The route is based on one by Jack Thurston in his book *Lost Lanes*. It takes in open spaces such as Hyde Park, Regents Park, Regents Canal, Green Park, the embankment cycle lane and Kensington Gardens as well as points of interest such as the BT Tower, Inns of Court, the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and Horse Guards Parade. It is surprising how clear of traffic some of the roads are even during the working week.

This route has been popular with members when offered as a SPOKES' Ride in the past and after riding it, riders were less concerned about cycling in London. If you are a ride leader or aspiring ride leader, please consider offering this route as a great way to introduce others to the joys of cycling in London.

Check out the route in Members' Routes on the SPOKES' website. You'll find it by clicking the SPOKES icon under the start location 'Other' against the distance 10-20 miles.

SPOKES Autumn Rides and Events Programme

Pam Stonebrook – Rides Co-ordinator

Pre-booking on Let's Ride is required for all 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. Rides may be added to the programme after the Newsletter is published, these rides are posted on Facebook and, if there is sufficient time, Let's Ride, SPOKES website and in an email to Members.

Disclaimer: As a participant of a SPOKES' ride, you must be aged 16 or over 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 wellbeing 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.

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.

What if the Weather is bad? If bad weather is forecast or in other exceptional circumstances, the ride may be cancelled or changed to ensure enjoyment for all riders. Unless the change happens at the very last minute, notice of the change or cancellation will be posted on Let's Ride, SPOKES website and our Facebook page.

Rides Leave on Time! Please turn up at the ride start location 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

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, register on the Waiting List, cancellations happen, even at the last minute. Searching for a full ride on Let's Ride is easiest by following the link in the ride description in "Rides and Events" on the SPOKES website.

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, Pam Stonebrook

if you are interested in others joining you on your favourite route/s. The SPOKES Routes for All and Members' Routes collections on our website have great routes you can use.

This is the programme at the time the newsletter is published. Additional rides will be announced during the quarter. These are publicised on the SPOKES Facebook Group and are available on the SPOKES Let's Ride Group and the SPOKES websites.

September

Sat 3 **10am** **A ride to the Rookery Cafe, Welham Green.
Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Rd, WD24 4LL.**

Ride with **Chris** out through Radlett, on to Colney Heath, using Harper Lane, Bell Lane, crossing the M25, on to Coursers Road to Colney Heath, where we turn right to Welham Green. After refreshments, returning a different way through South Mimms, through the lanes to Shenley, maybe stopping at the tea rooms, depending how we feel, then to Radlett and home, this is on roads so it will be at a good pace.

30 miles **Med to fast** Road Bikes.

Wed 7 **10am** **All aboard! A chance to ride the Luton and
Dunstable busway.
Dacorum active hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel. Free car
parking, height barrier may be in place, HP2 7BA.**

A ride with **Katherine**. Leaving Hemel on quiet lanes we join the Upper Lea Valley way through Harpenden and on to Luton, where we join the busway to Dunstable. Coffee and cake at Priory Tea Rooms. Back on road through Studham and Gaddesden Row.

31 miles **Slow to Medium** Not suitable for skinny tyres.

September

Fri 9 **10am** **Great Union Canal to Wembley.**
Cafe in The Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.

Ride with **Paul** south then east along the Grand Union Canal towpath, turn northeast along the Paddington Arm to The Black Horse for lunch. Then roads - some quite busy, others residential - to a circuit around Wembley Stadium, and quiet roads back to Rickmansworth. Pace will be slow - perhaps 9 or 10 mph, but the towpath can be challenging with gravel path, low hanging branches, pedestrians, dog walkers and narrow sections.

34.5 miles **Slow** No skinny tyres, please.

Tue 13 **10am** **Tuesday Ride**
Harvester, Baldwins Lane, WD3 3RX.

Cycle with **Roger** on lanes via Rousebarn Lane into the Chilterns passing through Flaunden and Bovington then Chipperfield for refreshment. Returning via Sarratt to finish at Croxley Green.

18 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

Wed 14 **9.15am** **Oxford SPOKES Day Out,**
Gerrards Cross Station Forecourt, SL9 8PP.

Ride to Oxford with **Peter** for a few hours sightseeing and an early evening meal, then train back to Gerrards Cross. Option of led ride From Tasty Bean Cafe, Oxhey Activity Park leaving at 8.00 am, about 11 miles. Led ride back from Gerrards Cross in the evening. Use message in the posting for this ride in Let's Ride "conversation" if you wish a led ride from Watford. Expect to be back at Gerrards Cross about 8.30pm. Lights and bike locks needed. SPOKES Members only ride. Route not checked by publication deadline so updates will be posted on the websites and Facebook.

47 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

September

Thu 15 **Evening** **Watford Cycle Forum**

Provisionally West Herts College, Hempstead Road, WD17 3EZ.

Watford Cycle Forum is back. Time and venue of this in person Forum to be confirmed. The agenda includes a SPOKES presentation on the proposed 2023 Bike Week 'Cycle Gathering' in Watford. All are welcome to attend and contribute to Watford's plans for Cycling provision as well as gaining an update on current plans.

Contact **Peter or Roger**.

Sun 18 **10am** **Great Union Canal and Nickey Line to Redbourn
Cafe in The Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** north along Grand Union Canal towpath (mostly paved) to Hemel Hempstead, through the old town to the Nickey Line - a paved, disused railway line - to Redbourn and back the same way. Much of the towpath is narrow and has a few low branches.

32 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

Tue 20 **10am** **Wendover
The Common, Chipperfield. WD4 9BS**

Routes for All Ride 056 Wendover. A challenging ride with **Philip** into the Chilterns on a road route to Wendover Woods. To find this route, select the Rides For All page on the SPOKES' website, check VISIT: Wendover Woods in the feature list and then click on show rides. Select Ride 056 Wendover.

33 miles **Medium** Suitable for any bike.

Sun 25 **10am** **Ebury Way Vegetation Cut Back.
Ebury Way, next to Travis Perkins, Rickmansworth.**

Please come to help clear vegetation from the Ebury Way for a couple of hours with Peter and Roger. Bring pruning tools and gloves.

September

Thu 29 **10am** **Stanborough Lakes**
Outside Leverstock Green Library, free car parking, drive
past the library, car parking around the back, HP3 8QG.

Riding through Gorhambury Estate with **Katherine** to St Albans, we join the Alban Way to Hatfield and onto Stanborough Lakes where we can have coffee. The return route is on roads to Sandridge to join the St Albans green ring to Verulam Park and back to Leverstock Green via Potters Crouch

27 miles **Medium** Not suitable for skinny tyres.

October

Sun 2 **10am** **Grand Union Canal and Nickey Line to Redbourn**
Cafe in The Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.

Ride north along Grand Union Canal towpath with **Paul** to Hemel Hempstead (mostly paved), through the old town to the Nickey Line - a paved, disused railway line - to Redbourn and back the same way. Much of the towpath is narrow, and has a few low branches.

32 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

Wed 5 **10am** **Flourish Via Leavesden.**
Tasty Bean Cafe, Oxhey Activity Park,
Wiggenhall Road, WD18 0HZ.

Out Via Cassiobury Park with **Peter** to Leavesden and Meridan Estate to Flourish Cafe/Bakery. Return via Colne Valley Cycle Route.

14 miles **Slow** Any Bike.

Tue 11 **10am** **Tuesday Ride**
Harvester, Baldwins Lane, WD3 3RX.

Cycle with **Roger** on lanes and tracks via Radlett to the cafe at Shenley. Return via Letchmore Heath.

18 miles **Medium** Any Bike

October

Wed 19 **10am** **Hatfield House,
Timberlake Car Park Radlett Road - charges and has 4 hour
limit. WD24 4JL.**

SPOKES Routes For All Ride 074 Hatfield with **Peter**. Out via Bricket Wood, Abbey Way and Alban Way cycle routes to Hatfield. Return via Sandridge and Bernard's Heath then Abbey Way. Fairly flat route including about 7 miles well surfaced traffic free. Refreshment stop to be decided. To find this route, select the Rides For All page on the SPOKES' website, check VISIT: Alban Way in the feature list and then click on show rides. Scroll through the rides and select Ride 074 Hatfield.

34 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

Sat 22 **10am** **Chilterns and Velo Café.
Aquadrome Cafe, Rickmansworth.**

Join **Roger** cycling mainly on road though Swillet, Amersham and Chesham, Pednor and St. Leonards to the Velo Cafe for lunch. Return via Ashley Green and Sarratt to Croxley Green or Aquadrome.

36 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

Wed 26 **10am** **Autumnal Burnham Beeches.
Outside The Cafe in The Park, The Aquadrome, Frogmoor
Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Out with **Philip** via Chorleywood, Gerrards Cross, Hedgerley to Burnham Beeches. Return via 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** Any Bike.

November

Wed 2 **10am** **Great Union Canal to Wembley
Cafe in The Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Join **Paul** riding south then east along the Grand Union Canal towpath, turn northeast along the Paddington Arm to The Black Horse for lunch. Then roads - some quite busy, others residential - to a circuit around Wembley Stadium, and quiet roads back to Rickmansworth. Pace will be slow - perhaps 9 or 10 mph, but the towpath can be challenging with gravel path, low hanging branches, pedestrians, dog walkers and narrow sections. Route ridden 6th July on a Brompton.

34.5 miles **Slow** No skinny tyres, please.

Tue 8 **10am** **Tuesday Ride.
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Cycle with **Roger** on minor roads and tracks to Denham Country Park via The Swillet and Chalfont St. Peter. Return though Denham Quarry, Harefield or Canal path.

18 miles **Medium** Any Bike.

Thu 10 **10am** **Bayhurst Wood Country Park.
Watford Cycle Hub, Chaffinch Lane, Watford, WD18 9QD.**

Routes For All 040 Bayhurst Wood Country Park. Join **Philip** on a surprising 18 mile excursion down the Colne River Valley, through the rural hinterlands of Hillingdon and back though South Oxhey, much of this off-road. There is a significant section on the canal towpath and there are road sections with typical town levels of traffic. There are narrow bridlepaths. There is only one significant hill on Potter Street and Potter Street Hill which is about 2 miles. To find this route, select the Rides For All page on the SPOKES' website, check VISIT: Bayhurst Country Park in the feature list and then click on show rides. Select Ride 040 Hatfield.

18 miles **Medium** No skinny tyres.

November

Wed 16 **10am** **Bedmond,**
Watford Cycle Hub, Chaffinch Lane, Watford, WD18 9QD.

A SPOKES Routes for All ride with **Peter**, 047. Out on Ebury Way and Colne Valley Cycle Route to Bricket Wood. Quiet roads to Bedmond. Back via Kings Langley, canal towpath and Ebury Way. Towpath muddy if wet, so not skinny tyres. Some climbing but not too challenging. Refreshment stop and detail to be advised when route checked. To find this route, select the Rides For All page on the SPOKES' website, check VISIT: Ebury Way in the feature list and then click on show rides. Scroll through the rides and select Ride 047 Bedmond.

22 miles **Medium** No skinny tyres.

Sat 19 **9.30am** **Redbourn Ride**
Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Road, WD24 4LL.

Ride with **Chris**, out through Bricket Wood, Potters Crouch, on to Hemel, where we join the Nickey Line (disused unpaved railway line) to Redbourn Cycle Hub for a cuppa. Back the more direct route through St Albans, stopping at Redbournbury Watermill, where bread is made and sold, along with flour and yeast, so you may want to bring along a rucksack!

28 miles **Medium to Fast** Suitable for any bike.

Wed 23 **10am.** **Tasty Bean to Bean Here Outside the Tasty Bean**
Café, Oxhey Activity Park, Wiggenhall Road, Watford, WD18
0HZ.

Out with **Peter** via Colne Valley Cycle Route and Balmoral Road to North Watford, Harebreaks, to the Bean Here Cafe at Hunton Bridge. Return via Langlebury, Cassiobury Park and Watford High Street. Bit of climbing on the return trip but not challenging.

12 miles **Slow** Any bike.

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

What Can You Do?

Share your routes	Contact routes@spokesgroup.org.uk
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Share your rides and news	Post to our Facebook Page www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/

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Check with the organisation what they offer discount on

British Cycling*	www.britishcycling.org.uk/clubs/membership	
Chiltern Velo Cafe and Workshop	Hawridge Common, Hawridge, HP5 2UQ 10% discount coffee and tea	01280 416564 www.chilternvelo.co.uk
Cycles UK	484/486 St. Albans Road, Watford, WD24 6QU	01923 243707 www.cyclesuk.com
Cycling UK*	shop.cyclinguk.org/membership/affiliate-membership-myself	
Northwood Cycle Depot	118 Pinner Road, Northwood, HA6 1BP	01923 824174 www.northwoodcycles.com
Ride St Albans	318 Watford Road, Chiswell Green, St Albans AL2 3DP	01727 614778 www.ridestalbans.com
Watford Cycle Hub	Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD Parts only	01923 223994 www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk

* Check the features of the discounted membership against the full membership as something you need may be omitted.

Riding with SPOKES



Near Grafham Water, visited on the SPOKES Fens Adventure. The group enjoyed an alternative mode of transport in Cambridge on the Cam. The wide path next to the busway path from St Ives to Cambridge provides an excellent cycling route.



Some of the group, in Huntingdon on the Fens Adventure, prepare for the civil war.

On Katherines' Lazy Lama ride outside St Albans' Cathedral.



Riding with SPOKES



SPOKES at the London Freecycle Festival



SPOKES at the seaside on Peter's Viking Trail ride. Plenty of off-road cycling.



Riding with SPOKES

A good turnout on Peter's ride to Burnham Beeches.

Philip's group enjoyed refreshments at the Royal Standard of England. Claimed to be the oldest alehouse in England, serving pints for over 900 years.



SPOKES were at the Rickmansworth Festival.

Roger and Chris couldn't resist trying out the track on Roger's ride to the Cottonmill Community and Cycling Centre.



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