



2023 Autumn Newsletter – No. 117



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membership@spokesgroup.org.uk



Katherine’s group outside Childwickbury Manor, which dates back to the 13th century. Film director Stanley Kubrick bought the manor in 1978 and used the estate as both a home and a nerve centre for his film productions. He lived there until his death in 1999 and is interred in its grounds.

Sustrans’ Millennium Mileposts from routes 72 and 24 that feature in articles in this newsletter.



The SPOKES’ Gathering 2023 was held in June on King George V Playing Fields.



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A different view of the group on Paul's ride to Wendover

Chat from the Chair

Peter Jackson

SPOKES has so far had a very busy Spring and Summer. First, we took part in Watford Cycle Hub's excellent 10th anniversary celebration day. Next, we joined Willesden Cycle Club to take part in their Tour De Ricky event at Woodoaks Farm. Then in June, we brought our annual "Gathering" to Watford and, at the request of Watford Council, included other local organisations offering information and activities, as well as inviting other Cycle organisations to join us with rides to the Gathering. That was in addition to a full, well supported rides programme and the Watford Green Ring approval success for SPOKES' campaigning.

Our Membership grew to over 200 by the end of June. That may reduce for a while once the annual renewal process is complete, but is still a healthy number, up on last year. Hopefully we will grow more this year.

I have written separately about the SPOKES Leiden Holiday and Katherine Deaney has written about rides in the Bath area. As you will see, both Katherine and I are considering offering cycling holidays next year. This will assist with meeting demand and offers two very contrasting breaks.

All the above illustrates the work done by many SPOKES Members to ensure we continue to thrive. Thanks to you all. I particularly enjoyed the support of Graham and Katherine in the planning and running of the Leiden holiday. Many thanks to both of you and to all who supported us during the week.

Finally, but most importantly, please give serious consideration to volunteering for the Newsletter Editor or Publicity jobs advertised in this Newsletter. Two vital roles for SPOKES. I will be pleased to hear from you and provide further information.

Campaigning for Better and Safer Cycling in South West Hertfordshire

Roger Bangs

2023 has been a year for meetings and consultations, but in our part of Hertfordshire, not much has happened on the ground.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) launched a consultation on its active travel strategy at a county wide forum in June. Whilst HCC appear to recognise the

need for a large change in policy and how recourses are used, they also recognise the difficulty convincing the voting public that more recourses should go to support active travel to the detriment of the car driving public. How this will happen has yet to be identified.

Active travel which is mainly walking and cycling, has been identified as the main way forward for improving health and wellbeing, whilst also reducing congestion, energy use and pollution.

Local government has been advised to produce Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) to enable then to gain future funds for investment in active travel. Recently SPOKES has responded to the consultation on the Three Rivers LCWIP. Although we believe it was a long winded, over complicated document, it did identify for cycling, the priority route from Watford to Rickmansworth and Maple Cross. Disappointingly it did not promote improvements for the routes to Abbots Langley and Bedmond. If, in the next few years, we see a major improvement on this one route, I will be surprised, but pleased.

Other ongoing issues include the Ebury Way (part of Sustrans NCR 6/61). I was very pleased to see the western part resurfaced early this year, but we still have the outstanding issue at the Rickmansworth end by the old Travis Perkins site.

Campaigning Volunteers Wanted

Help make cycling safer. Contact
Roger at
campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk.

HCC produced a draft Green Space Action Plan for the Ebury Way early this year, intending to have an engagement period in July which has not yet happened. I hope SPOKES will be consulted for the final plan.

The Watford Green Ring is still on the cards to happen. We hope dates will soon be identified for mapping and signing the route. The route needs to be actively promoted, informing the public where it is with links to local destinations.

In Watford we would still like to see a safe way of crossing the Station Road dual carriageway and improvement of the Ascot Road junction near Morrison's.

In the near future, we hope to see the contra flow lane in the High Street Water Lane junction improved as there has been many accidents at this dangerous junction.

You may be interested in looking on the web at Brake.org a charity site promoting safe transport & victims of traffic accidents.

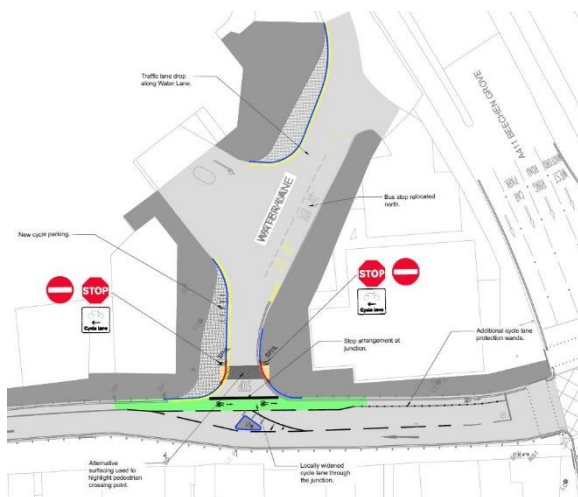
Watford High Street Cycle Lane Danger solution adopted by Herts County Council (HCC)

SPOKES has supported Hertfordshire County Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst in his efforts to have the reconstruction of the dangerous junction of the Watford High Street Cycle Lane with Water Lane actioned as a high priority. The plan is already costed and approved. We know of at least 3 cyclists being hit by cars there and numerous near misses. We have observed that 90% of drivers turning from Water Lane to go up the High Street towards King Street do not stop at the stop line or look right before emerging.

We set up a petition on the HCC Website and publicised the urgent need to reduce the risk of a cyclist, wheelchair user or pedestrian being killed. We are pleased to report that HCC have agreed to include the necessary work in this financial year (2023/4) and Stephen is continuing pressure to ensure that happens.

The plan below shows the layout of the new junction. Key changes are moving the Cycle Lane out further into the High Street, to improve the cyclists' sight line, and reducing Water Lane to one lane of traffic with a more distinct turn, so it is less easy for drivers to treat the right turn more like a bend than a road junction.

It may not be a complete solution but will definitely be an improvement. It may be necessary to continue our so far unsuccessful efforts to get Police enforcement of the STOP Sign.



Feedback on all campaigning issues raised is welcome. Please send your comments or ideas to campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AT SPOKES

SPOKES wouldn't exist without Volunteers. Please get involved and help SPOKES make an impact on local cycling.

Newsletter Editor



Perhaps you've thought about a career in journalism – bring down a president or maybe start with the easy option, a prime minister. Well, now is your chance. SPOKES is looking for a Newsletter Editor. Brian is standing down at the next AGM, or before if the new editor wants to start earlier. It's a great opportunity to influence how SPOKES supports and promotes cycling and communicates with its members, particularly important given the planned launch of a new SPOKES' web site. It should take no more than one day a quarter, though investigative journalism will be on top of this. But you can make of the job what you want; it is a great opportunity to showcase your creativity. The newsletter is currently created using WORD but you're free to use whatever app you feel gives you the most freedom to express yourself, as long as it can produce a PDF document. If interested, please contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk.

Ride Leaders



Do you enjoy cycling in company? Do you have routes you enjoy, and would like to invite other cyclists to join? Why not lead rides in our Rides programme? You don't need any qualifications and if you don't have a route, you can use "Routes For All" and "Members' Routes" on our website to find one. 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

Publicity and Promotion



If publicity and promotion is your love, you are likely to enjoy replacing Lorreine who, after several years in the role, wishes to stand down as soon as we can find a replacement. This role is important for SPOKES, as it promotes and supports our campaigning for local cycling infrastructure improvements and the recruitment of new members. The role can be adapted to take account of the skills of the volunteer, but is very much an opportunity to ensure local and influential people are aware of SPOKES, what we do and our campaigns. You will not be alone, other Committee Members very much feed into our publicity and will work with you. If you are reasonably IT literate, comfortable with Facebook and happy to develop contacts with the press, etc. the job may well be the one for you. If interested, please contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk.

Campaigning



Please help SPOKES to encourage our local authorities to improve and provide safer cycling routes. Promote your particular concern about safe cycling locally. Contact Roger at campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk

SPOKES Ambassadors



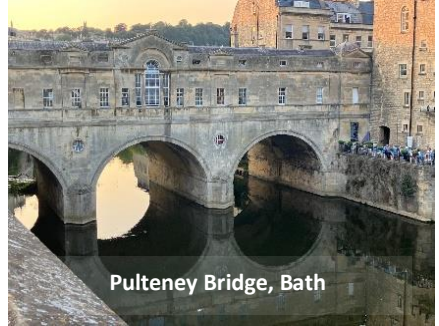
Do you regularly visit local cafés or bike shops? SPOKES needs volunteers to 'adopt' bike shops and cafés and keep them up to date with SPOKES publicity material. Please contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk.

A Weekend of Cycling in Bath

Katherine Deaney

My son is at university in Bath, so I have an excuse to go there now and again. In June, I managed to get free accommodation staying in my son's student house, which is a time warp from the 1980s; avocado bathroom suite and the big pattern floral carpets! On previous trips I have rented airbnb accommodation and there is a selection of hotels, although they can be pricey.

For those not familiar with the geography of Bath, the city sits in a bowl surrounded by steep hills! The River Avon and Kennet and Avon canal run through the city. There are Sustrans cycle paths to explore, many of which are traffic free along the river, canal and former railway lines.



Places to Explore

Two Tunnels

The Two Tunnels is a 13 mile circular route, ideal for a half day ride from the city. It follows the Kennet and Avon canal around Bathampton and Claverton and, at the Dundas aqueduct, leaves the main canal and ventures along the Somerset Coal canal, a branch that was constructed to link the coal mines. At the terminus is Angelfish, a wonderful café, where we tested the ice cream. The route continues along country lanes to the pretty village of Monkton Combe, where there is a pub. A former railway line with two tunnels adds interest and more traffic free cycling (lights required). The route returns to Bath city centre via Oldfield Park and another stretch of the river Avon.



Two Tunnels Route

Bristol

A former railway line has become the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, part of Sustrans route 4, The Great Western Way (Bristol to London). Linking Bath and Bristol, the Path is 17 miles one way and virtually all traffic free on good surfaces. Several of the old stations have been converted to cafes and at Bitton, the Avon Valley Railway run steam trains along three miles of restored track. From Bristol you can either return along the Path or catch a modern train back to Bath.



Bristol to Bath Cycle Path Route

Radstock and Frome

A day ride takes you to Radstock, a former mining town, and Frome, home of Formula One world champion Jensen Button! The route is hilly, and the return trip is 38 miles.

Frome is a quaint market town, and the Rye Bakery was a gem we found for lunch. Set in a former chapel, the bakery makes its own bread, cakes and savouries on site. Plenty of indoor seating and bike racks outside.



Radstock and Frome Route

On the way home

If you're using the M4 and have the time, there is another interesting route on a former railway line. Leave the motorway at Junction 15 and head to Chiselden, a mile away. From there you can ride along the former railway line to Marlborough, which is another lovely market town with a range of cafés to choose from. The Polly tea rooms was great for coffee and cake. Back in Chiselden there is The Three Tuns, a farm shop and café that serve lunches and snacks. The section from Chiselden to Marlborough and back is 17.5 miles.



Swindon-Marlborough Route

Are You Interested in Cycling this Area?

Would you be interested in a short cycling break, late Spring 2024, with a group of SPOKES' members, to explore Bath and the surrounding area? If so, please email Katherine, kldeaney@hotmail.com, to express your interest.

Hadrian's Cycleway, Wall and Forts

Brian Johnson

Hadrian's Wall has wonderful Roman ruins and a fantastic history. I have ridden Hadrian's Cycleway (NCN72) and hiked Hadrian's Way, and on neither occasion did I plan any time to see the forts or the Wall in a way that I could enjoy its history and ruins. So, I planned a ride including time for what I thought is the best of the Wall and the best of the cycleway. You can download the text and GPS file from Members Routes-select OVER 40 MILES under OTHER or use the QR code.



Three of us start at Carlisle and finish in Newcastle and travel out and back by train. If you are a purist, you'll start at the Glannaventa Roman Bath House at Ravenglass, the start of the official Hadrian's Cycleway. It is easy to get there by train from Carlisle and the ride from Ravenglass is lovely but, apart from the bath house, there are no Roman ruins to see and any connection between the bath house and Hadrian's Wall is questionable.

Depending on how interested you are in the history, you could spend more or less time on the ruins. I give some guidance as to where you might want to spend extra time and Google will provide the rest. The route includes some lovely downhill stretches but what does that mean? There are some hills, and some of these are steep, so factor that into your time estimates. There are volunteer guided tours at most of the forts and Corbridge Roman town, and they are well worth joining, if they are being offered when you get there.



Banks East Turret

Day 1 is a ride to Haltwhistle. This is 29 miles and should leave you with five or six hours to explore. The first stop is Lanercost Priory, free entry with English Heritage membership. There is a café and at 17 miles, it's a good refreshment stop. Built after the Norman conquest, its claim to be of interest on this ride is that part of it was built from stones from Hadrian's Wall. After a climb out of Lanercost, we find our first bit of the Wall with Banks East Turret. The original Wall at this point was built of turf but was

later replaced with stone. The turrets were all originally built of stone. A short distance further along the road is the Pike Hill Signal Tower. Here and at many places further on, the remains of the original ditch the Romans built in front of the Wall is visible next to the road.

You'll pass more sections of Wall and the remains of two more turrets before you get to Birdoswald Fort at around 21 miles, free entry with English Heritage membership. I didn't find the fort that interesting compared with others we see. There is a café. If you hike east from Birdoswald for ½ mile, following Hadrian's Way, you'll come to the remains of the Roman Willoford Bridge where the Wall crossed the River Irthing. If you have the time this is well worth the short hike and more worthwhile than spending time at Birdoswald.

The final historic stop on day 1 is Milecastle 48, the Poltross Burn Milecastle. Just as you leave Gilsland you pass under a railway bridge, and the road to the right, immediately after the bridge, is signposted to the Milecastle. No entry fees. This is the best preserved Milecastle on the Wall. As the name suggests, these were built at mile intervals and usually protected a gate through the Wall. There is a section remaining of the steps that would have led to the top of the Wall, and this has allowed the height of the Wall to be estimated.

After Greenhead you encounter a steep hill followed by a lovely descent into Haltwhistle. We stay at the Manor House Hotel.



Day 2 starts with us taking the AD122 (named after the year when building the Wall started) bus to the Sill Discovery Centre. This has a café and there is time to look around. From the Discovery Centre it is a short hike uphill to join Hadrian's Way just before the Steel Rigg car park. We head east along the path. This is a superb section of Wall along the natural cliffs on an

escarpment of the Whin Sill rock formation. At just over ¾ mile we come to Sycamore Gap, made famous in Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves. It's about 3 miles of reasonably hard hiking to Housesteads Fort. English Heritage or National Trust membership gets you free entry. The AD122 calls at the car park for the return trip to Haltwhistle.



Day 3 and back in the saddle. It's 20 miles of cycling and you have around 5 hours for exploring. The first part of the route leaves the official Hadrian's Cycleway in favour of the Beyond The Wall route. This is on the Sustrans map of Hadrian's Cycleway and is a wonderful route through moorland scenery with wonderful descents. You earn these descents through two horrible climbs leaving Haltwhistle, and a few other hills thrown in. Lovely ride to our first stop of the day, Vindolanda. There is much to see, and we could have spent most of a day here. We spend 3 hours. The AD122 bus calls here and you could possibly add a



visit onto day 2 and complete your visit on day 3 or perhaps add an extra day's stay at Haltwhistle. After a short climb from Vindolanda there is some wonderful cycling until you climb a hill just before Chesters Fort at around 20 miles. Chesters Fort was a cavalry fort and is well worth a visit. We stay at the George Hotel in Chollerford. If you feel like a walk before or after dinner, follow the

road across the bridge next to the hotel, take the first right and follow the Hadrian's Way signs. You can visit Brunton Turret and Plaintrees. The width of the Wall was changed sometime after building started and at Plaintrees you can see where the base was built to the original 10' width but the Wall was built to the later 6' width.

Day 4 is a lovely, mainly downhill ride, much of it on cycle paths through some lovely woodland and parks alongside the Tyne. It's 40 miles to the fort at Arbeia. We are staying at the Premier Inn Quayside in Newcastle, and this adds a further 11 miles for the return from the fort. You'll pass several villages with cafés. You come to Corbridge Roman Town at around 9 miles. You can walk along the main street of this Roman garrison town, flanked by the remains of granaries, a fountain house, markets, workshops and temples. Worth visiting and English Heritage membership gets you free entry. You could spend a most of a day here; perhaps extend the trip by a day and overnight in Corbridge. If time is tight, I'd recommend spending time here and cutting the day short by not continuing to Arbeia. I didn't find Arbeia that interesting but by that time I was a bit 'ruined' out.

We had a great time; the cycling is lovely (even better if you like hills) and the history and ruins are fascinating. I hope this article encourages some of you to ride the cycleway and explore the ruins.

Leiden Cycle Holiday

Peter Jackson

Twenty SPOKES' Members enjoyed a week's cycling in the Netherlands. We used the excellent overnight Stena Line Ferry, leaving Harwich on Saturday 1 July and arriving at Hook of Holland on Sunday. Our travel to Harwich was by bike train or car, some cycling the 97 miles from Watford, others cycling part way. Kim, Marilyn, Judith and Brendan elected to drive and kindly carried the luggage of those who cycled.

We cycled the 26 miles North to Leiden down the coast, for some their first experience of almost 100% cycleway provision with the only road sections being quiet roads. This and a distinct lack of hills were to be our experience all week. Our route was via The Hague. Leiden is a beautiful city, and we enjoyed a true tourist afternoon in small groups.

As usual in Leiden on a Sunday various barges were travelling on the canals, with musicians performing several genres of music to entertain us, while we enjoyed a canal side snack or walk.



Monday was our 53-mile ride North to Zandvoort Grand Prix track, inland vi Haarlem, returning on a terrific cycleway down the coast with sea views and sand dunes, and even some gradients. For a hardy few this was 20 miles of coastal well surfaced cycle way. For others about 10 miles of coast before we turned inland. Why? Because we experienced extremely strong gale force headwind interspersed by some “interesting” broadside strong gusts. Much cleaning of sand from our bikes when we returned home! Still a day enjoyed by all.

Katherine had checked we were able to go into the Grand Prix track to watch motorcycle practice and have lunch in “Mickey’s Bar”. Zandvoort was a new experience for all of us. As well as the motorbikes, we saw racing cars being worked on or parked up.

Tuesday was our relaxed short ride around Leiden Lakes. A 30-mile picturesque ride, which included two lake crossings by local ferry. A mixture of rural scenes, pretty villages, industrial estates and, inevitably, vast greenhouses which were another regular feature of our week. The variation between quiet canals and working canals with some very large barges added to the interest of the ride as did some of the bridge architecture.

On Wednesday we planned visiting Amsterdam by bike or train but woke up to a red weather warning with advice to stay indoors. According to reports trees were down and buildings damaged after Storm Poly, the strongest summer storm on record in the Netherlands, slammed the northern part of the country. At least one person died in the Netherlands and another in Germany as the storm moved to the northeast. Oblivious to this, Jay and Janet set off to Amsterdam early, by train. Before long they became the victims of all train services in Northern Holland being stopped. They were stuck on the train all day, arriving in Amsterdam about 6.00pm. They then returned to Leiden by bus arriving about midnight. They tell us they enjoyed the “experience”, there was food and drink on the train, and they were in the dry out of the storm.

The rest of us enjoyed the day in our own way, relaxing, touring the beautiful city and its excellent museums. Unsurprisingly, Jay and Janet enjoyed a rest day rather than joining our ride.



Thursday was the 40-mile round trip to Gouda for the weekly Cheese Market. As always, a lovely ride, and Gouda put on a good show for the tourists with the market. Women in costume and brightly dressed jazz musicians amongst the display of Gouda Cheeses, helped create the atmosphere, as did the Cheese Cart with manmade horse and a travelling fairground organ. Gouda itself looks well worth a visit even on non-market days.

Friday, we spent the morning in Leiden then it was pannier bags back on the bikes and a 31-mile ride to the Hook via Delft. We were lucky, the attended cycle park I found last time I was there is still operating, so we were able to safely leave our luggage laden bikes whilst we enjoyed Delft. Pretty town with café choices, Chocolatiers, Fromageries and of course Delftware. So, for some, a chance to buy gifts and souvenirs as well as to enjoy the town. Then on to Hook in time for a snack before boarding the ferry home at the end of a week enjoyed by all.



We disembarked at Harwich at 6.30 am and made our way home by the same mixture of transport as the previous Saturday. For about 11 of us, the very good fortune that we were able to get the 7.20am first train to Liverpool Street, as all later services were listed as disrupted due to strike action.

It is difficult to find Leiden city centre hotels for 20 guests, so we used two. Eight in the Mayflower on a room only basis and 12 in The DeLeon with a breakfast option. Both hotels were basic but friendly and generally good. The DeLeon, built in 1638, is the oldest Hotel in Leiden. It is run by two very friendly and helpful brothers, but unfortunately, they have sold the Hotel and are no longer investing in it. This led to a few issues including a badly leaking toilet pan and collapsing bed. Bed solution was books to replace a leg and, at the second attempt, the pan leak was cured.

The Netherlands infrastructure, etc is fascinating. A general impression of neat and tidy villages, impressive, water management engineering and a lot of agriculture, including vast greenhouses. The cycle provision is of course most impressive as is the variety of bikes in use



for commuting, cargo carrying and family use. In respect of bridges my lasting impression is of a two-track railway lifted perhaps 20 meters above a canal to enable vessels to pass under. The most impressive Cycle Bridge was a long spiralling bridge carrying a cycleway over the railway, canal and road.



The weather, excluding the Monday wind and Wednesday storm experiences, was generally good for riding, cloudy with sunny spells and the occasional shower.

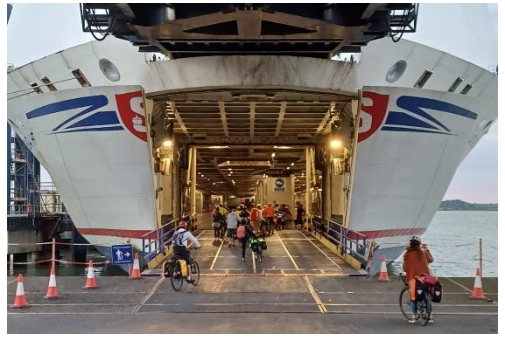
Thanks to all who joined us, particularly the tail enders and ride leaders. Next year? We shall see what develops, but I am seriously considering offering a World War 1 cycling tour based in Ypres (Belgium) and including participation, with wreath laying, in one of the nightly Last Post Ceremonies at Menin Gate. For some Leiden was their first experience of a cycling holiday and at least one was inspired to do more in the knowledge that they can manage their luggage on the bike.



[Collection of the Routes Used](#)



Leiden Cycling Holiday



Gouda Fairground Organ



Gouda





Useful Cycling Apps and Devices

RIDEWITHGPS: If you create your own routes or are looking for routes, then the RidewithGPS web site is a great tool. It's a very popular mapping app. SPOKES' Routes for All and Member's Routes are hosted on RidewithGPS and show you what is possible.



There is also a mobile app. You can sign up for free and the free features cover most needs. If you need paid for features, such as splitting and merging routes, you can sign up for one month at a time.

DRIFT GHOST XL Camera: About 18 months ago I tried this camera and, after three cameras failed to work, I got my money back. At the end of last year a car failed to stop after hitting my bike on a roundabout. Determined that no driver will escape like that again, I decided to give the camera another go. I've been using it for 8 months and the quality issues seem to have been fixed. A new model has been released so my model is now less expensive and with 8 hours of battery life, is great for use on bikes.

Do you use or know of an app or a web site that you think will be useful for cyclists. It can be for recording routes, measuring your performance, maintaining your bike or planning a route. Please send the details to newsletter@spokesgroup.org.uk.

SPOKES Self-Guided Rides

If you are a ride leader or would like to lead a ride but are stuck for a route, try one of our Self-Guided Rides.

Routes For All

A big thank you to all of those who helped create Routes For All by checking out the routes. There have been over 3200 views of the routes since the launch. Routes For All has 61 routes offering over 1,000 miles of rides ranging from around 3 to 46 miles. All come with a GPS file, a cue sheet for those without a GPS and information on points of interest and refreshment stops. Check out www.spokesgroup.org.uk/routesforall/.

Over the past three months the top three routes viewed are:

1. Watford Green Ring – route 14
2. Brookman's Park – route 73
3. Rickmansworth via Ebury Way – route 26



Featured Route

This newsletter's featured route, which continues the Roman theme, is Great Gaddesden, route 045, but taking the alternative with the off-road section along Spooky Lane. This sunken Roman road is now sided by old trees with tentacle-like roots that top the high brick and flint walls. Along the old holloway is a hidden bridge known by locals as the "Devil's Bridge on Spooky Lane." It's shrouded in urban legends of ghosts and witchcraft curses. One of the ghosts sighted along the old road was a silent, robed monk walking towards a monastery that used to be nearby. Another was a Roman soldier standing to attention guarding the road. Others have reported strange sounds and mysterious red lights coming from the surrounding bushes. In Routes For All, select AREA Watford and DISTANCE Over 30 miles and scroll down the list.

Members' Routes

There are 40 Members' Routes available covering over 1,000 miles. These routes have been submitted by members and are offered 'as is'. Check out www.spokesgroup.org.uk/members-route-library. Over the past three months the top three routes viewed are:

1. Hadrian's Cycleway, Wall and Forts – route MR0026
2. Burford, Cotswolds – Colesbourne – route MR0024
3. Forty Green – route MR0033



Featured Route

The featured route is Emily's Cake Hunt, route MR0003. It's a 54-mile ride, takes in lovely countryside and has as it's destination, Emily's lovely tearoom in Whitwell (closed Monday and Tuesday). Plenty of hills but not too steep. It also includes a lengthy and pleasant section of the Alban Way. In Members' Routes, select OVER 40 MILES under the DACORUM column and scroll down the list.

SPOKES Ambassadors

Chiltern Velo	Katherine Deaney
Cycles UK	Diana Ivory
Northwood Cycle Depot	Mick Leonard
Ride St. Albans	Volunteer needed
Rock & Road St Albans	Peter Jackson

Is there a café or bike shop that you could support as a SPOKES Ambassador and ensure they are supplied with SPOKES' publicity material? If so, please contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk

SPOKES Led-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, the 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. Please check before you leave for the start.

Rides Leave on Time! Please turn up at the ride start location ready to leave at the scheduled time.

We are only able to offer a ride programme because cyclists, like you, volunteer.

No formal qualifications needed and, if you don't have a route, you can use "Routes For All" and "Members' Routes" on our website to find one. Contact Pam at rides@spokesgroup.org.uk.

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-paced rides, up to 15 miles, flat and no busy roads.
- Steady. SPOKES slow-paced rides over 15 miles with some easy climbing and SPOKES medium-paced rides which are 30 miles or less with some easy climbing.
- Challenging. Any ride with challenging climbs, any SPOKES fast-paced ride and medium-paced 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 2023

Tue 5 **10:00 am Longer Tuesday Ride, Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Join **Roger** on a circular ride, mainly on lanes and tracks, through Chalfont St. Giles and Winchmore Hill to Great Missenden for refreshments. Returning through Amersham and Chenies.

30 Miles Medium Any Bike

Wed 6 **10:00 am Short Watford to Chorleywood Harvester, Baldwins Lane, WD3 3DH.**

Ride with **Neil** on a short return ride from the Two Bridges Harvester to a cafe in Chorleywood.

12 Miles Fast Any Bike

Fri 8 **10:00 am Ashley Green, Cafe in the Park, Aquadrome, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Circular ride with **Phil** via Chandlers Cross, Belsize, Bovington to Ashley Green. Stop for refreshments at the Glebe Cafe. Return via Ley Hill, Flaunden and Sarratt. Some challenging hills.

28 Miles Medium Any Bike



September 2023

Thu 21 **10:00 am Watford-Ice Cream Farm, Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Road, WD24 4LL.**

Join Neil on a return ride from Watford Rugby Club to Ice Cream Farm near Barnet.

21 Miles Medium Any Bike

Mon 25 **10:00 am Ashridge Estate, Outside Blackwells Cafe, Chipperfield Common, WD4 9BS.**

This is SPOKES Rides For All Route 076. Ride with **Peter** through the lovely Chilterns countryside, all on road. Out via Hawridge, through the Ashridge estate with a refreshment break at the Bakehouse Cafe, Ashridge House. Return via Potten End and Boxmoor. 1968 feet of climbing.

32 Miles Medium Hybrid (Road and Off Road) Road Bike.

Tue 26 **10:00 am Slow Ride to Shenley Park, Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Road, WD24 4LL.**

Ride with **Graham** on a slow, lazy ride to the Orchard Café at Shenley Park.

12 Miles Slow Any Bike



September 2023

Wed 27 **10:00 am Redbourn and Back, Cafe in the Park,
Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through Chorleywood, Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead, Redbourn, Abbots Langley. Rest stop at The Hub, Redbourn.

32 Miles Medium Any Bike

Fri 29 **10:00 am Game, set and match to Halton, Canal fields
Berkhamsted. Free Parking close to train station,
HP4 2AA.**

Join Katherine up and out of Berkhamsted on country lanes to Cholesbury, St. Leonards and downhill to Halton, where we have coffee and cake at the Tennis club. Back via Dancers End to Tring and through Cow Roast back to Berkhamsted. Some hills, not suitable for beginners

24 Miles Medium Any Bike

**We are only able to offer a ride programme because cyclists, like you,
volunteer.**

No formal qualifications needed and, if you don't have a route, you can use "Routes For All" and "Members' Routes" on our website to find one. Contact Pam at rides@spokesgroup.org.uk.

October 2023

Tue 3 **10:00 am Watford, St Albans and Hatfield, Cafe in the
Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** on mostly country lanes and cycle tracks; rest stop at The Red Lion, Hatfield.

36 Miles Medium Any Bike

October 2023

Thu 5 **10:00 am Berkhamsted Castle, Cafe in the Park,
Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Phil** out via Chandlers Cross, Bovingdon, Berkhamsted.
Refreshment stop at Fred & Gingers. Return via Flaunden and Sarratt.
Challenging hills.

33 Miles Medium Any Bike

Tue 10 **10:00 am Tuesday Ride, Two Bridges, WD3 3RX.**

Ride with **Roger** up Rousebarn Lane into the Chilterns. Refreshment at
Blackwells café.

20 Miles Medium Any Bike

Wed 11 **10:00 am Redbourn and Back, Cafe in the Park,
Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through Chorleywood, Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead,
Redbourn, Abbots Langley. Rest stop at The Hub, Redbourn.

32 Miles Medium Any Bike



October 2023

Tue 17 **10:00 am Watford, St Albans and Hatfield, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through mostly country lanes and cycle tracks; rest stop at The Red Lion, Hatfield.

36 Miles Medium Any Bike

Tue 24 **10:00 am Redbourn and Back, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through Chorleywood, Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead, Redbourn, Abbots Langley. Rest stop at The Hub, Redbourn.

32 Miles Medium Any Bike

Wed 25 **10:00 am Chiltern Velo, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Out with **Peter** via Amersham and Chesham. Refreshment stop at Chiltern Velo, Hawridge Common. Return via Flaunden, Chenies and Chorleywood. 1662 feet climbing. Ride includes both road and off-road terrain.

32 Miles Medium Hybrid



November 2023

Tue 7 **10:00 am Tuesday Ride, Aquadrome Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.**

Cycle with **Roger** on roads and tracks though Herongate and Chalfont St. Peter to Denham Country Park for refreshments. Return via Harefield.

20 Miles Medium Any Bike

Wed 8 **10:00 am Redbourn and Back, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through Chorleywood, Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead, Redbourn, Abbots Langley. Rest stop at The Hub, Redbourn.

32 Miles Medium Any Bike

Thu 9 **10:00 am Lovely Lanes, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Phil** on a circular Ride around Chandlers Cross, Belsize, Flaunden, Bovington Green, Chipperfield. Refreshment stop at The Cake Shack. Return Sarratt.

20 Miles Medium Any Bike



November 2023

Tue 14 **10:00 am Watford, St Albans and Hatfield, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through mostly country lanes and cycle tracks; rest stop at The Red Lion, Hatfield.

36 Miles Medium Any Bike

Wed 15 **10:00 am London Ride, Tasty Bean Cafe, Oxhey Activity Park, Wiggshall Road, Watford, WD18 0HZ.**

Ride with **Peter** on SPOKES Routes for All Ride 039. Not all the way to London, but a pleasant excursion on quiet streets and lanes you never knew existed. Out via Aldenham and Elstree to Edgeware then Stanmore for refreshment. Return via Bushey.

18 Miles Medium Any Bike

Fri 17 **10:00 am Flourish craft bakery, Kings Langley library, The Nap, Kings Langley, WD4 8ET.**

Join **Katherine** through Country lanes to Bedmond and Garston. Coffee and cafe at Flourish craft bakery. Bring a rucksack to take bread home! Return via Hunton Bridge. One Big Hill.

12 Miles Slow / Med Any Bike

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No formal qualifications needed and, if you don't have a route, you can use "Routes For All" and "Members' Routes" on our website to find one. Contact Pam at rides@spokesgroup.org.uk.

November 2023

Tue 21 **10:00 am Slow Ride to Chipperfield, Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley, WD3 3RX**

Slow, lazy ride to with **Graham** to Blackwells café at Chipperfield. Couple of hills but we can walk if we want to.

12 Miles Slow Any Bike.

Wed 22 **10:00 am Redbourn and Back, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** through Chorleywood, Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead, Redbourn, Abbots Langley. Rest stop at The Hub, Redbourn.

32 Miles Medium Any Bike

Wed 29 **10:00 am Watford, St Albans and Hatfield, Cafe in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, WD3 1NB.**

Ride with **Paul** on mostly country lanes and cycle tracks.

36 miles Medium Any Bike



Join SPOKES

Membership costs just £12 per year and £3 for each additional family member. You can complete the application on-line on our website. Go to: www.spokesgroup.org.uk and click on the JOIN SPOKES tab.



You'll be joining an active campaigning and social cycling group. There is an active led-ride programme. Members have created a library of over 90 self-guided rides covering our area. You will be helping us campaign for improved cycling conditions in the Southwest Herts area. You will also receive regular details of our cycle rides, social events, and other activities in our quarterly Newsletter.

You Also Get Members' Discounts

Check with the organisation what they offer discount on

British Cycling*	www.britishcycling.org.uk/clubs/membership	
Chiltern Velo Café 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*	my.cyclinguk.org/new-member/new-member-affiliated	
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
Rock & Road Bikes, St Albans	117 Victoria Street, St Albans AL1 3TJ	01727 832020 info@rockandroadbikes.com
Watford Cycle Hub	Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD Discount-Bike 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.

SPOKES' Committee

Chair	Peter Jackson	chair@spokesgroup.org.uk
Treasurer	Pam Mann	treasurer@spokesgroup.org.uk
Secretary	John O'Connor	secretary@spokesgroup.org.uk
Campaigning	Roger Bangs	campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk
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Rides Co-ordinator	Pam Stonebrook	rides@spokesgroup.org.uk
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Web Master	Graham Phillips	webmaster@spokesgroup.org.uk
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Watford Cycle Hub Appointed Attendee	Fiona Timme	office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk
Other Members	Katherine Deaney Philip Gibbs	kldeaney@hotmail.com philip.gibbs2@gmail.com

Keep In Contact With SPOKES

SPOKES WEBSITE SPOKESGROUP.ORG.UK



LED-RIDES and EVENTS

Join one of our
community rides and
support our events.

SELF-GUIDED RIDES ROUTES FOR ALL MEMBERS' ROUTES

Use one of our fully
checked routes. Use a member's route.

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.





Burnham Beeches is always a popular ride and Philip's group enjoy nice weather



Roger's Tuesday Ride



Katherine's Bucks Village Ride



Basic cyclist sustenance at Chiltern Velo



Tour De Ricky event at Woodoaks Farm-Philip tops up his creative juices



bike registration

advice

social rides

maps

Your One Stop Cycling Shops

training

hire

donation & reconditioning

In the Community, for the Community



01923 223994

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

