



SPOKES
SW HERTS CYCLING GROUP



2023 Winter Newsletter – No. 118



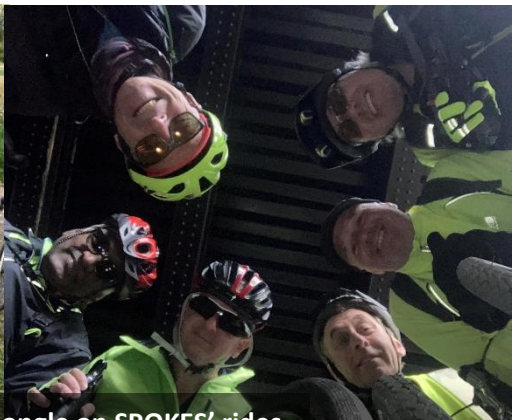
**SPOKES' Xmas Social
Evening, 21st December
Details Inside**

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Come along to the SPOKES' Christmas Social Evening on 21st December. Beforehand, join Katherine on a ride to see local houses decorated with Xmas lights. More details on page 8.



Paul finds a new angle on SPOKES' rides



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Chat from the Chair

Peter Jackson

Thanks to Brian for taking on the editor role for the 2022 Summer edition and doing such a great job. I am pleased to announce that with Brian deciding to relinquish the role, Phil Gibbs has volunteered to take over and will be Editor for our 2024 Spring edition and onwards. Thank you, Phil.

Yet more good news. Janet Marshall has enthusiastically agreed to take on the Publicity role. Thank you, Janet, and thank you, Lorreine, for fulfilling this role for more years than I have been a Member.

After a full Summer and Autumn rides and events programme, we can now look forward to some Winter Rides and SPOKES' Xmas social evening.

2024 and Spring is not too far away, and several members are organising cycling holidays for the group. Katherine has already filled her Bath cycling holiday and has a waiting list. In this edition you will find articles about two other members' cycling holidays. There will be an Ypres based WW1 Cycle Tour in July, booking for which opens on 1 December. Shabir, supported by Jay, will be offering a Scotland Coast to Coast Tour following the Kirkpatrick C2C route.

SPOKES is in good shape. The membership is about 176, which is very good so early in the current subscription year. Our Rides Programme is well supported, and our finances are healthy. Roger, with support from other members, is enjoying campaigning success with progress on the Watford Green Ring (although we still await timescales) and a much needed re-construction of the hazardous Water Lane/Watford High Street Junction, scheduled to be carried out in the period January to February 2024. Our Self-led rides, based on Routes For All and Members' Routes, continue to get a high level of views.

Very importantly there are a good number of SPOKES Members willing to volunteer and ensure SPOKES continues to thrive and grow, though our campaigning and rides programme will always benefit from more help. Volunteers include all who serve on the Committee, our cycling venue Ambassadors, Ride Leaders, ride "tail enders", holiday organisers and vegetation clearers. Many thanks to you all. Without your input SPOKES would be much the poorer.

Campaigning for Better and Safer Cycling in South West Hertfordshire

Roger Bangs

In recent years SPOKES has developed its relationship with Watford Council. We had the Cycle Forum re-started and have established a closer working relationship.

Green Ring

One result of this relationship is the proposal for the Green Ring. The section between the Town Hall and the Skate Park is now termed the Green Loop. This section is mainly on roads so is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Councils (HCC) Highways Authority.

Watford Borough Council, partnering with Hertfordshire County Council and Digital Urban, has created a Virtual Reality and Computer-Generated Imagery walkthrough for the Green Loop improvements. These upgrades include new cycleways, path widening, resurfacing, improved intersections for cyclists, and road markings with cycle signage.

The Watford Council website (www.watford.gov.uk/future-travel-watford/walking-cycling-schemes) has more information on the plans for the Green Ring and a link to the video. We hope that in the next year Watford Council will be able to promote the use of the green ring through information, signing and showing the Green Ring on local maps.

Campaigning Volunteers Wanted

Help SPOKES make an impact.
Contact Roger at
campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk.



Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIP) are a new approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at a local level. Hit the 'Find Out More About Our Plans' box on the Watford Council website page (link shown above) and you can read the LCWIP for Watford and Three Rivers. Five key cycle routes and seven core walking routes have been identified as the ones most likely to attract more people to walk and cycle in Watford.

Watford Council has liaised with local cycling groups, including SPOKES, and council members to determine the concepts for improvements for walking and cycling on the key routes. Appendix F1 of the LCWIP sets out the cycling interventions and appendix F3 sets out the prioritisation.

Other Local Cycling Issues

We are waiting to hear what the proposals are for making the St. Albans Road more cycle friendly, as we have been told it is now a high priority.

Watford and Three Rivers now have LCWIPs but getting them implemented will depend upon funding from Central Government's Active Travel Fund.

Although the resurfacing of the Rickmansworth end of the Ebury Way has improved the route, as yet we see no plan to improve the dangerous and dark part of the route by the Old Travis Perkins site.

Earlier in the year HCC consulted on a five-year Action Plan for the Ebury Way. SPOKES responded supporting many aspects of the proposed plan. We identified two vital safety issues that need to be tackled: the bridge over the River Colne needs higher handrails, making it safe to cycle across; at the Rickmansworth end, following recent redevelopments, the route has been left dangerous, due to tree roots, in what has become a dark narrow area.

Getting Issues Resolved

If no one reports a problem, it will never get fixed.

Reporting Highways faults is easy on the HCC website:
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Highways-roads-and-pavements/Report-a-problem/Report-a-street-light-or-pothole.aspx.



Another website that is worth looking at is www.widenmypath.com.

SPOKES campaigning does get results. But the more of you that get involved, the more we can do. Please offer to help with our campaigning for safer cycling.

If you have concerns over any issue relating to local cycling or you would like to get involved with our campaigning, please contact me on campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk. You can also contact your district or county councillor regarding any issues you have.

Happy days are coming!!

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AT SPOKES

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

Campaigning



HELP Still Needed

SPOKES does make a difference. Successes such as the Green Ring and changing the dangerous Water Lane Junction show that SPOKES campaigning work does have an impact. But we need your help 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

Ride Leaders



Vacancies

You enjoy cycling, please help others share your enjoyment. 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.

Newsletter Editor



FILLED

Publicity and Promotion





SPOKES Xmas Social



A great opportunity to meet up with other SPOKES members at our Xmas Social Evening. There is also the opportunity to join Katherine for a short ride before the event, to see local houses decorated for Christmas.

We're meeting on Thursday 21st December 7.30pm at Coffee & Wine, 97 High Street (Old Town), Hemel Hempstead HP1 3AH. Mulled wine is available along with a selection of red and white wine by the glass, coffee, hot chocolate and soft drinks. Mince pies and nibbles such as breadsticks, olives, nuts and crisps are available and they also offer toasted sandwiches, etc. Dress code: Christmas jumpers or other festive attire.

Check out www.coffeeandwine.co.uk/old-town for more information. Each person to order and pay as you go on the night. Car Parking is available at the Council Car Park which is on the left at the far end of the High Street just before the Fletcher Way mini roundabout.



Please email Katherine (kldeaney@hotmail.com) if you'd like to come to the social event and indicate any dietary requirements such as gluten free, vegan etc. Deadline for confirming attendance at Coffee & Wine is Thursday 14 December.



SPOKES Xmas Social Ride



Before the SPOKES Xmas Social event above, Katherine is leading a short ride for SPOKES members from the Old Town to visit some of the Christmas light displays. Dress code: Christmas jumpers. Christmas lights and tinsel on your bike are optional! Your bike must be road legal for riding in the dark, ie. front and back lights.

The ride will depart from the Council Car Park, which is on the left at the far end of the High Street just before the Fletcher Way mini roundabout, promptly at 6.15pm. Bookings via Let's ride. Bring secure lock if you are coming to the social afterwards.



SPOKES London Xmas Lights Ride



Katherine Deaney



I am organising a SPOKES members only social ride, around 6 people, in London to look at the Xmas lights followed by a light snack. It will be on **Thursday 7 December**. We'll get the train into Euston around 4pm and hire Boris bikes for a tour around some of the lights. If the weather is unsuitable for cycling, we'll walk or use buses. Light bite before getting the train back home at a reasonable hour. Please email Katherine (kldeaney@hotmail.com), if you'd like to join me.

SPOKES Gathering and Cycle Event 2024

Peter Jackson

Please keep Saturday 1st June free to join other Members at a SPOKES Gathering at Woodoaks Farm. The Tour De Ricky runs from the farm and various cycling related activities and supplier stands will be available during the day.

SPOKES plans to offer group rides to the farm from various locations with a mixture of distances and pace. Also we will be offering rides around a 7-mile local quiet route during the day as well as having our own display stand. We will need volunteers to lead rides and staff the stand.

The partnership of SPOKES, Willesden Cycling Club and Woodoaks Farm seeks to build on last year's Gathering at Watford Cycle Hub and the Woodoaks Farm event with this larger, combined, event. A great opportunity for many cyclists to meet up, socialise and enjoy the day.



The Ebury Way - A local Gem

Roger Bangs

The Ebury Way was established on the route of Lord Ebury's railway, which ran from Watford to Rickmansworth. The railway opened in 1862 and closed in 1952, long before the Beeching cuts. The route is now a part of the Sustrans network (NCR 6/61) linking Slough to St. Albans and beyond.

It was in the 1990's that the Ebury Way really became popular, being used by walkers, runners and cyclists. But there were obstacles, such as missing bridges and the incline near the King George V playing fields, where the rail bridge had to be removed.

SPOKES was formed in 1996, mainly from Friends of the Earth and Sustrans supporters. They have supported the improvements to make the route safe and attractive.

John Mann, a founder member of SPOKES, died in 2002. Members thought it appropriate to provide a memorial to John. After negotiations with various parties, it was agreed to plant a tree on the Ebury Way and surround it with a seat, which was made by Peter Hitchcock, another founder member. In November 2003, a gathering of members on the Ebury Way, near



the canal crossing, assembled the seat around the tree. The tree and seat are still there for a pleasant rest reminding us of John's work for SPOKES.



Today the Ebury Way is well used, particularly by cyclists. It has been improved and earlier this year the western end was resurfaced, giving a wider track with a smooth surface. However, there are still areas in need of

improvement and SPOKES, as part of its campaigning effort, will continue to work to keep it a safe and enjoyable route.

Help Needed to Organise a 2024 SPOKES Holiday in Scotland

Shabir Ahmed

With thanks to Jay Rajani for his administration support, I intend offering a holiday for SPOKES Members, riding the 250-mile Coast to Coast Kirkpatrick Cycling Route. Are you willing to join us as part of a small team doing the administration for the holiday?

Please email me at msa385@gmail.com, if you are willing to help.

This is a newly developed route with several attractions on the way. There are reviews and articles on the internet and the route is described at: <https://scotlandstartshere.com/kirkpatrickc2c/>



World War 1 Themed (or do your own thing) Cycling Holiday based in Ypres, Belgium in July 2024

Peter Jackson

SPOKES Members only, **booking opens 1st December and closes 22nd December**. Access to the online Booking Form will be via the Rides and Events tab on the SPOKES Website from 1st December.

We depart Dover on **Sunday 7th July, returning Saturday 13th July**. Hotel rooms for maximum 20 Guests are booked. There will be a pre meeting in Watford, at 10:00 on Saturday 10th February, to discuss the programme, navigation in Belgium and answer any questions.

All the riding will be SPOKES Medium Pace, flat terrain on good surface, much of it with no motorised traffic. The longest ride is Dunkirk to Ypres, about 40 miles each way. Led rides during the week will be up to 25 miles. Guests have the option of joining a led ride or doing their own thing. Apart from to and from Dunkirk, all led rides will use the excellent Belgian Cycle Network (<https://www.fietsroute.org/cycle-node-planner>). The led rides will be in groups up to 8 doing the route clockwise or anticlockwise, or on different days, to ease the logistics. We will be seeking volunteer Ride Leaders to facilitate small groups.



Those who wish will be visiting museums, memorials, cemeteries and the café at a monastery, which brews and sells Trappist Beer so we can drink the beer where its brewed! (souvenir 6 pack of Trappist Beer?) This will be the third holiday I have led from Ypres, and the previous ones have been much enjoyed. The first time we set it up as a touring long weekend with a small amount of time for Museums and Cemeteries, but we all became so absorbed in the story of the dreadful war that we halved our programme and returned for the second visit.

The nature of the Belgium Cycle network and ease of navigation enable any guest to do their own alternative rides. More about navigation in Belgium at our February pre-holiday meet. Some of the museums, etc. in the programme may not be of interest to all and, on the Poperinge day for example I doubt any of us will do all 3 museums and the Trappist Monastery café.



Laying a wreath as part of the Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony is a very moving experience and I hope to be able to provide the option of participants buying and wearing SPOKES Tee or Cycling Shirts.

So, I look forward to another great week, with the programme

based on my experiences and valuable input from Paul Harding, British Legion Cycling Group Secretary.

Provisional Programme

- Tyne Cot Cemetery - <https://www.toerismewesthoek.be/nl/tyne-cot-cemetery>.

Passchendaele Museum Zonnebeke - <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-passchendaele-1917.htm>.



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- Poperinge - Talbot House and Hop Museum - <https://www.talbothouse.be/en/museum/home>.



Lijssenthoek-visitor-centre Medical wartime services - <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-lijssenthoek-visitor-centre.htm>.



Hop Museum - <https://www.toerismepoperinge.be/hopmuseum>.



Ride 3 miles each way to enjoy lunch at Trappist Beer Monastery café - <https://indevrede.be/trappisten.php>.



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- Hooge Crater Museum, nr Ypres - <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-hooge-crater.htm>.



Free time in Ypres e.g., Flanders Field Museum - <https://www.inflandersfields.be/>.



-
- Sanctuary Wood Hill 62 - <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-sanctuary-wood.htm>.



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- Optional participation in wreath laying on behalf of SPOKES at an evening Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony (share cost of wreath) - <https://lastpost.be/>.



- End of holiday Dinner at the Ariane Hotel.

Accommodation and Approximate Costs

The 6 nights in the Ariane Hotel, will be in twin bedded rooms, unless double requested. If a single occupancy is by request the cost is €1,020 for 6 nights B&B charged in full to the guest. If a single is necessary due to numbers or gender mix the additional cost will be shared by all guests. Approximate cost, per person for 6 nights bed and breakfast, assuming 18 guests (with one man and one woman each needing to occupy a single room) is €615. If optional buffet breakfasts are not wanted, deduct €108 (this decision can be made at the hotel upon arrival). Ferry fare is about £60 with bike.



Guide cost sterling B&B plus ferry is £615 per person or £518 without breakfast. May be cheaper if gender mix in twin rooms is equal. Deposit to confirm place £100. There will be a small additional admin cost for items such as printing route guides for Belgium and the pre-holiday meeting room.

Payment stages

To ensure SPOKES holds sufficient money to cover the risk of cancellation costs being incurred the following payment dates will apply.

- Ferry payment will be deducted from your booking deposit.
- By 1 April each guest will be required to have paid sufficient to cover the ferry cost plus 25% of their hotel cost (the £100 deposit will be part of this).
- By 1 May each guest will be required to have paid 75% of their hotel cost plus ferry.
- By 15 June each guest will be required to have paid their entire trip cost.

Travel to and from Ypres

Out: meet at ferry terminal at 08.00. (check in closes 09:00, sail 10:00 BST, arrive Dunkirk 13:00 (Belgium time). Cycle Dunkirk to Ypres.

Return: Leave Ypres 08:30 to check in at Dunkirk before 15:00, sail 16:00 (Belgium times). Land Dover 17:00 BST.

Each will make their own arrangements for travel to and from Dover. Due to timings, going to Dover by train on departure day is not an option. So, overnight stay locally or Dover by car on the day.

Booking: You will be required to pay a £100 deposit soon after booking before your place is confirmed. When completing the Booking Form, you will need to

enter your passport details unless you need to renew your passport before departure date. Each guest is encouraged to take out Travel Insurance.

Thanks to Graham Phillips, Jay Rajani and Paul Harding for joining me in the organisation of this holiday.

I look forward to members joining me in June.

Useful Cycling Apps and Devices

In our Facebook Group pages, Paul mentioned the [Road Bike Rider](#) web site and its beginner's guide as useful. The web site has a range of information useful to cyclists, including articles on anti-aging, which will be of interest to some of us!



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 routes@spokesgroup.org.uk.

SPOKES Self-Guided Rides

Brian Johnson

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

We've had over 3,600 views of these 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. Chipperfield from Croxley – route 60
2. Brookman's Park – route 73
3. Ashridge Estate – route 76



Featured Route

Our Chipperfield from Croxley route has become popular from out of nowhere. At just over 12 miles, it suits the shorter days of winter so may become more

popular. Plenty of Autumn colour along the route and some lovely places to enjoy refreshments. Take care on Rousebarn Lane.

To understand why it has become popular, in Routes For All, select START Croxley Green-Baldwins Lane and VISIT Chipperfield Common.

Members' Routes

There are 40 Members' Routes available covering over 1,000 miles and we've had over 500 visits to these routes since they were loaded. 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. Emily's Cake Hunt – route MR0003
2. Colne Valley Figure of Eight – route MR0034
3. Bath Two Tunnels – route MR0037



Why not get your favourite route on the leader board. Either send the GPX file or sufficient detail so that we can produce a GPX file for the route, together with any information that will be useful to those who ride the route, such as refreshment stops or parking, to routes@spokesgroup.org.uk.

Featured Route

Emily's was our featured route in the last newsletter. It's a lovely route and has obviously attracted members checking it out, though probably a route for the longer days of summer.

Newlands Park from Rickmansworth Aquadrome is a shorter and delightful route up the side of the Colne Valley exploring some quiet lanes and enjoying some lovely views. The canal towpath may be muddy if very wet.

In Members' Routes, select 10 – 20 MILES under the THREE RIVERS column and scroll down the list.

Coast and Castles

I'll be cycling the Coast and Castles route next year with an extension using NCN754 to take the finish to Glasgow. Most of the route is fairly flat and passes through some lovely scenery and historic sites and the more recent Kelpies and the Falkirk Wheel. The route I'm taking is in Members' Routes - in Members' Routes, select Multi-day Touring under the OTHER column and scroll down the list. There will be an article in the newsletter.

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.

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.

December 2023

Tue 5 10:00 am. Tuesday ride into the Chilterns Hills
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Cycle with Roger on minor roads through Chorleywood. Flaunden and Bovingdon to Chipperfield for refreshments. Return via Sarrett and Croxley Green.

20 miles

Medium

Any Bike

December 2023

Thu 7 10:00 am. Lazy Llama Café
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Follow the Ebury Way and Abbey Way to Chiswell Green with Phil. Return same route. Mostly flat and along cycle paths with some sections on road. Stop at Lazy Llama Café.

24 miles Medium Any Bike

Tue 12 10:00 am. Redbourn and Back
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

To Chorleywood, Flaunden, Hemel Hempstead, Redbourn and Abbots Langley with Paul. Rest stop at The Hub, Redbourn.

32 miles Medium Any Bike

Ride Leaders Wanted

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.

Wed 13 10:00 am. Ashley Green,
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Join Phil in a circular ride via Chandlers Cross, Belsize, Bovingdon to Ashley Green. Stop for refreshments at the Glebe Café. Return via Ley Hill, Flaunden and Sarratt. Some challenging hills.

28 miles Medium Any Bike

December 2023

Wed 20 10:00 am. Chipperfield Bricket Wood
Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green,
WD3 3RX.

Ride with Peter on a road and tarmac cycle way route via Sarratt, Chipperfield and Bedmond to Bricket Wood Station Tea Rooms for refreshment. Return via Watford High St and Cassiobury Park.

23 miles

Medium

Any Bike



Thu 21 18:15 pm. Christmas lights tour and mulled wine social
Council Car Park at the top of Old Town High
Street, Hemel. Left turn before Fletcher Way
roundabout, HP1 3AQ

Katherine's Xmas ride. Wear your Christmas jumper and bling up your bike with lights, tinsel, etc. and join Katherine on a short ride around the streets of Hemel to look at the Christmas lights. It will be 5 miles with stops to take photos of the displays. Your bike must be road legal for riding in the dark, ie. front and back lights. Afterwards, visit Coffee & Wine in the Old Town for mulled wine, coffee, mince pies. If you don't want to do the cycle ride, why not join fellow Spokes members for a festive tippie. For the ride, please book on Let's Ride as normal. If you are coming to the social, please email Katherine (kldeaney@hotmail.com) so I can advise the venue on numbers.

Approx 5 miles

Slow

Any Bike

December 2023

Sat 23 10:00 am. Christmas Cracker to Chiswell Green Wonderland Gadebridge Park, by the white bridge. Free car parking, HP1 1AE.

Out with Katherine to Chiswell Green and Burston Garden Centre to have coffee and visit the Christmas display.

18 miles Medium Any Bike

Sat 30 10:00 am. New Year, New you!
Canal fields car park, Broadwater, Berkhamsted.
Free parking, near train station, HP4 2AL.

Join Katherine cycling up a few hills to challenge you and burn off those Christmas calories. Mainly on quiet roads. Figure of eight around Tring reservoirs and canals. Coffee at Meads Farm Shop. Bring a lock for your bike.

20 miles Medium Any Bike



January 2024

Tue 2 10:00 am. Watford, St Albans + Hatfield
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Cycle with Paul on mostly cycle tracks and country lanes.

36 miles Medium Any Bike

Tue 9 10:00 am. Chiltern Open Air Museum
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Join Phil to Chorleywood, Chalfont St Giles, stopping at the Garden Centre for refreshments, onward to Maple Cross, Rickmansworth.

12 miles Medium Any Bike



Thu 11 10:00 am. Taking the Nickey Line to Harpenden
Gadebridge Park, by the white bridge. Free car
parking, HP1 1AE.

Follow Katherine on the Nickey Line from Hemel through Redbourn to Harpenden. Coffee at the Oval Café. Lock needed.

14 miles Slow No skinny tyres

January 2024

Tue 16 10:00 am. Grand Union Canal to Wembley
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Ride with Paul south, then east along the Grand Union Canal towpath, turn northeast along the Paddington Arm to the Yummy PL (Polish Café) 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, because the towpath can be gravelly, low hanging branches, pedestrians, dog walkers and narrow sections. Now avoids Sudbury Hill and the hill to Mount Vernon.

34 miles Medium No skinny tyres

Thu 18 10:00 am. St Albans circular ride
Cassiobury Park car park, Gade Avenue, Watford,
WD18 7LG.

Ride out with Steve. Leavesden Country Park, East Lane (on-road alternative if very muddy), Bedmond and Gorhambury Estate. Refreshment stop at Verulamium Park. Return via Bricket Wood.

23 miles Medium Any Bike

Sat 20 10:00 am. Shenley Special
Harvester, Baldwins Lane,
Croxley Green, WD3 3RX.

Cycle on NCR6/61 with Roger on roads to Shenley for refreshment. Return via Letchmore Heath.

20 miles Medium Any Bike

January 2024

Tue 23 10:00 am. Flourish Craft Bakery
Café in The Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB.

Join Phil along the Ebury Way and Abbey Way to the Watford Rugby Club, then road to Flourish Craft Bakery in Garston and return.

14 miles Medium Any Bike

Fri 26 10:00 am. Hendon RAF Museum
The Rutts Car Park (over 5 hrs £6.50),
High Road Bushey, WD23 1ND.

A visit to the excellent RAF Museum with Peter via Letchmore Heath, Borehamwood, Barnet Gate and Mill Hill to the museum for a look around and refreshment. About 3 hours in the museum. Return via Burnt Oak and Stanmore. 1122 feet of ascent which is not too challenging. Bike racks outside the museum so locks needed. Good lockers inside for helmets, etc.

21 miles Medium No skinny tyres

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.

January 2024

Wed 31 10:00 am. Harefield
Cassiobury Park car park, Gade Avenue,
Watford, WD18 7LG.

Ride out with Steve along the Ebury Way and Grand Union towpath to Harefield for coffee stop, return mostly over the same route. One steep hill, but it is short. Bring a lock for stopping at Harefield.

15 miles

Slow

No skinny tyres



February 2024

Tue 6 10:00 am. Watford, St Albans + Hatfield
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Join Paul cycling mostly along cycle tracks and country lanes.

36 miles

Medium

Any Bike

February 2024

Thu 8 10:00 am. Seer Green and Jordans
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Ride with Phil on roads via Chorleywood, Chalfont St Giles, Seer Green,
Jordans (coffee stop), Chalfont St Giles, Maple Cross.

17 miles Medium Any Bike

Tue 13 10:00 am. Tuesday ride to St. Albans
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Cycle on roads to Bedmond with Roger for refreshment in the park café.
Return via Chiswell Green to Watford.

22 miles Medium Any Bike

Thu 15 10:00 am. Cheslyn Gardens
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome,
WD3 1NB.

Join Phil on the road via Croxley Green, Cassiobury Park, to Cheslyn
Gardens in Nascot Wood. Café stop on return route.

12 miles Medium Any Bike

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volunteer.**

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and "Members' Routes" on our website to find one. Contact Pam at
rides@spokesgroup.org.uk.

February 2024

Wed 21 10:00 am. Ruislip Lido
Tasty Bean Café, Oxhey Activity Park,
Wiggenhall Road, Watford, WD18 OHZ.

Ride the Ebury Way and road route with Peter out via Rickmansworth and Harefield to ride around Ruislip Lido and stop for refreshment. Return via Northwood Hills and South Oxhey.

22 miles

Medium

Any Bike



Fri 23 10:00 am. En route to Rootz
Kings Langley Community Centre,
The Nap, WD4 8ET.

Join Katherine on a circular route on quiet lanes to Rootz, an independent café in Chorleywood for coffee. Lock needed to secure your bike outside.

20 miles

Medium

Any Bike

February 2024

Tue 27 10:00 am. Grand Union Canal to Wembley
Café 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 Yummy PL (Polish Café) 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, because the towpath can be gravelly, low hanging branches, pedestrians, dog walkers and narrow sections. Now avoids Sudbury Hill and the hill to Mount Vernon.

34 miles

Medium

No skinny tyres

SPOKES Ambassadors

Peter Jackson

Thanks to willing volunteers we now have a full team of Ambassadors ensuring identified Cycling venues in our area have a stock of SPOKES Leaflets. Do you know of other cycling related venues in our area which may be willing to display SPOKES leaflets? For example, I intend to ask the Tasty Bean Café in Oxhey Activity Park to display our Watford Green Ring. If you know an appropriate venue, are you willing to take leaflets and ensure they remain in stock over time, please contact Peter at chair@spokesgroup.org.uk.

Chiltern Velo	Katherine Deaney
Cycles UK	Diana Ivory
Northwood Cycle Depot	Mick Leonard
Ride St. Albans	John O'Connor
Rock & Road St Albans	Peter Jackson
The Bike Shop, Watford	John O'Connor
Watford Cycle Hub	Peter Jackson

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	
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	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
Membership	Nigel Pollard	membership@spokesgroup.org.uk
Rides Co-ordinator	Pam Stonebrook	rides@spokesgroup.org.uk
Newsletter	Philip Gibbs	newsletter@spokesgroup.org.uk
Web Master	Graham Phillips	webmaster@spokesgroup.org.uk
Publicity	Janet Marshall	publicity@spokesgroup.org.uk
Watford Cycle Hub Appointed Attendee	Fiona Timme	office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk
Other Members	Katherine Deaney	kldeaney@hotmail.com

Keep In Contact With SPOKES

<p>SPOKES WEBSITE SPOKESGROUP.ORG.UK</p>		
<p>LED-RIDES and EVENTS Join one of our community rides and support our events.</p>	<p>SELF-GUIDED RIDES ROUTES FOR ALL Use one of our fully checked routes.</p>	<p>CAMPAIGNING Support our efforts to improve cycling in South West Herts.</p>
<p>SPOKES FACEBOOK GROUP WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/178161195994290/</p> <p>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.</p>		
	<p>SPOKES LETSRIDE GROUP WWW.LETSRIDE.CO.UK/GROUPS/SPOKES-WATFORD</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>SPOKES STRAVA CLUB WWW.STRAVA.COM/CLUBS/SPOKES_SW_HERTS</p> <p>Sign up and see where SPOKES' members are riding, how your activity compares with theirs and how you are progressing.</p>		



On Paul's ride to Hatfield the group pose outside of the Picture House, Bricket Wood



Neil took a group to Lewis of London Ice Cream Farm

Fewer short sleeves! A sure sign that Autumn has arrived.

Members from Bletchley, Bushey, Boxmoor, Amersham, Ivinghoe and Berkhamsted joined Katherine on her ride to The Clubhouse, Halton



Peter's group outside Bricket Wood Station Café



Philip's group pose on Venus Hill



bike registration

advice

social rides

maps

Your One Stop Cycling Shop

training

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donation & reconditioning

In the Community, for the Community



ride



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