



2017 Winter Newsletter - No. 95

BUMPER 24-page ISSUE!

Website: www.spokesgroup.org.uk

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Winterproof your Ride (<http://bit.ly/2zfVxDA>)

Don't let winter weather dampen your spirits!

Alban Way Ride



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SPOKES members ride for lunch in St Albans



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CHAT FROM THE CHAIR – ROGER – WINTER 2017



What's happening with SPOKES?

We are now in our 22nd year and changing with the times.

A few weeks ago Clive Jones and I met Peter Taylor, the Deputy Mayor for Watford to look at some of the issues affecting cyclists in the central Watford area.

We met at the junction of Wiggenhall Road and the new access road to the hospital. This is an important development for Watford which should help to reduce traffic congestion. There is a shared use path alongside the road, but it is not clearly marked as being for both cyclists and pedestrians. There are blue signs at the beginning of a shared route, but blue signs on posts can add to street clutter. I believe these shared use routes should be clearly marked with white paint on the ground where they will be easily seen.

When we went to the junction of Thomas Sawyer Way and Dalton Way we noted that the sight lines are very poor for pedestrians and cyclist wanting to cross.



Poor sight lines to see traffic



Path width reduced by bollards and posts

We noted that the walkway from Lady's Close to the subway, which links to Pump House Close, could be a useful route for cyclists and easily made legitimate.

We then moved on to Watford High Street, where from last year you can cycle the full length. Of course we had to mention the issues around market stalls causing obstruction further up the High Street.

But the real benefit of our tour with Peter Taylor was to be able to talk about local issues, where minor changes could make a big difference for people wishing to cycle. Peter said he was willing to hold some local liaison meetings in the future, where ideas for improvement could be explored. That was a result for cycling and sounded good to me.

Cassiobury Park

The long-standing issue around cycling in the park still has to be resolved, although rumour has it that the so called Friends of Cassiobury Park are making it difficult for the council to support cycling. The park should be there for everyone; safe cycling should be encouraged and cycling through the park would be beneficial to many people.

Junction of Radlett Road and Little Bushey Lane

This road junction, crossed by National Cycle Route 6, is clumsy and dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists to use. We would like Hertfordshire Highways to consider re-aligning the paths to the junction, allowing a safer and shorter crossing.



How could this junction be improved?

Croxley Danes School - Future development at the bottom of Baldwins Lane

For many years SPOKES have been trying to get our local councils to extend the existing shared use paths from Two Bridges along Baldwins Lane to Links Way. Now that a new secondary school is to be built on this site, surely a shared use path should be provided, allowing safe cycling for pupils and other cyclists.

Better and Safer Cycling

Cycling is relatively safe and definitely healthy. But danger comes from fast vehicles passing close to cyclists. The St. Albans cycle campaign group has recently contacted David Lloyd, the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, about the “Close Pass Initiative”, that has now been adopted by many police forces. In this the police identify drivers, who are passing too close to cyclists and advise them how to drive in a more considerate manner.

Ebury Way

The Ebury Way is a wonderful route for cycling between Watford and Rickmansworth. The path there has been dangerously neglected, with over half of it disappearing under vegetation and dirt, until recently cleared by SPOKES and SUSTRANS volunteers. However, the cleared path is still dangerous due to tree roots under the tarmac, creating dangerous ridges – see photos below:



Before clearance



After clearance

Speed Reduction

Reducing the speed of traffic in residential areas is an aim of many cycling and walking groups. SPOKES policy is to support 20mph in large residential areas. We do not support the policy of lots of small zones, as this causes confusion and is not effective. We recognise that A and B classified roads may be exempt.

The use of average speed cameras is effective in many situations and now supported by central government. We hope that Hertfordshire County Council will get on-board with speed management issues. **Do you have any suggestions how we could present our concerns to them?**

Potholes

If you come across potholes in the road, do report them at:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/faultreport

If they are not reported they will never get repaired.

Campaigning Group

A few members meet up occasionally to discuss where and how cycling facilities and routes can be improved. Our next meeting will be at the **Aquadrome Café**, Rickmansworth **10.00am on Monday 29 January 2018**. You are welcome to join us.

SPOKES - Annual General Meeting

The 2018 AGM will be held at the Hub on the 16th April. Details will be in the Spring 2018 Newsletter.



SPOKES RIDES AND EVENTS PROGRAMME

Please make sure you arrive in plenty of time at the start, so rides can leave at the stated time.

Stay In Touch With Spokes

Spokes Web Site: www.spokesgroup.org.uk
Information about Spokes, its ride events and links to its campaigning.

Spokes Campaigning Site: spokesswherts.cyclescape.org
Spokes' campaigning activity for cycling.

Spokes Strava Club: www.strava.com/clubs/Spokes_SW_Herts
See where other Spokes' members are riding and, if you're competitive, see how your cycling activity compares with theirs.

Spokes Let's Ride 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 share your rides. Let's Ride will also help you find other local rides that you can join and routes that you download and ride yourself.

Spokes rides are posted to this web site. Some Spokes members use this web site to sign up for the ride and others just turn up on the day. Spokes rides are posted with a limit on the number of riders who can sign up, to avoid the number of riders getting too large. However, as a Spokes member you can just turn up on the day, so don't worry if the ride doesn't show on Let's Ride, as this only means that the Let's Ride limit has been reached.

Spokes Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/
Keep up to date with what other Spokes members are doing, find details of forthcoming rides, both from the Spokes ride programme and ad hoc rides added by Spokes members, and discuss or share issues you are passionate about.

Maintaining the Spokes Rides Programme

Spokes' members put together a varied programme of social rides, where you can find a ride that suits you, where you ride in a group that chats and enjoys a sociable break en route or at the end of the ride and where slower riders don't feel they are a burden. Spokes' rides tend to be smaller more sociable group rides.

The programme relies on members volunteering to lead these rides. The rides are usually well attended and enjoyed by the participants. Most riders have a favourite route or area they enjoy and where they know at least one route. Offer to share yours with others, either as part of the next programme or by posting an invite on Let's Ride or to our Facebook group. So think about what ride you can share when we start to compile the Spring programme at the start of February.

Rides and Events Programme

As well as the list of rides in this newsletter, Spokes rides are published on the following web sites:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Spokes Web Site: | www.spokesgroup.org.uk |
| Spokes Let's Ride Group: | www.letsride.co.uk/groups/spokes-watford |
| Spokes Facebook Group: | www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/ |

Rides additional to those in this newsletter will appear on these web sites.

Spokes Buddy Rides

If you are planning to go out for a ride why not invite other Spokes' members. Post the details to our Facebook Group and/or Lets Ride on letsride.co.uk. Include the start location and time, approximate distance, a description sufficient to allow others to decide whether they will be able to join you and the pace. If you post on letsride.co.uk please mention Spokes in the ride title, e.g. Spokes Social Ride: Up Andover Way, and add it to the Spokes Group as an open ride. You'll then be able to invite every other member of the Spokes group.

Disclaimer

As a participant of Spokes rides, you must be over 16, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Insurance is your responsibility. Spokes cannot accept liability for you or your possessions. Your 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.

Ride Speed Guide

Slow ----- Gentle up to 8mph

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

Fast ----- Average over 12 mph

Please check the web site or contact the organiser before you travel to the start of a ride. Turn up at the start location for a ride, ready to leave at the scheduled time.

Remember to Bring: Water and snack; spare inner tube; pump; appropriate clothing for the forecast weather and road conditions – reflective, waterproof and warm - and lights if appropriate.

As this is the winter programme, it is more likely to be cold which means you are more likely to get a puncture, so please come prepared!

Rides and Events Calendar

Rides may be added to the programme and details will be added to these web sites.

December

**Sunday 3rd 10.00am Latimer Loop – from outside Harvester,
Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**

We head through Chipperfield, Felden, Bovingdon and Ley Hill to Latimer and back via Belsize and Sarratt, stopping for refreshments at the Mediterranean Nursery. All on road, suitable for any bike.

28 miles

Medium

Brian *elided*

**Tuesday 5th 10.00am Tuesday Ride – from outside Harvester,
Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX**

Cycle on road via Leavesden and Bedmond, before coffee stop at Chipperfield. Suitable for any bike.

18 mile. Medium Roger *elided*

**Thursday 7th 10.00am Denham Aerodrome - from Watford Cycle
Hub, Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits
Lane, Watford WD18 9QD**

Out through Harefield, refreshment at Denham Aerodrome, return via Chalfont St Peter and Chorleywood. All on road, except possibly one section of track leaving the aerodrome, which Peter will check and will amend the route, if this track surface has deteriorated. There will be 653 feet of climb, nothing too severe. Suitable for any bike.

21 miles Medium Peter *elided*

**Saturday 9th 10.00am Vineyard Ride – from Dacorum Cycle Hub,
Dacorum Cycle Hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel
Hempstead HP2 7BA**

Through Flamstead, Markyate, Studham and Little Gaddesden we get to the Frithsden Vineyard for refreshments. Then back to the start via Great Gaddesden and an opportunity for more cakes at the Dacorum Cycle Hub. All on road and suitable for any bike.

24 miles Medium Brian *elided*

**Saturday 16th 10.00am Little Gaddesden Meander – from Dacorum
Cycle Hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead
HP2 7BA**

A meander to Little Gaddesden and back for refreshments at the Dacorum Cycle Hub. All on road and suitable for any bike.

24 miles Medium Brian *elided*

December

**Saturday 23rd 10.00am Christmas Ride to Aldbury/Frithsden Vineyard
- from The Nap, Kings Langley WD4 8ET
(free car parking available!)**

We leave Kings Langley and head up Rucklers Lane towards Chipperfield, where we skirt around Bovington and through Whelpley Hill to head into Berkhamsted. We then follow Shootersway and into Aldbury before climbing Toms Hill to Ringshall and Little Gaddesden. Coffee and cake are available at Frithsden vineyard, where you could even sample some of their home produced wine or fizz! We then head back to Kings Langley via Potten End, Hemel and Nash Mills. This is a challenging route with many hills, so you need a reasonable level of fitness. All on road and suitable for any bike.

32 miles

Medium

Katherine *elided*

**Saturday 30th 10.00am Mid festive ride to St Albans - from Watford
Junction Station, Station Rd, Watford
WD17 1AB**

A morning ride to St Albans to blow away the cobwebs, via Potters Crouch, through the historic Gorhambury Estate, entering the city from the north, with a lovely view of the Cathedral. We will stop for refreshments at the Inn on the Park Café, and then return the direct route through Bricket Wood. Any type of bike should do, but parts of Gorhambury are bumpy, so racers might suffer!

25 miles

Medium

Chris *elided*



January

Thursday 4th 10.00am **New Year Folly To College Lake - from Canal Fields, Castle Hill Close, Berkhamsted HP4 1HR by the wooden footbridge road near the canal. Free car parking, not far from Berkhamsted train station.**

We head uphill out of Berkhamsted towards Wiggington, then skirt around the edge of Tring town and onto New Mill, Little Tring, Bulbourne. We will stop for coffee and cake at College Lake nature reserve, before heading towards Aldbury and back to Berkhamsted via Cowroast, Dudswell and Northchurch. All on road and suitable for any bike.

20 miles Medium Katherine *elided*

Sunday 7th 10.30am **Spy Ride – from outside Cha Cafe, Cassiobury Park Ave, Watford WD18 7HY**

Visit places connected with real (Burgess and Maclean) and fictional (George Smiley) spies. Pub lunch at the Green Dragon, Flaunden. All on road and suitable for any bike.

18 miles Medium Charles *elided*

Wednesday 10th 10.00am **Kings Langley Valley Crossing – from Dacorum Cycle Hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7BA**

We'll follow a meandering route to Kings Langley via Potters Crouch and Bedmond and then climb the valley side, before descending to Nash Mills and back to the Dacorum Cycle Hub for refreshments. All on road and suitable for any bike.

20 miles Medium Brian *elided*

Sunday 14th 10.00am **Redbourn Hub Ride – from outside Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Road, Watford WD24 4LL**

Join Jeremy for a ride to Rebourn via the Nickey Line. Refreshments at the Hub, Coffee and Cyclists Refuge, and then a return via Jeremy's favourite route from St Albans. Some off road so more suitable for mountain, hybrid or touring bikes.

25 miles Medium Jeremy *elided*

Thursday 18th 10.00am Refreshments at Woody's - from Watford Cycle Hub, Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD

Out via Bricket Wood and Bedmond to bask in the January sunshine alongside the Grand Union Canal for refreshment at Woodys of Apsley. Back via Chipperfield and Chandlers Cross, but can shorten return route if weather is bad e.g. too hot! Mainly on road, but includes the gravel surface Ebury way to Riverside Park and other well surfaced cycle ways. There will be 1137 feet of climbing. Suitable for any bike.

27 miles Medium Peter *elided*

Sunday 21st 10.00am Ley Hill Loop – from outside Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX

All on road, the ride will head to Ley Hill via Chorleywood and back via Bovingdon, stopping for refreshments at Blackwells in Chipperfield.

22 miles Medium Brian *elided*

Sunday 28th 10.00am Flaunden and Back – from outside Cha Cafe, Cassiobury Park Ave, Watford WD18 7HY

Out to Flaunden along the lanes, back via Sarratt, with refreshments at the Cha Cafe on our return. All on road, so suitable for any bike.

18 miles Medium Pam *elided*

Monday 29th 10.00am Cycling Campaigning Meeting – Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome

A friendly discussion on how to improve cycling routes and cycling in general in South West Herts.

Roger or Clive *elided*

Monday 29th 7.30pm Spokes Committee Meeting - Watford Cycle Hub, Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD

This is your group. Come along and tell the committee what Spokes can do for you and what you can do for Spokes.

Roger *elided*

January

Wednesday 31st 10.00am Ashridge Climb – from Dacorum Cycle Hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7BA

We head across the valley to Frithsden and then climb up past Ashridge and onto Dagnell, before returning via Flamstead, where we stop for refreshments at the Coffee Dog. All on road and suitable for any bike.

25 miles

Medium

Brian *elided*

February

Tuesday 6th 10.00am Tuesday Ride – from outside Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX

On road ride via Bedmond to St.Albans for refreshment, then return on NCR6/61. All on road and suitable for any bike.

18 miles

Medium

Roger *elided*

Wednesday 7th 10.00am Bluebell Ride – from Dacorum Cycle Hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7BA

Out to Marsworth via Berkhamsted and Tring for refreshments at the Bluebell Tearoom and return via the Ivinghoe Beacon. All on road and few hills and suitable for any bike.

33 miles

Medium

Brian *elided*

Sunday 11th 10.00am Up Wendover Way – from outside Harvester, Baldwin Lane WD3 3RX

The easiest route up to Wendover Woods and refreshments at the Café in the Woods. Plenty of easy riding giving the opportunity to enjoy lovely views and the pretty villages we'll pass through. A few lung-busting hills as well! Back via Chesham old town. All on road and suitable for any bike.

44 miles

Medium

Brian *elided*

Tuesday 13th 10.00am St Albans Meander - from Watford Cycle Hub, Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD

Out via Bricket Wood and, if open, the Gorhambury Estate. Refreshment at the Café in the Park, St Albans. Back via London Colney and a

meander. There will be 1173 feet of climbing. All on road and suitable for any bike.

29 miles

Medium

Peter *elided*

Saturday 17th 10.00am Early Lunch or Late Breakfast – from Watford Junction Station, Station Rd, Watford WD17 1AB

Cycling on tarmac via Drop Lane to Shenley and the park cafe. Return via Letchmore Heath. All on road and suitable for any bike.

22 miles

Medium

Roger *elided*

Wednesday 21st 10.00am Tame the Bison – from Dacorum Cycle Hub, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7BA

We'll head up to Dunstable and then onto the Downs, past Whipsnade View and then down Bison Hill. On through Ashridge and Berkhamsted, then a climb to the tea room at Little Heath for well-earned refreshments. Then back to the start. All on road and suitable for any bike.

37 miles

Medium

Brian *elided*

Saturday 24th 2.00pm Half Marathon Revival by Bike – from outside Cha Cafe, Cassiobury Park Ave, Watford WD18 7HY

Following the Watford Half Marathon route around the Grove to Commonwood Common and Chandlers Cross to finish for tea time at Cha Café.

14 miles

Medium

David *elided* or *elided*
on the day



NEW RIDE CO-ORDINATOR REQUIRED

Brian has been organising the presentation of our rides and events for the last two years, but now need to recruit a new Ride Co-Ordinator.

Could this be you? The essential role is getting the quarterly programme together by gathering information from the ride leaders. For further information, please contact either Brian or Roger, we can ease you into the job.

CAMPAIGNS: WHAT'S NEW? You tell us: what is new in your area? We'd love to hear about any campaigns you are involved in, or any burning issues you would like to discuss.

Hertsmere – is it the worst part of our area for cyclists?

-by Clive Jones, Watford-area campaigner

I recently started a weekly commitment that involves riding from my home in West Watford to the far side of Borehamwood. Not far enough to justify getting the car out - as readers will know, the bike is far better for so many reasons. I initially tried the following route: join the A411 off Watford Ring Road and follow it up to Bushey Heath, down Caldecote Hill A411 to cross the A41 at a big fast roundabout, then, still on the A411, skirting round Aldenham Reservoir, and up to Elstree crossroads then more A411 to Stirling Corner, Arkley to journey's end in Barnet. Cycling-wise, this is a shockingly bad route: very hilly, very busy with traffic, and east of Elstree the A411 is very narrow - more like a B road. A high-quality cycle route between Watford, Bushey and further east into Hertsmere is very much needed as the A411 currently has no reasonably direct alternative. Unlike the Ebury Way between Watford and Rickmansworth, the impetus for the route is not the relative ease of creating it (no abandoned railway offering itself as a new route), but, rather, the sheer need for the link. Look at the map; where are the cycle-friendly roads linking Watford and Bushey to Hertsmere? There aren't any.

The approach to creating a new route will inevitably be a cobbling together of minor roads and public rights of way, with perhaps a stretch or two of permissive path, probably passing near to Aldenham Country Park and Hillfield Park Reservoir.

When I worked in campaigning in Wycombe District in the nineties, I remember that two factors were important in getting routes put in: who owns the land that they're on, and the attitudes of local planners/councillors. Wycombe cyclists were lucky: they got a useful stretch of cycleway along edge of a local greenspace called 'The Rye' which led down to a quiet back lane which in turn ran along the River

Wye. A narrow pedestrian bridge meant that for cars the back lane was a no through road, but for bikes it was a way of avoiding a lot of traffic, and a pleasant one at that! The SW Herts to Hertsmere Link, if that is what it is to be called, will not be as simple; it will probably turn out to be the route that everyone will agree is a 'good project' and 'meeting a need' but that no councillor or local authority will want to get stuck into because it will be a lot of work over a long period of time. In any case, who wants to go from Watford to Hertsmere *by bike*?! 'The roads aren't safe for cycling' is what they'll say. Precisely we say. That's why Hertsmere needs this route.

Spokes welcomes ideas and suggestions on the above, and any other local campaigning issues, either via Spokes Facebook page "Spokes Cycling Group SW Herts" or by email to Roger Bangs or myself. We have a campaigning meeting on the 29th January (see Rides and Events Programme, or detail on page 7); Spokes members who are interested in campaigning are welcome to come along.

HAVE BICYCLE, WILL TRAVEL ABROAD

SPOKES members narrate their travels on two wheels

Many thanks to Peter Jackson and Pam Mann for sharing stories of their continental and Baltic cycling adventures abroad.

France and Belgium WWI Cycle Tours

-by Peter Jackson

After charity rides to Brussels and Paris a group of my cycling friends agreed to try some relaxed low mileage cycling tours in Northern Belgium and France. The cycling network in North Belgium is so good and easy to navigate, we tended to focus on that network, with daily rides of about 30 miles. On separate tours, we discovered a small extremely moving World War 1 cemetery for French and British Soldiers east of Dunkirk, and a magnificent war memorial by the side of a Belgian canal.

This inspired us to do a World War 1 cycle tour based in Ypres in 2015. I planned three days of "tasters", assuming none of our party would want too much museum and cemetery time. I was completely wrong; the

experiences were so moving we halved the first year's programme to spend more time at each destination and planned a second tour for 2016. We used the Belgium Cycle Network and I planned the routes using the Fietsroute planner <http://fietsroute.org/cycle-node-planner> . Most of the routes are well surfaced cycle ways or quiet lanes with the majority being totally traffic free. Where the cycle way is not surfaced, it is colour coded on the maps and those sections can be avoided if you wish. There was plenty of lovely scenery with a variety of canal towpaths, woodland routes and open countryside. The canal towpaths are wider than ours and generally tarmac or concrete surface.

The routes follow node points (numbered junctions) and can be printed off when complete. The printed route is a vertical list of node point numbers with distances. I get these laminated on an A4 sheet, which I then cut off to velcro on to my crossbar (spare set for one of the other group members). When cycling, it is simply a matter of navigating, following the well signed number system. I do also download a GPS route to my Garmin as backup, which we did need once, when we all missed a sign due to too much nattering.

The advantage of world war one tours by bike is the ability to follow front lines, which are often off road grass tracks, but which we found perfectly manageable on our light tourers. The 2015 tour was cemeteries, museums and trenches. 2016 was more of the same but with two important additions. A visit to the café linked to the Monastery which brews and sells the wonderful Trappist Beers, where we had an excellent lunch ably assisted by a bottle of beer. On the Sunday evening, a few of us had the privilege of laying a wreath at the famous Last Post Ceremony on behalf of the social club we belong too. It was very easily arranged through the Ypres Last Post Association and British Legion delivered the wreath to our hotel.

I had what proved to be the good fortune of being unable to cycle due to vertigo on one of the 2016 days. Good fortune because I went with two non-cycling friends, who had joined us in Ypres, to visit Talbot House in Poperinge, (<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/museum-talbot-house.htm>) a short train ride from Ypres. A wonderful, albeit moving,

experience I would recommend. It gave insight not only to the life of the soldiers but of the civilians, including children, living in this dreadful war torn region.

Over the years, we have used Eurostar and ferries to reach Dunkirk, Calais or Lille and cycled to our hotel base from there. We all prefer Eurostar, as cycling out of Calais or Dunkirk is not the most pleasant ride of the tour.

For anyone wanting a first easy taste of continental cycling I recommend North Belgium, cyclists are welcomed and the riding and navigation are easy.

For 2017 an Amsterdam-based tour was our plan. The journey used the Harwich Hook of Holland ferry plus trains. I had to withdraw with a medical operation being priority. My friends enjoyed it so much they are already planning a Netherland/ Belgium border country tour in 2018.

The photo on page 24 shows two of us, on one of the Belgium cycle ways from Ypres to the French border, en route to Dunkirk and home.

Cycling the Baltic States

-by Pam Mann

In June this year my sister, Sue, and I went to the Baltic States on a cycling trip, organised by Exodus, a company that specialises in small-group adventure holidays. There were 13 in our group, plus the leader and the driver of the support vehicle. The bikes were locally hired hybrids, perfectly suitable for the purpose.

We first flew to Tallinn, the beautiful medieval capital of Estonia, and after a couple of nights there, began our cycling tour in the Lahemaa National Park in the north of the country. The countryside of forests and meadows was fresh and green and the roads, unlike many in the UK, were pleasantly quiet and well-maintained.

From Lahemaa we travelled east to Lake Peipsi. This area felt very off the beaten track, with its ancient fishing villages and wooden houses and churches.

The following day we cycled through what is known as Estonian Switzerland, because of its stunning scenery and hilly terrain. We then crossed the border into Latvia and transferred to Riga, the capital.

The next day we cycled along cycle paths to the coast at Jurmala, but the weather was wet and inhospitable, so no-one felt like a dip in the Baltic Sea. It was also raining a couple of days later when we cycled the Curonian Spit, 68 kilometers long and made up of pine-forested sand dunes. There was a wonderful cycle path all the way along it, passing through places of interest and villages here and there. It was a pity the weather meant we couldn't enjoy it as much as we otherwise would.

We were now in Lithuania and before arriving in our third capital city, Vilnius, we had a lovely ride to Vente Cap, a popular place to see birds on migration, with great views of the Curonian Spit from the top of the lighthouse. We had two nights in the lovely baroque city of Vilnius and our final ride was from there to Trakai to visit the castle on the lake.

Over the course of the trip we cycled just under 350 kilometers, averaging about 45 kilometers per day. Although the cycling was not unduly demanding, as the three countries are mainly flat or undulating, it was nevertheless very enjoyable and varied. We also had plenty of time to explore places of interest, whether towns or villages, manor houses or folk museums.

Altogether we loved our tour of the Baltic States, three countries that have had such tragic histories and long years of occupation. The people are so glad to be free, so proud of their culture and so happy to be members of the European Union!

See photos of Pam and Sue's Baltic tour on our Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/2AYtCFR>

**Only £12 per annum
£3 for an additional family
member at the same address**

You will receive regular details of our cycle rides, social events and other activities. You will also be helping us campaign for improved cycling conditions in the South West Herts area. When joining you agree to become a member of SPOKES and Cyclescape, unless you opt out by ticking the spaces below.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Title | | First Name | |
| Surname | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Post Code | | | |
| Telephone | Mobile | | |
| Member Email | | | |
| Second Family Member Name | | | |
| Second Member Email | | | |
| Second Member Phone | | | |
| Amount £ | | Opt out of printed Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Donation £ | | Opt out of Cyclescape | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Total £ | | | |
| Signature | Date | | |

Please also indicate below if would like to contribute to the following SPOKES activities:

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Campaigning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assisting at Events | <input type="checkbox"/> | Leading Rides | <input type="checkbox"/> |

For membership please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to:

SPOKES Membership,
120 Kenilworth Drive,
Croxley Green, WD3 3NA.

You will receive a Membership Pack, including a SPOKES Membership Card, entitling you to discounts of 10% on repairs and spares at these locations:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Cycles UK 484/486 St. Albans Road Watford, WD24 6QU 01923 243707 www.cyclesuk.com watford@cyclesuk.com</p> | <p>Northwood Cycle Depot 118 Pinner Road Northwood , HA6 1BP 01923 824174 www.northwoodcycles.com northwoodcycles@tiscali.co.uk</p> |
| <p>Watford Cycle Hub Holywell Community Centre Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD 01923 223994 www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk</p> | <p>The Bike Shop 66 Queens Road Watford, WD17 2LA 07941 800029 thebikeshop66@outlook.com</p> |
|  <p>Pam Mann and sister Sue Gotley</p> <p>in the Baltic States, see page 20 for full story. More photos on our Facebook page: http://bit.ly/2AYtCFR</p> | <p>Peter Jackson WWI tour, see page 18 for details.</p>  |
|  | <p>Get on your bike and join us!</p> <p>If you want to join us on a ride, then just turn up at the stated start point. Look at our programme of rides. We have rides most weekends, some weekdays and summer evenings. They start at several places around Watford. Visit our web site to catch the latest news and rides: www.spokesgroup.org.uk https://www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/</p> |



Watford Cycle Hub

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

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

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



The BIG BIKE Revival.



Standard Cycle Hub Opening Times:

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

www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk

01923-223-994

office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

