



2025 Autumn Newsletter – No. 125



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membership@spokesgroup.org.uk



1. Basingstoke to Winchester day out with Peter
2. Hughenden ride with Peter
3. Harpenden ride with Katherine
4. Lazy Llama ride with Kim
5. Chipperfield ride with Roger

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Above: Berkhamsted ride to Wilstone near Tring
Below: One of the sights on the Milton Keynes
ride. Both rides were with Katherine



Chat from the Chair

Peter Jackson

The Spokes Cycling Holidays in Italy, Belgium and England have all gone well this year. Many thanks to Janet, Paul and Katherine for organising and leading them and the members who have supported them. You will see elsewhere in the newsletter that planning for 2026 is under way.

Janet suggested that Spokes offer a basic bike maintenance course. By good fortune Watford Cycle Hub are in the process of setting up just that. It will cover what cyclists need to know to get home safely. It will be held this November. I will email all members as soon as we have more detail, and we will advertise it on our website and Facebook page.

Sadly, we have lost yet another bike shop, with Cycle UK closing in Watford, but our other local bike shops, including Watford Cycle Hub, appear to be in good shape to continue providing a service.

The Hertfordshire Cycling Routes Map updating, reported in the Summer Newsletter, has been delayed. But we expect to be asked for input during the Autumn. Until further notice the email address I can be contacted at is chair.spokes@yahoo.com.

Enjoy your Autumn rides with all the scenic beauty, and hopefully some fine weather.

2026 Spokes Cycling Holidays

We reinstated offering Spokes cycling holidays in 2022 and they have been a great success. Thanks to the work of a team we were able to offer three holidays this year. By the time you read this we will have had our first planning meeting for the 2026 holidays and plan to advertise the holidays in the winter newsletter.

Spokes Committee Vacancies

My job as Chairperson has been made much easier due to a hard-working committee and I thank them all. We now have two vacancies, please support Spokes work by considering one of the roles.

Publicity

Janet's travels have led her to take the decision to step down from her publicity role so that position is now vacant. Thank you Janet for the work you have been doing. The role involves ensuring gaining publicity via social media and the local press. Janet has set up a Spokes Instagram account, plus we use the Spokes Facebook page and the news section of our website. When appropriate we do get articles in the Watford Observer. The new Publicity Officer may have additional ideas which would be welcomed.

Routes Coordinator

This role, advertised in the summer newsletter, remains vacant. Tasks include arranging for 'Routes for All' to be checked periodically and updating them accordingly. In addition, transferring 'Members Routes' to 'Routes For All,' if appropriate and checked for accuracy.

Both these roles would suit a member who wishes to help with Spokes work, but needs flexibility in how much time is needed and when the work can be done. Please contact me in person or by email at chair.spokes@yahoo.com, if you are interested in taking up either vacancy or would like more information.

Changes to Spokes' Financial Year

Nigel Pollard

It was agreed at the Spokes Committee meeting on 24 July to change our financial year to run in tandem with the membership year, which runs from 1 July to 30 June.

Aligning the financial year with the membership year will lead to easier reporting and a clearer overview of membership revenue throughout the year.

It would mean that the 2025/26 financial year will run for a 14 month period (6 April 2025 to 30 June 2026) and then from 1 July 2026 it would be a normal 12 month period.

Spokes Ride Leading get-together

8.00pm Wednesday 15 October

An informal meeting organised by Rides Coordinator Steve for those currently leading rides and those thinking about leading a ride. Find out how easy it is! Or just come along to talk about what rides you would like to see being organised. Or just come along to keep me company. No need to book – a drop in event. Pub is almost next to Croxley Met Line Station. From about 8pm.

Venue: Red House Pub, Watford Road, Croxley WD3 3DX

Note from editor

Please feel free to send articles to the editor for the next newsletter, if they are related to cycling and which you think would be of interest to others. The editor is very grateful to Pam Mann for doing such a fine job proof reading every edition before it is printed. Really much appreciated.

Update on campaigning for better cycling

Roger Bangs

Watford and Hertfordshire Cycle Forums

Peter, Graham and I attended both the Watford Cycle Forum and Hertfordshire Cycle Forum. These meetings are open to all. The next Watford Cycle Forum will be held from 6pm to 8pm on 18th September at the Watford Cycle Hub, The Pavilion, Chaffinch Lane, Watford WD18 9QD. Do come along.

Green Loop

This is being well used by walkers, cyclists and runners. Work on changes to the road crossings in the Dalton Way/Thomas Sawyer Way area should start later this financial year. Work is due to start on the St. Johns Road contra flow lane in 2027.

County Cycling Map

Hertfordshire County Council are intending to produce a new revised county cycling map, including a paper version. They will consult with Spokes later this year. We will be asked to identify all current cycle tracks, street furniture and signage. You will be able to comment and add information at the Watford Cycle Forum on 18th September, as mentioned above. It was suggested by a Stevenage member that a visit to Eindhoven in 2026 could be arranged to look at their cycling infrastructure. If interested please contact Roger.

Cycle access to Watford Hospital

Suggestions have been made to Watford Council for cycling from Thomas Sawyer Way, south of the hospital site, to Vicarage Road pedestrian area.

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS)

Hertfordshire County Council will look into how these can be revised, keeping them relevant to changing circumstances. Hertsmere and Three Rivers District Councils have still not had their LCWIPS plans adopted.

Ebury Way and links

We have suggested to Watford Council they signpost the existing link from Thomas Sawyer Way via Colnebank Drive to the Ebury Way. We have also suggested to Three Rivers District Council that they improve the ramp on NCR6/61 from the Aquadrome to the canal path. We still have the problem with the narrow dark part and tree roots at the Rickmansworth end of the Ebury Way.

Future of Local Government

Peter and Roger met Counsellor Ian Stotesbury on 24th July. We need to understand the future changes in local government, because in two years time Unitary Authorities will be introduced. We need to consider how will we influence future active travel development. A survey is likely to be issued in the next few weeks asking people's view on the options for the new local authorities.

Woodoaks Gathering

It was a good event held at the end of May and well worth supporting next year. We will need to attract more cycling groups and encourage them to organise rides to the site. We need another main attraction apart from the photo shoot. Maybe Zumba dancing. What do you think?

NCR 6/61 Garston






A tree stump mysteriously appeared under the M1 underpass partly blocking access. Officials do not know how got there!



Spokes Committee

Chair	Peter Jackson	chair.spokes@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Nigel Pollard	treasurer@spokesgroup.org.uk
Secretary	Nikolay Vachev	secretary@spokesgroup.org.uk
Campaigning	Roger Bangs	campaigning@spokesgroup.org.uk
Membership	Katherine Deaney	membership@spokesgroup.org.uk
Rides Co-ordinator	Steve Ashford	rides@spokesgroup.org.uk
Routes Co-ordinator	Vacant	routes@spokesgroup.org.uk
Newsletter	Philip Gibbs	newsletter@spokesgroup.org.uk
Web Master	Graham Phillips	webmaster@spokesgroup.org.uk
Publicity	Vacant	publicity@spokesgroup.org.uk
Watford Cycle Hub	Fiona Timme	office@watfordcyclehub.org.uk

Keep in Contact with Spokes

Spokes Website	http://www.spokesgroup.org.uk/rides-events/ Includes Spokes Rides, Events, Routes, News, Newsletters and Join Spokes online page.	
Spokes Facebook Group	https://www.facebook.com/groups/178161195994290/ See what other members are doing and post your own cycling topics and photos.	
Spokes Let's Ride Group	https://www.letsride.co.uk/groups/spokes-watford Book Spokes Rides. Join our Let's Ride Group (free) to join our occasional Spokes Members' day out rides.	
Spokes Strava Club	https://www.strava.com/clubs/Spokes_SW_Herts Sign up, see where Spokes Members are riding, how your activity compares with others and your own improvement.	
Spokes Instagram Page	https://www.instagram.com/spokes_cycling_group/ Photos and more from Spokes. Email yours to publicity@spokesgroup.org.uk for publication.	



A ride to Wendover Woods with Paul

Join Spokes

Membership costs just £15 per year and £5 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

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

British Cycling*	www.britishcycling.org.uk/clubs/membership	
Cycling UK*	my.cyclinguk.org/new-member/new-member-affiliated	
Leisure Wheels Spokes Ambassador is Katherine Deaney	89 High Street, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 3AH	01442 213000 https://www.leisurewheels.co.uk/
Northwood Cycle Depot Spokes Ambassador is Peter Jackson	118 Pinner Road, Northwood HA6 1BP	01923 824174 www.northwoodcycles.com
Ride St Albans Spokes Ambassador is John O'Connor	318 Watford Road, Chiswell Green, St Albans AL2 3DP	01727 614778 www.ridestalbans.com
Rock & Road Bikes Spokes Ambassador is Peter Jackson	117 Victoria Street, St Albans AL1 3TJ	01727 832020 info@rockandroadbikes.com
The Bike Shop (Watford) Spokes Ambassador is John O'Connor	66 Queens Rd, Watford WD17 2LA	07941 800029 www.thebikeshopwatford.com
Watford Cycle Hub Spokes Ambassador is Peter Jackson	Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford WD18 9QD Discount-Bike parts only	01923 223994 www.watfordcyclehub.org.uk

Summer Cycling Holiday in Rimini

Janet Marshall

In Spring 2022 I was introduced to road bikes for the first time in my life, in Lanzarote. Ever since then, cycling has been my hobby. I found myself in a super supportive community, my horizon was lifted up further and beyond both earthly and spiritually. My inner self was gradually reshaped and is still developing. On this journey of exploring, I was humbled by so much help I received through so many inspiring people. With deep gratitude, I wish I could



help give back, to help people explore the outside world through cycling. This Rimini trip did exactly what I wished for. Thanks for the great help from Peter Jackson, Cinzia Chiodaroli and Ming Choy. Sixteen members of Spokes SW Herts Cycling Group joined me to challenge our individual limitations during this one week cycling holiday in Riccione. We were very well looked after by Hotel Gambrinus Riccione in every way: Great food, flowing wine, different distance rides and timely bicycle service. No wonder people come back for this well tailored cycling experience year after year. Last year when I read Cinzia's blog about her Riccione trip, I was impressed by her comment; strangers become friends after the

rides. Today I am overwhelmed by such strong emotions that when we sang 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow', I struggled to hold back tears.

The hotel organised five different group rides for resident cyclists, led by the local cycling guides. The groups were set up for different distances and elevations, to suit different abilities. For the majority of our Spokes riders, a daily distance of 40 miles and under was most comfortable. We also got the chance to visit a local vineyard and old castles during the ride. Both road bikes and e-bikes can be rented at reasonable weekly prices. The few issues raised were sorted out quickly by the in house mechanics. All in all a great trip.





Cycling Holiday in the Black Country

Katherine Deaney

Fifteen Spokes members headed to the Black Country for a short break back in June, flaming June! Temperatures were in the thirties which made conditions challenging, but we were spared any rain. Most took their bikes on the trains from Hertfordshire which is an adventure in itself, although it is possible to drive and pay for long term car parking.



Accommodation was in the central Birmingham hotel The Briar Rose, which is run by the Wetherspoons chain. Being in the heart of the city gives plenty of choice for evening meals from Indian, Taiwanese, Italian to name a few! The pub downstairs from the accommodation is open from early to late for an easy option.

Birmingham has an extensive canal network, more miles than Venice! Birmingham City Council claims there are 35 miles, which extends to over 100 miles when the entire Birmingham canal navigations that crisscross the Black Country are included.



Four rides were offered, heading off in different directions each day. Cycling infrastructure is generally good with lots of towpaths, parkland and segregated cycle paths.



After dropping luggage at the hotel, the afternoon was spent riding to the suburb of Kings Norton for cold drinks and ice cream!

The Birmingham to Sutton Coldfield loop was a 26 mile ride through a mix of urban cycle ways and peaceful canals. It looped up to the greenery of Sutton Park National Nature Reserve and returned through areas like West Bromwich. The route blended city life with nature beautifully, with plenty of sights and quiet stretches perfect for a steady, reflective ride.

Our second day headed north with the first stop at the Dudley Canal Trust for a boat trip through the many caverns and tunnels that were once part of the limestone mining that went on during the Industrial Revolution. We had the boat and guide just for our group, which was great.

Rejoining the canal, we circumvented Wolverhampton and utilised the Kingswinford former railway path. Coffee and cakes were enjoyed at Cupcake Lane tea rooms in an original station building. Seating was on the platform.



Riders had a choice of riding through the Netherton Tunnel on the way back to the city, it is over a mile long of darkness with a metal railing separating the path from the canal! Not for the feint hearted! An alternative was available for those not keen on the tunnel.

The group came together on the final evening to enjoy an Italian meal at an independent restaurant.



Earlswood Lakes, big reservoirs that hold water for Birmingham, were the final destination for coffee and cake before heading back to the city to collect luggage and head back to Hertfordshire.

The Black Country has a fascinating history and plenty of traffic free cycling. There are lots of canals to explore and a wide network of trains to take the strain, should the need arise. The routes are available, just email Katherine (kldeaney@hotmail.com) if you'd like to see what Birmingham has to offer.

This trip was made possible by extensive planning and test trips by Katherine with help from Sue Bendall. Roger Bangs volunteered to lead a second group enabling the trip to be opened up to a maximum of sixteen members.



Spokes Bruges Ride Report 2025

Paul Harding

Twelve cyclists from the Spokes South West Herts Cycling Group joined together to make a memorable cycling holiday to, and around, Bruges in July 2025. Friday 4th July We assembled at 06:30 under the eastbound A2 flyover at the Dover Ferry Terminal, then boarded the 08:00 DFDS ferry to Dunkirk, arriving at 11:15 (local time). We then had a 57 mile ride to our hotel, The Black Swan in Bruges, with our luggage. The smooth, flat Belgian cycle ways were even better than the French (no-one was sure exactly where we crossed the border). Roadworks in France gave us a bit of an issue, but as they had left the pavement clear for pedestrians, we used that carefully. A brief lunch stop at Koksidge (some disappointing croque monsieurs) left us with a little under half way to go, and at



Neiuipoort, we stopped for a group shot. It was a hot day, so Simon pressed ahead and found an ice cream shack on the other side of the canal with only 6 km to go; €2 a scoop!

Arriving at our hotel at 18:30, we took the concierge's suggestion and left our bags in reception and before setting off to find the parking garage we had booked to secure our bikes, a 4 minute ride away. Bikes secured, so back to the hotel to check in, shower, change and have dinner somewhere. Then - disaster. Simon, who was the last to book and requested a single room, had been booked into the AirBnB across the street. Which would might have been ok if it had been booked for the right YEAR! Also demolition

and building work was going on next door - I only found this out after I'd got everyone checked in, showered, changed and returned to see how Simon was getting on. He had managed to contact the host by phone and it was she that told him. She allowed him to stay the night, but as she was already fully booked, "he would have to find somewhere else for his stay". He took a shower and changed, while thinking about riding all the



way back to Dunkirk the next day. But help was at hand — Valentina, the Black Swan receptionist, phoned around and managed to get him into the Martin Bruges hotel, a 7 minute walk away. Phew! She said this sort of thing happens a lot.

Saturday 5th July Eeklo and Beernem - 46.2 miles

Setting off from the garage at about 10:00, everything was going really well until, just after passing through DenHoorn at 10 miles, our route was compromised by there being no bridge over the dual carriageway! Fortunately, a young mum and her two daughters cycled past, looking as perplexed as we were, and together we found a new underpass (that was not well secured) and so we may have been the first to use it.

A little further on we took a brief foray into another country - Holland - and had 4.6 miles before we were back in Belgium. Time enough for one of us to catch the back wheel of a passing peloton (a cycling phrase) and hang on for a few minutes. Possibly at the border (no-one knows for sure) we managed a group shot at a bride. After lunch, and 35 miles under our wheels, we could just see what must be a peloton, with a lead motorcycle, coming our way. I stopped the group to make sure we wouldn't cause an obstruction - and they peeled off just in front of us, hidden behind a stand of trees. We pressed on and stopped for an ice cream at an activity centre just east of Beernem; as we did so that same peloton came speeding past us... a few times.

Our way back to Bruges continued the theme of - as Shabir tells me - the flattest, smoothest, cleanest and endless canal paths he has ever cycled on. He also mentioned "the unforgettable smells, from waffles, chocolate and coffee to the last of the tree blossoms, scent of freshly cut grass, flowers of the potato plants and lingering, most memorable aroma of decaying farm animal excrement." Thanks, Shabir.



Sunday 6th July - raining, and the forecast suggested it was going to last all day. Our wet-weather plan kicked in, and those that wanted to took the 5.8 mile walking tour of Bruges. The rain stopped about half way.

Monday 7th July - more rain forecast in the morning so we left at 12:00, in dry weather and a welcome tail wind to cycle the 30 miles to Ghent (or Gent, as it is locally spelt). Lunch in

the square was a curious case of a misunderstanding by waitress/bar staff/me... having waited 20 minutes for a beer and two Cokes, our table of three decided to cancel and grab waffles and drinks opposite. In cancelling our order, she also cancelled our other table, who were happy to wait (they'd ordered food, we hadn't). Soon sorted though.

Chris and I took some time out to try and find the place he took a selfie at 11 years ago; and nearly got it too.

Taking the train back had always been the plan (in small groups) and fortunately my route continued to take us to the station.

Tuesday 8th July - and what to choose? Having done the walking tour on our one rainy day, we had a choice of routes. Should we do the 42 miles to Knesselare, or the 50 to Tiel? We had a vote and did the 50 miler.

Our next cafe stop, in Aalter, was closed. Fortunately, another was open a few miles further on, and we took refreshments there. Soon after, a young couple from New Zealand and their daughter arrived and, as the cafe couldn't accept card payments, and they had no cash: Kevin stepped up and paid for them. Top man!

Wednesday 9th July Damme and the seaside; 35 / 41 miles

The two distances mentioned are there because it was suggested that, as today's ride was the shortest, it might be nice to do a circuit around Bruges; some of us did it, some of us didn't, and a few others had a rest day off the bike, to relax before our 57 miles to Dunkirk the next day. To get the extra miles for the orbital, we set off at 9:30, and arrived at the meeting point - first - at 10:15. The others arrived a few minutes later, and we set off for the seaside.

Stopping a little past a windmill, level with the church tower in Damme, I advised the reason why this day's ride is so named, is because the one redeeming feature I could find about Damme was its church tower - 206 steps - which we could all climb if we wanted to, and get a great view of the surrounding area. We chose not to, and pressed on to the seaside.



Thursday 10th July Bruges to Dunkirk - and home; 58 m

Three of us decided to skip ahead by taking the train, hoping to catch an earlier ferry. Arriving at 13:00, they were informed that, as they were part of a group booking, changing to an earlier ferry was not possible - the whole group needed to travel together. The rest of us, knowing it had taken a little over 5 hours cycling to Bruges, were keen to leave as early as possible, although the hotel breakfast opened at 08:00. We decided to see how open the breakfast actually was from 7:30 (or even earlier - I wasn't the first). We were out of there by 8:15, and ready to set off at 08:30 .

As we passed through Neiupoort, I asked if anyone was ready for refreshment, but the response was no - to press on for a few more miles. So it was back to the endless, smooth cycle ways and a chance to search Google Maps for a "cafe near me" - and there was one, just the other side of the canal, and next to a bridge. Phew. Stopping outside the place, which looked as closed as anything could be, the barn door opened and I asked the lady there if they were open? "Of course!" She says. "But first," I say, "May I use your toilet, please?" "How do you know

that I have one?" She laughed. We were 29.1 miles into our 58 mile journey. Then — surprise, surprise!

Yes, they had closed the cycle way, and we were diverted off our track for a little, rejoining it a little further on, circuiting Veurne to the west, not the east, as planned. At 42 miles, we noted Simon, Neil and Kevin had dropped off the back. Our back marker advised they had stopped to recover for a bit, and we were to press on. Which we did, Peter even sharing his location to the WhatsApp group, so they could keep tabs on where we were. Shortly after that, the path surface lost it's unblemished finish with cracks, lumpy joints, weeds and — what's that? LITTER? This told us we had left Belgium behind. Loon-Plage is the last village before the ferry port, and it was here that our three tail-end heroes caught us up, making for a joined-up, triumphal arrival, where we met up with those three earlier train-ers, at the DFDS control office, which is, of course, not the same as passport control; so we returned to our bikes, and checked through 10 minutes before it closed for our ferry.

All lined up, ready to board, and the DFDS guy called out "6 cyclists, this way" and directed the first 6 to walk up the ramp. We did so, and kept walking until we had crossed the steel fingers - a gap between these had caught the front wheel of a cyclist a few years ago and since then all cyclists on cross-channel ferries have had to walk across these. She had to have some serious dental work. We were directed along the length of the ship to the rear, where we secured our bikes away from passing artics. Reaching the front of the ship again, in the cafe, we could see the rest of our group were still waiting boarding instructions. They ended up securing their bikes at the front and this resulted in a less than ideal disembarkation.

At which point, the Dover Port team at the bottom of the ramp points to - and says - "Follow the red line". Which is simple enough to do, but right angle corners? And then a gate that can't be opened? Ah, there's a buzzer, let's see if that works. It doesn't. "Press again, and harder, maybe?" Some one says. I did so. A few anxious moments pass. I was about to press it again, when I spot someone approaching from the customs shed. I draw back my hand. She stretches out hers. There is a click; and a whirr and the gate opens. "It's not very loud, that call button" I say. "It's very loud in the office!" She replied.

Our cyclists were as follows: Peter Jackson, Michael Phillips, Simon Humphries, Chris Kinsey, Graham Phillips, Shabir Armed, Steve Blood, Ram Ramanan, Martin Strong, Kevin Lynch, Neill Jenkins and me, Paul Harding

Spokes Rides and Events Programme

Autumn 2025

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

Spokes members put together a varied programme of social rides. Ride descriptions normally include speed, distance and hills information to help you find rides that suit you. We ride in a group that chats and enjoys a sociable break en route or at the end of the ride. If you are struggling on the day, you will not be left behind. Rides may be added to the programme after the newsletter is published. These rides are posted on Facebook and, if there is sufficient time, Let's Ride, Spokes Web Site and in an email to Members. ***Please note some rides will now only be available for booking two weeks in advance. If you find the ride you are interested in is fully booked, please check again nearer the time. This is to avoid the repeated occurrence of cancellations which has become a bit of an issue on some rides.***

Disclaimer: As a participant of a Spokes ride, you must be aged 16 or over, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. You need to be capable of riding in a group on the highway. Spokes cannot accept liability for you or your possessions. Your safety and wellbeing is your responsibility and it is your responsibility to follow the Highway Code at all times. Your participation in the rides is acceptance of these terms.

What to bring on a ride? Please come to rides with appropriate clothing for the weather and with water, snack, spare inner tube and pump. Bring lights if appropriate. Please carry something that gives your name, address and emergency contact details.

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

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

Ride Speed Guide:

- Slow ----- Gentle up to 8mph.
- Medium ----- Average of 9-11 mph
- Fast ----- Average over 12 mph

Ride Categories on Let's Ride:

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

- Steady. Spokes Slow Pace rides over 15 miles with some easy climbing and Spokes Medium Pace rides which are 30 miles or less with some easy climbing.
- Challenging. Any ride with challenging climbs, any Spokes Fast Pace ride and Medium Pace rides which are over 30 miles.
- Mountain Bike. Off Road rides on unsurfaced trails.

Tips on Use of Let's Ride: If the ride is full, register on the Waiting List. Cancellations happen, even at the last minute. Searching for a full ride on Let's Ride is easiest by following the link in the ride description in 'Rides and Events' on the Spokes website.

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

Short Notice Rides

Members can add extra rides at short notice using an online form on the Spokesgroup website. Click 'Rides and Events' at the top of the screen, scroll down to the end of the list of rides and you will find a form to fill in with details of your ride.

September

Tue 2 Sep 10.00 am – Tuesday ride to Great Missenden

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Roger**. Cycle on road and lanes through Chesham to Great Missenden for refreshments. Return via Holmer Green and Chalfont St.Giles.

35 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Wed 3 Sep 10.00 am – Chenies Garden Centre

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride with **Neil**. On roads via Belsize, Flaunden and Chenies to Chenies Garden Centre for refreshment. Some challenging (8-10%) climbs.

19 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Thur 4 Sep 10.00 am – Flourish Bakery

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Phil**. Off road Ebury Way, part of Abbey Way, then quiet roads to North Watford and return. Not skinny tyres.

14 miles **Slow** Any bike

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Mon 8 Sep 10.30 am – Rhubarb Café

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Chris**. Ebury way to Rhubarb Café Watford, return via Cassiobury Park.

10 miles **Slow** Any bike

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Wed 10 Sep 10.00 am – En route to Rootz

Kings Langley Community Centre, The Nap WD4 8ET

Ride with **Katherine** out via Flaunden and Chenies for coffee at Rootz in Chorleywood. Return via Chandlers Cross and Hunton Bridge.

20 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Thur 11 Sep 10.00 am – Watford – Ice Cream Farm

Watford Rugby Club, Radlett Road WD24 4LL

Ride with **Neil**. Return ride from Watford Rugby Club to Ice Cream Farm near Barnet.

21 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Fri 12 Sep 8.00 am – Spokes Day Out Oxford

**Tasty Bean Café, Oxhey Activity Park, Wiggenhall Road,
Watford WD18 0HZ**

Ride with **Peter**. This is a Spokes Members Only ride. Alternative Starting Point: 9.10 am. Gerrards Cross Railway Station entrance, Station Approach, Packhorse Road, Gerrard's Cross SL9 8PP. Email chair.spokes@yahoo.com if joining the ride there. (43 Miles GX to Oxford). Ride out via Princes Risborough and the Phoenix Trail. About 4 hours in Oxford, return to GX by train, then optional led ride to Watford. May have to split between trains, arriving Gerrard's Cross between 8.30pm and 9.30pm. Spokes Members Only on this Ride.

55 miles **Medium** Any bike except Mountain

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Tue 16 Sep 10.30 am – Grand Union Canal to Wembley

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride south then east with **Paul** along the Grand Union Canal towpath, turn north east along the Paddington Arm to the 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. I usually use my Brompton for this ride.

34 miles **Medium** Any bike (not skinny tyres)

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Wed 17 Sep 6.00 pm – Cycle Forum

Cycle Hub, Chaffinch Lane, Watford WD18 9QD

Open evening - Sharing information with Watford Council. Peter and Roger on cycling in Watford. Also an attempt to identify and record all local cycle routes and cycling infrastructure.

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**Thur 18 Sep 10.00 am – Ashley Green Memorial Hall Cafe
Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX**

Ride with **Neil**. On roads via Belsize, Flaunden and Leyhill Common. Return generally on slightly NE route.

23 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Wed 24 Sep 10.00 am – Watford, St Albans and Hatfield

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride south then east with **Paul**. Mostly country lanes and cycle tracks. Rest stop at The Red Lion, Hatfield.

36 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Tue 30 Sep 10.00 am – Sunnyside Ride

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride with **Steve** out via Bovington to Sunnyside Café in Hemel. Return via Kings Langley. Short length of canal towpath. Some hills.

23 miles **Medium** Any bike

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October

Fri 3 Oct TBC – Day Ride to Pitsford Water and Brixworth

Northampton Train Station NN1 1SP

Ride with **Katherine**. Head north out of the town, then through pretty villages to Pitsford Water, a large lake, with roadway across it. Cycle round part of the lake then into Brixworth village for lunch at The Workhouse café. For our return, we join the Brampton Valley way (former railway line) and head back to the station for journey home. We will take the first off peak train from Watford / Dacorum stations. Time to be confirmed – check Spokes website. This is a Spokes Members Only ride.

29 miles **Medium** Any bike (not skinny tyres)

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Sat 4 Oct 10.00 am – Ebury Way Maintenance

Wiggenhall Road, Ebury Way Junction WD18 0HS

Ride with **Roger**. Ride along the Ebury Way, removing minor obstructions and tidy up. Bring hand tools, saws, cutters and waste bags for minor litter. Finish at Lock 81 for coffee, provided by Roger. All welcome.

5 miles **Slow** Any bike

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Tue 7 Oct 10.00 am – Tuesday ride to Black Park

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Roger**. Cycle on roads and tracks though Chalfont St. Giles to the café at Black Park. Return to the Aquadrome via Bakers Wood and Maple Cross.

30 miles **Medium** Any bike

Wed 8 Oct 10.00 am – Redbourn and Back

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

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

32 miles **Fast** Any bike

Thur 9 Oct 10.30 am – Blackwell's Tennis club, Chipperfield

Watford Met Line Station WD18 7LE

Ride with **Chris** via Cassiobury, Sarratt and Flaunden.

25 miles **Slow** Any bike

Sat 11 Oct 10.00 am – Chiltern Villages

Hemel Station, London Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BQ

Ride with **Katherine**. Ride out via Berkhamsted and up into the Chilterns, passing through many quaint villages. Refreshments half way round, back via Latimer and Flaunden. Plenty of hills to challenge you, not suitable for novice riders.

30 miles **Medium** Any bike

Tue 14 Oct 10.00 am – Chipperfield

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Phil**. Out via Croxley Green and Chandlers Cross towards Chipperfield. Café stop. Return via Belsize and Sarratt Green. Mostly fairly quiet roads.

15 miles **Medium** Any bike

Wed 15 Oct 8.00pm – Spokes Ride Leaders get-together

Red House Pub, Watford Road, Croxley WD3 3DX

An informal meeting organised by **Steve** for current Ride Leaders and those thinking about leading a ride. Find out how easy it is. Or just come along to keep me company. No need to book. Pub is almost next to Croxley Met Line Station.

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Thur 16 Oct 09.30 am – Hole in one at Redbourn Golf Club

**Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre, bottom of Heath Lane
opposite main carpark entrance. Public parking on Park Road. Not far from
train station HP1 1JS**

Ride with **Katherine**. Join the Nickey Line to Harpenden, then back on lanes to Redbourn Golf Club for coffee. Back to Hemel using Nickey line and cycle paths.

23 miles **Slow/Medium** Any bike

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Thur 23 Oct 10.30 am – Autumnal Burnham Beeches

**Tasty Bean Café, Oxhey Activity Park, Wigganhall Road,
Watford WD18 0HZ**

Ride with **Peter** out via Chalfont St Peter and Beaconsfield, return via Gerrards Cross. Café stop Burnham Beeches. 1475 ft climbing, some challenging.

39 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Thur 23 Oct 7.30pm – Committee Meeting

Watford Cycle Hub, Chaffinch Lane, Watford WD18 9QD

All Members welcome to attend our Committee Meetings.

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Sat 25 Oct 10.00 am – Gorhambury and St Albans

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride with **Roger**. Cycle on road, lanes, and canal path to Gorhambury then St.Albans for a cafe stop. Return on the NCR61

26 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Wed 29 Oct 10.30 am – Berkhamsted and Tring

Canal Fields, Broadwater, Berkhamsted (near station) HP4 2AL

Ride with **Steve**. A circular route around Wigginton, Tring, Ivinghoe and Ashridge. A bit of canal towpath and cycle path, but mostly quiet roads. Some hills, about 1500 feet of climbing. Refreshment stop part way round.

24 miles **Medium** Any Bike

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November

Sat 1 Nov 10.00 am – Bricket Wood Tea Rooms

**Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre, bottom of Heath Lane
opposite main carpark entrance. Public parking on Park Road HP1 1JS**

Ride with **Katherine**. Join the Nickey Line and Hemel Greenway to Potters Crouch. Coffee at Bricket Wood Tearooms. Return via Hunton Bridge and Kings Langley.

22 miles **Slow/Medium** Any bike

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Tue 4 Nov 10.30 am – Windsor

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Chris**. A longish all day ride to Windsor via Northwood, Ruislip, Ickenham and Uxbridge.

38 miles **Slow** Any bike

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Thu 6 Nov 10.00 am – Ashley Green

Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Phil**. Out via Croxley Green and Sarratt, Chipperfield, Bovingdon, Whelpley Hill to Ashley Green. Cafe stop. Then return via Flaunden. Mostly quiet roads.

27 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Tue 11 Nov 10.00 am – Tuesday ride to Shenley

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride with **Roger**. Cycle on road and lanes via Drop Lane to the café. Return via Letchmore Heath

22 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Thur 13 Nov 10.00 am – Chorleywood Short

Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride with **Neil**. On road to Chorleywood Simmonds or other café. Some challenging (8-10%) climbing.

12 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Sat 15 Nov 10.00 - Spokes Poppy Ride London

Farringdon Station EC1M 6BY

This is a gentle, easy-paced ride with **Paul** around over 100 points of interest around London. Meet up at the exit of Farringdon station. Normal bikes will be allowed on the trains, as it is a weekend, or hire a Santander bike. Direct trains from Radlett to Farringdon.

21 miles **Slow** Any bike

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Thur 20 Nov 10.00 am – Chiltern Velo

**Tasty Bean Café, Oxhey Activity Park, Wigganhall Road,
Watford WD18 0HZ**

Ride with **Peter** out via Sarratt and Ashley Green to Chiltern Velo, Hawridge for refreshment. Return via Chesham Bois and Rickmansworth. All on road and surfaced Cycle Ways. 1742 ft of climbing, some challenging.

37 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Wed 26 Nov 10.30 am – Grand Union Canal to Wembley
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride south then east with **Paul** along the Grand Union Canal towpath, turn north east along the Paddington Arm to the 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. I usually use my Brompton for this ride.

34 miles **Medium** Any bike (not skinny tyres)

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Thur 27 Nov 10.00 am – Chenies Garden Centre
Harvester, Baldwins Lane, Croxley WD3 3RX

Ride with **Neil**. On roads via Belsize, Flaunden and Chenies to Chenies GC for refreshment. Some challenging (8-10%) climbing.

19 miles **Medium** Any bike

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Sat 29 Nov 10.30 am – Day Ride to Burnham Beeches
Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome WD3 1NB

Ride with **Roger**. Cycle on roads and some good tracks via Heronsgate, Gerrards Cross to the café at Burnham Beeches. Return via Maple Cross.

36 miles **Medium** Any bike

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A ride from Berkhamsted to Mead Farm shop in Wilstone near Tring with Katherine

bike registration

advice

social rides

maps

Your One Stop Cycling Shop

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In the Community, for the Community



ride



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