

REABILITY BIKE RIDE 2001
Sunday 2nd September
 Another ride postponed earlier this year. We have been asked to help with this while enjoying a choice of either 15, 25 or 40 miles of cycling from Here to Canterbury, Faversham, Wickham etc depending on your choice of route. You can help the Reability Bike Appeal by getting sponsorship and registration from Dave Stode Park, Here at 10.30am. Sponsor forms and registration from Dave Hopper, Ride Leader, The Reability Bike Appeal Office, 17 Beacon Avenue, Here Bay, CT6. Tel Dave Hopper 01227 373808 or Tim Perks 01227 367422.

CREAM TEAS & HONEYBEES
Sunday 5th August 11am
 Join Martin & Colleen at Canterbury West Station at 11am for a delightful pedal through picturesque countryside along the Elham Valley to Barham. Only bring a snack for lunch because mid afternoon the ladies of Barham Methodist Church will serve the finest Cream Teas in Kent for a small charge. There will also be a surprise optional extra leg for those that want that something special. This is a round robin ride. This is not to be missed (we know cos we've tried em!) so phone Martin on 01227 712244 for further details.

BRIGHTON WORLD HPV CHAMPIONSHIPS (www.bhp.org.uk)
August 2-5
 01795 53606 or Tim Perks 01227 367422.

ANTI-CLOCKWISE WITH FESTINA
Sunday 1st July 10.30am
 Join Derek at Teigham station at 10.30am for 20 miles of scenic cycling. Pub lunch or BYO. This ride was postponed in March due to Foot & Mouth epidemic and may be subject to some changes. Details from Derek Latter 01795 53606 or Tim Perks 01227 367422.

SUSTRANS PICNIC PEDAL
Sunday 17th June 10.30am
 Join members of Sturry Cycling Club (and the Parish Council) to discover the delights of National Route 1 with very gentle ride to The Way Out Inn at Westmarsh on mainly quiet country lanes some traffic free. Help celebrate the 1st anniversary of the National Cycle Network. This very gentle round trip is a must. Eat at the pub or bring a picnic. Meet at Canterbury West Station, 10.30am or picking up at the George & Dragon Fordwich 11.15 approx. Further details from Martin on 01227 712244.

RIDING UP THE DOWNS
Sunday 3rd June 10.30am
 Fancy a scenic challenge? Try 25 miles of hilly but easy paced cycling around the Downs. Join Anne & Greg at Wye station at 10.30am for a circular tour with pub lunch or BYO. Plenty of stops for catching your breath and admiring the views. Details from Anne & Greg Sharp 01233 750278.

A MAGICAL PEDAL ON THE MARSH
Friday 1st June 2.00 pm
 A gentle family pedal on the Romney Marsh to look for those unseasonal Magic Sloc. There will be five to find. LEADER: Andrew Nixon, RMCP (01797 367934). MEET: West Street car park, New Romney, (opposite the Cinque Port Arms pub). GRID REF: TR 064247. DISTANCE: 15 miles

SUSTRANS PICNIC PEDAL 2
Sunday 17th June 2.30pm
 Starting at 2.30pm at Canterbury City Council offices in Military Road. A circular route, stopping to admire the view and have a BYO picnic at Neal's Place meadow. Finish at 5pm. Details Andy 01227 713285.

Saturday 23rd June
BIG WHEEL OF KENT RIDE
 Canterbury is the "hub" of the wheel and "spokes" will run from Maidstone, Ashford, Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Sandwich, Ramsgate, Here Bay, Whitstable, Faversham, Sittingbourne and Rochester. There will be a Festival at the finish in Canterbury, with food and refreshments and live music for all the family. Entry fee. Contact Gary Macgowan (KCC Cycling Officer) 01622 221028

"FOOTPRINTS" GREAT KENT BIKE RIDE
Sunday 24th June
 This is an opportunity to help a local charity - Kent Kids Miles of Smiles - while cycling either 28 or 13 miles. The organisers are putting on a breakfast before the ride and a BBQ with licensed bar at the finish. Start and Finish at Footprints Holiday House, Stodmarsh Road, Canterbury. There is an entry fee of £5.50 for this ride. Details and registration pack from Geoff Hayes 01227 785067.

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Campaign Corner
 Campaigning for cycling facilities is seen by some simply as hard-earned cyclists trying to grab a share of limited resources, such as local authority funding and road space. If there is to be a reduction in congestion, mostly caused by the dominance of the private car in personal transport, then bicycle usage has to be a significant factor. It is possible to attract people out of their cars by the fact that travel by car, particularly for short journeys, will be such an unpleasant experience (a bumper to bumper crawl, followed by a lengthy search for a parking place) that they will look for an alternative? I believe the principal objective of campaigning for cycling facilities is to ensure that, as the inevitable grind towards gridlock causes drivers to think twice about using the car, there is a viable alternative, there will be choice. With Canterbury's road conditions being what they are, I very rarely use my car to go into town on a Saturday. This is possible because the facilities that have been provided mean that I can choose my mode of transport. For me, campaigning is about providing options.

SATURDAY 23RD JUNE 2001

BIG WHEEL OF KENT BIKE RIDE

These routes are mainly on country lanes with refreshment stops and overnight camping available. Whether you are cycling or not, all are welcome. Choose which spoke of the Big Wheel of Kent that you would like to ride (application form on reverse)

£3.00 ENTRY (£4.00 ON THE DAY) UNDER 16'S FREE

PLEASE ARRIVE 20 MINUTES BEFORE THE START!

10.30am Rochester to Canterbury starts at Rochester Castle Grounds
11.00am Maidstone to Canterbury starts at Ashford Railway Station
11.30am Folkestone to Canterbury starts at Folkestone car park, Whitstable
12.00pm Dover to Canterbury starts at Deal Pier
12.30pm Thanet to Canterbury starts at Ramsgate Motor Museum
13.00am Here Bay to starts at The Central Bandstand Here Bay
13.30am Whitstable to Canterbury starts at Whitstable Station
14.00am Sittingbourne to Canterbury starts at Milton Court Farm, Milton
14.30am Ashford to Canterbury starts at Ashford Railway Station
15.00am Canterbury to Canterbury starts at Canterbury West Station
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These forms are available from all bike shops, libraries, sports centres, post offices and the council offices. If you are unable to get hold of an application form or you need further details, contact: The Kent Cycling Officer 01222 221028 cyclokent@kent.gov.uk

LEASE COME AND JOIN US AT THE HOUSE OF AGNES, CANTERBURY FROM 12PM

RIDES AND RIDE LEADERS
 We need your help for Autumn, please do not leave it to the usual volunteers because the more leaders we have the greater variety of rides we can offer. If you have not lead a ride before then help is available. If you have any ideas please call Gail or Tim on 01227 367422.

SPOKES holds regular rides on the first Sunday of most months. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Children under 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult. SPOKES and its members accept no liability for any accident or loss - please note that you attend a cycle ride at your own risk.

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Loose Chippings Bikers get their demob orders

The world's last bicycle soldiers are soon to be disbanded as the Swiss government has decided that there is no place in a 21st century army for its 3,000 strong Bicycle Brigade.

Formed in the late 1800s when many European powers had added pedal power to their military capability the regiment continued as a vital back-up communications tool that was ideally suited to operating in rugged terrain where conventional vehicles would find difficulty operating.

The Swiss army is based upon a militia system where each male citizen between the ages of 18 and 42 spends three weeks every two years doing military service. The cycling regiment has generated a unique esprit-de-corps among fit, young Swiss and some members even went on to become Olympic cycling contenders.

Thousands applied to join each year and following a very physical selection procedure that involved running 3.4km in 12 minutes, successful recruits faced a 15-week training course including a 200km forced "pedal march". This fitness regime was essential to be able to use a specially built 7-speed, hydraulically-braked, mountain bike that featured machine gun clips, space for four panniers and weighed-in at 90kg fully loaded.

On finishing their service at 42 the citizen-soldiers can buy their machines for a nominal sum, but they may not sell them on. However, so well thought of are these Swiss-built Condor machines that they can sell on an Internet black market for over £2,000.

By 2003 the brigade will be no more as the Swiss Army faces a cycle-free future while it refocuses its efforts to repelling economic refugees rather than the threat of conventional military invasion. It is ironic that the potential for nuclear holocaust was seen-off with pedal power yet the possibility of human invasion needs a higher-tech army.

Cyclists "Stand Easy".

MALCOLM BULPITT

More articles can be found on www.spokeseastkent.org.uk Some of the items included in this issue have been edited to fit our limited space. For the full versions, please log on to the web site.

NEW - Reflective Snap Bands - two for £4.50!
 Wear a SPOKES hi-vis yellow safety waistcoat while cycling. Unbeatable bargain at £10 each. Makes an ideal present whatever the time of year. Available in Medium, large, XL, XXL and children's sizes. Order by phoning 01227 367422.



Contacting SPOKES
CHAIRMAN: Andy McNally 01227 713285 andy@room-101.freeserve.co.uk
VICE CHAIRMAN: Martin Farbrother 01227 712244 marfar@lineone.net
LIAISON: Sheila & Sam Webb 01227 738296 sam@spokeseastkent.org.uk
MEMBERSHIP: Andy McNally 01227 713285 andy@room-101.freeserve.co.uk
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MINUTES SECRETARY: Paul London 01843 586653 paul.london@lineone.net
 Find us on the Internet at www.spokeseastkent.org.uk

Now's the time to be a SPOKESperson!

Name _____ date _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone _____

Annual membership - please tick relevant box

Individual adult £4 Family/household £6

Senior citizens/unwaged/under 16 £3

I am a Connex Gold Card holder

Please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to the address overleaf.

SPOKES

www.spokeseastkent.org.uk ISSUE 28 SUMMER 2001

Provident backs down in counter claim row

Four years ago, a car driven by a woman insured with Provident Insurance plc hit eight year old Darren Coombes, cycling to a friend's house near Sandown in the Isle of Wight.

Darren suffered severe brain damage, was in hospital for 3 months and was given a 25% chance of survival. Now he is 12 but has the mental age of an eight year old.

Darren's parents sued the driver for damages. Provident lodged a counter claim for negligence claiming he was not adequately supervised and should have been wearing a helmet. This counter claim affected not only Darren's parents but also Mrs Cole, a childminder who was looking after Darren on the day of the accident. If they lost the case the Coombes would have become bankrupt.

The case was due to come to court in Feb 2001. If pursued along those grounds by PI it would have made legal history. But the action by PI was so unusual that it brought media attention and offers of help from barristers, expert witnesses and the CTC.

Kevin Mayne CEO of the CTC wrote an open letter to the Chief Executive of Provident questioning its motives.

Hundreds of concerned people and many cyclists wrote to Provident Insurance. Many cancelled their policies and in Bradford local cyclists considered an action outside the offices of PI to draw attention to the case.

On 19th February PI withdrew its action against Mr and Mrs Coombes and Mrs Cole.

The company said: "PI does not accept any negligence on behalf of the driver and continues to reject the insurance claim. However PI does not wish to involve Darren's parents and childminder in any further unnecessary distress at this time."

However the CTC says: "If it (PI) had not wanted to cause distress it would not have taken this action in the first place."

Spokes has long supported, as does the CTC, a move in UK legal frameworks towards a situation closer to that in many European countries where the burden of proof in negligence cases involving walkers and cyclists falls more strongly on the motorist to prove they were not negligent than on the claimant to make a case. Darren's sad plight is a good reason for this to become law.

Member's sales/wants

FOR SALE - Old Fashioned Bradbury Cast Iron Wheel Truing Jig £55. Chris: 01227 731511 email: chartham1@netscapeonline.co.uk
WANTED - Brompton 3 or 5 speed in reasonable condition for recent convert via Sheila Webb. Ring 0118 933 2345 or 01227 738296.

Basic Bike Maintenance

Andy McNally will be running more of his successful bike maintenance sessions on these dates:

- 25 July - Wheels & Punctures
- 27 July - Brakes
- 1 August - Gears
- 3 August - Saddles and Bearings

The aim is not to repair anyone's bike but to provide them with knowledge to carry out adjustments, minor repairs and recognise when a fault occurs. Details from Andy 01227 713285 or andy@room101-freeserve.co.uk

To advertise in this newsletter, please call Tim Perks on 01227 367422, mobile 0802 268893, email gaileyrichardson@cs.com



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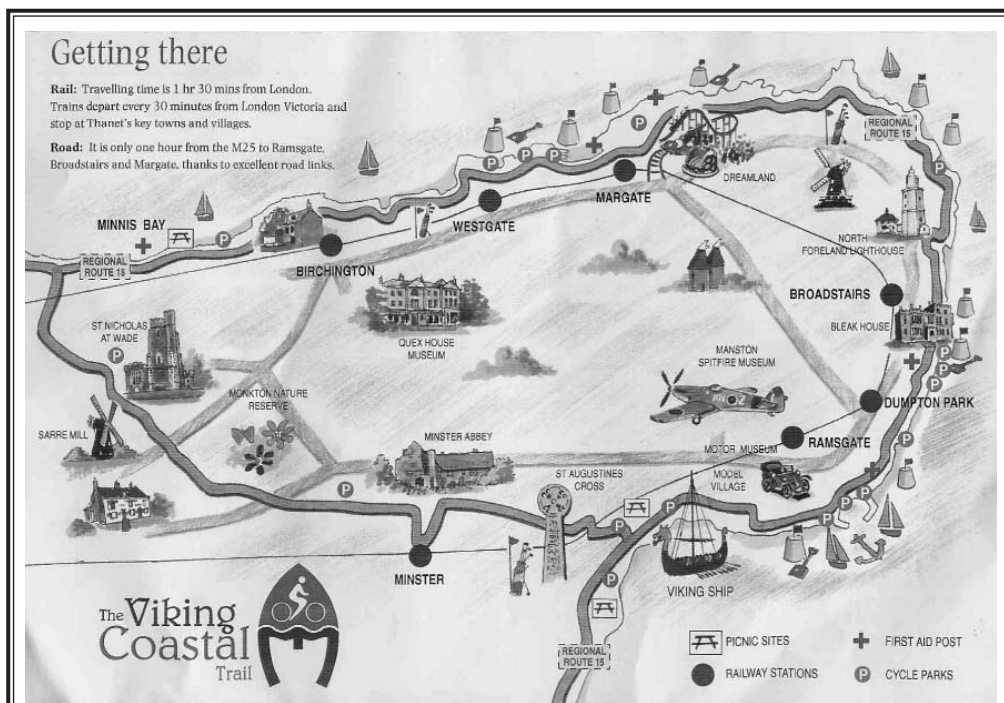
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Saturday 6.45am-3pm
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Coastal Trail set for June opening

Thanet's circular cycle route, the Viking Coastal Trail is nearing completion and will be formally opened on 7 June during a ceremony at the Viking ship Hugin at Pegwell Bay near Ramsgate followed by the chance to ride all or some of the 22 mile route.

Do your bit for the Kyoto Agreement

The British government has signed up to the Kyoto Agreement, which means that it has pledged to reduce CO2 emissions to 8% below 1990 levels by 2008. How can you help achieve this? Well, there are four principal ways.

Use alternative energy sources. Solar panels, wind turbines and hydro-electric turbines all harness natural energy and don't produce CO2 emissions in use. The only one of these that is normally applicable to the individual is the solar panel.

Improve insulation. Energy generation emissions are reduced if we make more efficient use of energy, but will we see the difference that we make?

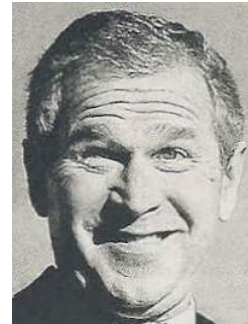
Improve the efficiency of internal combustion engines. In the last 30 years, engine efficiency has improved by something like 80%. Of course, all of that improvement has been lost in increased usage. There is still much potential for improvement, but we can't wait another 30 years.

Reduce the use of the internal combustion engine. At last, here is something where we can all make a difference. If, one day a week, you leave your car at home and ride your bike to work, you will be making a 20% cut in your commuting CO2 emissions; here and now, not in 30 years time, not dependent on manufacturers, energy suppliers or anyone else. I ride my bike to work one day a

week for the duration of British Summer Time. Why not five days a week or in the Winter I hear you say. Well, there are three reasons.

First, living in Sturry and working in Dover, my trip to work and back is around 40 hilly miles. Second, I'm the wrong side of 50 and parts of me don't always work as well as they once did. Third, I don't like cycling in the rain. What? A fair weather cyclist as well! Why not? Cycling should be a pleasure, not something that is endured. I am lucky that my employer has provided shower facilities, so I don't sit at my desk in sweaty clothes and smelling like a polecat. However, if your commute is around the average (five miles or less), it is possible to pootle along and avoid the need for special clothing or a hosing-down on arrival.

So, choose your day carefully (even the average British Summer doesn't normally produce five consecutive days of rain) and start cutting those emissions, right now. You won't be on your own.



George Dubya about to tear up the Kyoto Agreement.

ANDY MCNALLY
CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Just before George 'Dubya' Bush announced he considered the US economy more important than the threat of climate change to the rest of the world, Sir Crispin Tickell told the Associate Group on Architecture and Planning meeting at the House of Commons the world needed "Some useful catastrophe to jerk us out of our inertia: big, but not too big."

To back his arguments he quoted these figures:

- The demand for fresh water has doubled in the past 20 years
- Carbon emissions have increased by a factor of 17 over the past century
- The human population is now four times the size it was in 1900
- Sea levels are predicted to rise by half a metre by the middle of the next century.

None of these figures appear to have made the slightest dent in Dubya's enthusiasms. He has thrown caution to the wind as America increases its CO2 emission levels without a care in the world.

What has this to do with us in East Kent you ask?

We have just witnessed the heaviest rainfall in 300 years, not just here, not just in the UK but all over Europe. One of the Kentish Nailbournes flowing through Barham, Bishopsbourne, Bridge and Patrixbourne has caused untold damage.

The other Nailbourne flowing down the valley formed by Chartham Downs has put the mainline railway out of action and required more than one million gallons of water to be pumped out every day from a field by the tracks to stop the line flooding. What other warnings will we need?

SAM WEBB

Camp sites where things go bump in the night

As my wife will testify, I really do not like spending money. Why waste money on a hotel bed when all you do is fall asleep on it? The same very unconscious condition can be achieved in a sleeping bag in a tent at a fraction of the cost.

Logically therefore, a focus for any long distance cycle ride becomes, "Where are the camp sites?" But my Scrooge-like character pays dividends, not only in terms of economy, but more importantly in the people we meet and the memories they provide.

Who could forget the campsite owner halfway across the C-2-C who wanted to charge an additional £2 for opening the door to the toilets, and who went on to give us a guided tour of his 6ft x 4ft garden shed which he had proudly converted by putting in a table and four chairs as the "lounge" for campers.

Who would forget pitching a little tent right among the apple trees on a farm next door to the Danube?

Outside the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is what would be a remarkable sight in England, half pipes for BMX bikers and skateboarders.

The Rijksmuseum houses some of the world's greatest paintings by Frans Hals, Vermeer and Rembrandt. But something which also draws the crowds of tourists are the amazing gymnastics on the half pipes, by BMX riders, skateboarders and roller bladers.

There was nobody else in the orchard at all. What a quiet setting-at least that's how it seemed.

But NOT in early September. Have you ever listened to the sound of an orchard heavy with ripe apples while you were trying to get to sleep? Ripe apples tend to fall! Each apple goes: ShShSh... (as it falls through the leaves underneath it).....THUMP!!! (hits the ground!)

But all totally unpredictable....minutes can pass without a sound, and then suddenly 2 or 3 in quick succession and in random directions around the tent. When was the next one going to go....? Which direction will it be in?....Yawn....Perhaps I can drift off before the next one.....ShShShSh....THUMP!!!

STUART MILLIGAN

Canterbury has nowhere for our homegrown experts to practice. They are always being chased away wherever they go. They could be quite a draw. The city could win Interreg money for a site which could be a public art project. If the Dutch can do it why not us?

Come on Canterbury how about it? How about something for the forgotten ones?

The mechanic's dilemma

Have you ever pondered over seemingly impossible to solve cycling problems? In this issue Spokes brings you a new column by an experienced mechanic.

Have you ever had a hub gear that won't change ratios? It's a daunting experience to dismantle a Sturmey Archer the first time and a relief to find the malfunction caused by a live slug in the internal mechanism!

Have you ever had an alloy seat pin stuck in the steel frame? Usually a chemical reaction takes place between the frame and the pin unless the pin has been well greased before insertion. Once the obvious methods of removal have been exhausted you will probably be left with a mutilated exposed stump. A method successfully used is to take out all the bottom bracket axle.

Assuming the seat tube is open sufficiently you can

put a threaded rod down the centre of the seat post and fit a suitable washer and nut onto it from within the bottom bracket. Then slip an old tube spanner or similar over the threaded rod from the top and another washer and nut to retain the spanner.

This can then be used as a slide hammer to strike out the old seat post. It helps to lubricate inside the seat post before you do this.

I often wonder if seized seat posts are the reason so many ride with the saddle too low! It is a liberating experience to get it right. While sitting on the bike, with the ball of the foot on the axle of the pedal, the leg should be "just before" full lockout on extension, ie almost straight. But experiment with this as we are not all the same shape! (Another tip for this is to stand astride the frame with both feet on the ground and the point of the saddle touching the bottom tip of the coccyx. Ed.)

CHRIS HARRINGTON

Le Tour comes to Pas de Calais for first stages

The 2001 Tour de France, the first of the millennium, will set off from the Côte d'Opale (North Sea and Channel coastline of the Nord Pas-de-Calais). Various cities have decided to co-host, over four days, the launching of the 88th Tour de France.

On Saturday 7 July the Prologue will be held, in Dunkirk: an 8 km course through the streets of the city, with a finale along the seashore up to the finishing line on Place du Centenaire. Next day, Sunday July 8th, the 200 km first stage will take riders from Saint-Omer to Boulogne-sur-Mer, via a loop through the regions of Audomarois, Montreuillois and Boulonnais. Finally, on Monday July 9th, the second stage will set off from Calais.

Dunkirk is one of the Tour's traditional stopovers. It first held a stage back in 1911, during the 9th Tour de France. This Channel harbour has since hosted a stage on sixteen occasions, the last time in 1995 (stage victory for the sprinter Jeroen Blijlevens). But never before has it held the Prologue.

Boulogne-sur-Mer has previously held two stage finishes: Callens won there in 1949, as did the sprinter Van Poppel in 1994. Calais was once before the starting point for a stage, in 1994. As for Saint-Omer, it will be its first encounter with the Tour bandwagon. www.letour.fr/2001/us/infos/granddepart.html

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The centre is open Tuesday to Saturday 10.30am to 4.30pm. Good food, drink and lots of useful resources and information.