

AUTUMN EVENTS

Rides co-ordinator: Gail Richardson 01227 367422
 Email: gail@richardsoncs.com

Tuesday 21st August 2.00pm
CYCLE RIDE: A FAMILY PEDAL ON THE MARSH
 A family bike ride on the Romney Marsh to look for wildlife and enjoy the Marsh landscape. Donation appreciated. LEADER: Owen Lychon, RMCP (01797 367934). MEET: West Street car park, New Romney, (opposite the Cinque Port Arms pub) (TR 064 247).
 DISTANCE: 14 miles (2.5 hours).

Saturday 25th August 1am
INVICTA WAY CLEAN UP
 We are going to clean up the rubbish on the Invicta Way. Meet at the railway station end, off All Saints Close, at 1am on Saturday 25th August. Bring stout gloves, some people will need wellies. Details from Andy on 01227713285.

Saturday 1st September 10.15 am
*** CYCLE RIDE: OFF ROAD / RURAL RYE 2'**
(Please book with ESSC on 01797 226488)
 Through woods and valleys enjoying the spectacular High Weald Countryside - be prepared for the mud! LEADER: Julia Scanes, ESSC Rye Bay Countryside Office (01797 226488). Please leave name and number. MEET: Rye Railway Station (TQ 919 205). DISTANCE: 16 miles.

Sunday 2nd September
REABILITY BIKE RIDE 2001
 Another ride postponed earlier this year. Spokes has been asked to help with this while enjoying a choice of either 15, 25 or 40 miles of

SPOKES holds regular rides **S** on the first Sunday of most months. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Children under 16 must be accompanied by responsible adult.
 ● We aim to integrate bikes and trains by starting and finishing our rides at or near railway stations.
 ● We have taken every care to ensure that ride details given here are correct at time of printing but you may wish to check with the leader by phoning before travelling.
 ● You are advised to wear protective equipment, such as a cycle helmet, and wear warm clothing in cold weather. On longer rides, there will usually be refreshment stops but please bring a drink and some food with you. You should ensure your bike is in a safe, roadworthy condition before setting out.
 ● SPOKES and its members accept no liability for any accident or loss - please note that you attend a cycle ride at your own risk.
 ● Details of East Kent CTC rides from Lorna on 01304 832492, South Kent CTC, from Mick on 01233 625414.
 ● Kent section Veteran Cycle Club rides, contact Dave on 01892 722584. For East Kent Cycling Club rides contact Jack Cole on 01843 592577.
 ● White Cliffs and Romney Marsh Countryside Projects regularly organise cycle rides throughout South Kent. Call 01304 241806 or 01303 274806 for details and ask for a comprehensive guided walks leaflet.

www.spokeseastkent.org.uk ISSUE 29 AUTUMN 2001



Olympic champ Kelly Holmes opens Thanet's Viking Coastal Trail
SPOKES brings you Snap Band reflectors

SPOKES was formed in 1994 to campaign for better cycling facilities in East Kent. SPOKES works closely with Sustrans, Kent County Council, district and parish councils. SPOKES is affiliated to the Cyclists' Touring Club, the Cycle Campaign Network and Euro-Regio Velo.

SPOKES

East Kent Cycle Campaign

Loose Chippings

As I travel around Kent I become increasingly frustrated at the opportunities that have been missed to provide for, and encourage, cycling in our county.

Maidstone has just opened a new multi-million pound riverside walkway and park that was partly funded by the Millennium Commission from National Lottery money. The scheme includes two new pedestrian bridges over the Medway to link the park and its leisure facilities to the town. In addition the town's award winning Lockmeadow Millennium Bridge that was opened in 1999 is also part of the project. Good news for the residents of Maidstone.

However, walkway is the appropriate word. Cyclists are prohibited from using the 10km long path alongside the river that gives a potentially safe and traffic-free route into the town. Cycling is also prohibited on all three bridges that link the elements of the route together and give access to the park where cycling is allowed, although not publicised. There are no cycle route links into the existing cycling network in the town including National Cycle Route 17. That was also funded by Lottery money. The reasons for these anomalies appear to be a lack of joined-up-thinking between KCC and Maidstone BC. Missed opportunities.

In another area of the county a new Community Hospital is under construction but an opportunity to study the plans has shown that apart from an area designated for cycle parking in a remote corner of the car park there is a distinct lack of cycle facilities serving the site. This Government now recommends that on all new major projects of this type a Cycling Audit be commissioned to ensure that cyclists can safely access the facility from its entire hinterland. Apparently this was not carried-out, resulting in another missed opportunity.

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.

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.

RIDES AND RIDE LEADERS

A pre winter warmer. Join Tim (and perhaps Gail & Joshua) for a pleasant but possibly chilly ride through Elham valley and surrounding country. All country lanes with some hills once we get out of Canterbury. Meet at Canterbury West Station at 10.45am for approx 25 miles of scenic Autumnal views and Pubs with log fires.

ELHAM VALLEY FIREWORKS

Sunday 4th November
 A gentle family pedal for the family to enjoy the beautiful Marsh. This will be a treasure hunt for everyone, with clues to find and prizes for everyone. Donation appreciated. LEADER: Owen Lychon, RMCP (01797 367934). MEET: West Street car park, (opposite the Cinque Ports Arms pub), New Romney (TR 064 248). DISTANCE: 12 miles (2.5 hours).

Thursday 25th October 2.00pm

CYCLE RIDE: CLEVER COGGES
 Meet at Folkestone West railway station at 10.30am for a 20 mile ride up & around the countryside near Folkestone. The usual pub stop or BYO. Further details to be added to the website closer to the time as the ride leaders are moving house!! Or contact Tim 01227 367422.

Sunday 7th October

UP AND DOWN FROM FOLKESTONE
 give an illustrated talk on his ride from Hanot to Saigon.

Friday 28th September

SPOKES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
 St Alphege Centre, Canterbury from 7.30pm

Sunday 16th September

NICE N EASY AFTERNOON
 Ten miles via Fordwich and Patixbourne. Meet at the City Council offices in Military Road at 2.30pm back around 4.30pm. Ride Leader Ian Rogers 01227 455391.

cycling from Home to Canterbury, Faversham, Wickham etc depending on your choice of route. You can help the Strode Park Foundation for disabled people by getting sponsorship. If you pre register lunch will be provided for £2, otherwise byo. Meet at Strode Park, Home at 10.30am. Sponsor forms and registration from Dave Hopper, Ride Leader, The Reability Bike Appeal Office, 17 Beacon Avenue, Home Bay, CT6, tel Dave Hopper 01227 373808 or Tim Perks 01227 367422.

As you can see from the appeal at the foot of the rides list we could not exist as a cycling group without these volunteers. In fact as the volunteers will tell you this "task" is not too difficult. Just choose your favourite route(s) and the nearest railway station, phone us (01227 367422) and agree a date. If you need advice on any aspect of running the ride again call us or any Spokes committee member. Remember we are willing to help and you will not be on your own on the day. The more ride leaders we have the greater the variety of rides we can offer.

Thanks to our leaders - but we still need more

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Make it big for Marie Curie with Cyclo Sportive

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

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Find us on the Internet at www.spokeseastkent.org.uk

Now's the time to be a SPOKESperson!

Name _____ date _____

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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. **AUT01**

New books reflect greater interest in cycling

Once upon a time the only book you could find on bookshop shelves was *Richard's Bicycle Book*, usually well thumbed with the occasional smudge of oil, as if a cyclist had dashed in to find out how to fix a spoke. But all is now changing. One of the measures of the growing popularity of cycling today is the number of books that are written. Tim Moore's book *French Revolutions: cycling the Tour de France* is an account of an innocent abroad attempting to cycle round the entire Tour route carrying all his luggage. First he has to find where the actual route is going. All he has is the 1:5 billion map from *Cycling Weekly*. So like the good journalist that he is, he phones the Tour Press office:

"Oh it's you again." It's never wise to phone a Frenchwoman more than once in any given fortnight, even if - especially if - she works on a help desk. Asking the Tour de France press office for details of the race route was clearly ranked on the scale of telephonic enquiries somewhere between "Have you ever considered the benefits of pet insurance?" and "What colour knickers are you wearing?" No matter that the route had clearly been decided well before the release of the basic outline in September some six months previously. "We do not announce this information," said the voice defiantly, "until fifteen May." The line went dead; you could just imagine her flinging the phone down in petulant exasperation as a sympathetic press office colleague looked up from her Paris Match and, slowly unwrapping another bon-bon, said, "Don't tell me - another journalist."

I won't spoil it and tell you how it ends. But this is a wonderful book and, is to cycling what Round Ireland with a Fridge was to hitch hiking.

By the time you read this, barring a catastrophe, Lance Armstrong will have crossed the line on the Champs Elysee to notch up his third consecutive win. What is remarkable about Armstrong is that five years ago he was diagnosed with stage four testicular cancer. When lesions appeared on his brain and then his lungs he was given a 40% chance of survival. Against all the odds he responded to treatment. Out of hospital he rebuilt his life. He started to cycle again, went into training with the target of just completing the 1999 Tour. But not only did he complete, he won in the fastest ever time. Lance Armstrong's book is called: *It's not about the bike: My journey back to life*.

Tim Moore dedicates his book to Tom Simpson, Armstrong to his mother and if you have ever wondered what it is like to ride the Tour, or what it is that grips millions of people all over the world in this heroic sporting event, then these books are for you. And if you want to ride the mountain stages then try www.bikepyrenees.com

London's gain – our loss

Gary Macgowan will be taking up his new job on September 3rd in Transport for London's *Cycling Centre for Excellence* part of Ken Livingstone's new GLA initiative to put cycling on the map in the capital. London's gain is our loss.

We wish Gary all the best, and many, many thanks for all the hours he has put in for cycling in Kent. Gary will be joining us on rides and giving a talk at the AGM. I know all of us in Spokes will miss Gary very much. We also extend a warm welcome to the new cycling officer whoever he or she may be.

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



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Unit 81, John Wilson Business Park, Chestfield, Whitstable, Tel 01227 771720
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Saturday 7.30am-12pm
DELIVERY SERVICE AVAILABLE

It's straight, it's curved – it's a Snap Band!



Spokes latest fun and safety must have is the Spokes Snap Band. Fitting all sizes including children the Spokes Snap Band comes in beautiful Hi-Viz safety day-glo yellow to coordinate perfectly with your Spokes Hi-Viz Safety Jacket. The pictures show what they look like and

how to put them on. They also double as rather fetching glow in the dark trouser clips.

The Snap bands retail at £2.50 each or £4.00 per pair. They are popular 32 bands were snapped up (groan) at the pre-launch committee meeting. To order contact Tim on 01227 367422.

Driving on curriculum is bad move

It has been stated in the national press that the DLTR intends to introduce instruction in driving to pupils in the upper years of secondary school.

What this in fact does is increase the amounts of fatalities on the roads as it encourages youngsters to buy their first pollution packer and start driving earlier.

This is typical of measures introduced over the years under the safety banner, backed by the road and lobby have simply been methods of making it easier to drive and therefore increase sales of tarmac, cars and petrol.

We would like to see the DLTR take a balanced approach here, and give training in other methods of transport. Many kids are brought up strapped in the back of estate cars. Then they get bought a car by mum and dad at the first opportunity. They never get to travel by train or use their bikes for anything other than recreation.

It demands far more intelligence and skillful logistical knowledge to use underfunded public transport than a heavily subsidised car on the heavily subsidised car network. One also asks why car manufacturers are given this boost by the tax payers to their sales. In these days of PPP they aren't asked to pay for the whole sham themselves. Just consider the huge sums we have donated to

Dagenham and Sunderland to bolster their profits. Surely it's time for this to become a two way street.

I don't agree with kids being taught how to drive at school, full stop. It puts anti-environment pressure on them to acquire and drive a car over any other method of transport. What if the kid doesn't want to drive? Will they be under such peer pressure that giving in will be the only way? It seems that the Blair State wants to obliterate conscientious objectors of any kind.

EMILY SHIRLEY

Langdon Battery wins engineers' award

Langdon Battery has just won the coveted Institute of Civil Engineer's South Eastern Association Merit Award for National Cycle Route 1.

The award stated that the civil engineering works were in harmony with the environment. This is a great first for Kent. It is not only the premier route into the UK for European visitors it is the first cycle route to win this award in the UK. Gary Macgowan would like to extend thanks to Colin Porter of Babbie for his hard work in designing the route.

Wheely good fun

The Big Wheel of Kent is an event where people of all ages and cycling abilities get out their bikes and set themselves an aim.

This is to cover a given distance with like-minded people and enjoy themselves. 2001's Big Wheel certainly proved that anyone can come out on their bikes. To my knowledge, the age range was from a five year old who rode his own bike, (although there were younger ones being carried), to a seventy year old gentleman (if there was anyone older I apologise for not knowing this fact).

There were people for whom long distances held no fear and those who had not been on their bikes for a long time, but with encouragement from those around them they completed the journey and surprised themselves.

Everyone I saw, had had a really good ride and enjoyable, sociable day. Let us hope this event carries on for many years as it had proved again that riding a bike is fun.

SYLVIA MCNALLY

Cash for parishes

Funding for small scale transport projects, has recently become available from the Countryside Agency as part of their Vital Villages rural support programme.

It is a new scheme that helps rural communities through their parish or town councils to carry out a wide range of small projects to meet local transport needs. It includes *Projects to promote walking or cycling*.

For instance where local need can be proved for enhanced cycle facilities such as cycle racks, lockers, routes etc or a walking bus route to schools, an application can be made for up to £10,000 per parish or small town and the grant will fund up to 75% of project costs. Match funding can include up to 20% of volunteer time with only 5% of actual cash needing to be raised for the project.

This is a new grant and applications are actively being encouraged. For more information contact David Terry at the Countryside Agency at Maidstone on 01622 765222 now!

Pathway takes away A road misery

I enjoy cycling in Kent by necessity and for pleasure, alone and in the company of friends and family. I cycled from Ashford to West Malling railway station (just past Maidstone) along the A20 and would like to spread the news that there is a very cycleable 'pathway' all the way along this part of this major road.

After noticing it hadn't petered out by the time I got to Charing and nearly losing my wits as countless badly-loaded international lorries stormed past, I decided to 'cycle on the pavement' for a while. On joining it I regained my composure and had a much

more pleasant and productive ride.

I also saved 40% on the price of my train ticket to London (my destination). Nowhere, however, on any cycle map was I given a clue as to its existence (from tracks in the sun-baked mud I noticed it is used by cyclists). Couldn't something be done about this? I'm sure I'm not the only one who has to go to London every so often and likes to store up some beautiful memories (bluebells, rabbits, pheasants and fields of flowering crops) to keep me company in the train-jams of London Bridge.

JEZIA TARLETON

It's Gary's cycle route top ten

KCC's cycling officer, Gary MacGowan, chooses the Top 10 Cycle Routes in Kent

1. The Viking Coastal Trail - A circular ride starting at the point where the Vikings first landed in Britain and following the coast around the beautiful Isle of Thanet.
2. The Cliffs and Castles Cycle Trail - A scenic cycle route between Dover, Deal and Sandwich. There are five castles in the area, three are around Deal.
3. The Crab and Winkle Way - An off-road link between Canterbury and Whitstable, along parts of the now disused Crab and Winkle line, the first passenger railway to be opened in the world.
4. Romney Marsh Meanders - 5 delightful circular routes on quiet, flat rural lanes. The routes are an excellent introduction of the history, churches and wildlife of the Marsh.
5. Bike Trails by Rail in the Stour Valley - 8 routes, all starting and finishing at railway stations along the beautiful Stour river valley in east Kent.
6. The Chalk and Channel Way - A dramatic cycle route along the top of the famous White Cliffs of Dover, with panoramic views of the Channel, rest stops and cycle sculptures.
7. Cycling for Pleasure - 4 circular routes following

quiet lanes and paths in Swale's lovely orchards and woodlands. Plenty of pubs and historical interest.

8. Parish Pedals - 14 circular routes in the beautiful heart of the Garden of England, around Ashford and Tunbridge Wells.
9. Cathedral to Coast - a circular route from the famous Canterbury Cathedral through quiet villages and stunning countryside to Dover and Folkestone.
10. The Heron Trail - the route combines rural and maritime interest with spectacular views of the Medway and Thames estuaries. Several detours include a National Nature Reserve famed for the herons that give the Trail its name.

This list is just the top ten! There are hundreds of miles of quiet country lanes and over 100 on and off-road routes to cycle passing through superb countryside and peaceful villages with friendly pubs. Kent is also developing a network of cycle-friendly places to stay and working closely with partners in France to develop cross-Channel cycle routes.

For more information and a cycle pack, contact the KCC's Cycling Officer on 01622 221028 or email on cyclekent@kent.gov.uk. Watch out for our new cycling website in August.

New route circuits Planet Thanet

The newly opened Viking Coastal Trail gives cyclists the opportunity to explore some of the most varied scenery in east Kent. This circular 28-mile route winds its way along coastal promenades, cliff top paths and minor roads, and passes through the seaside resorts of Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate, before turning inland.



Following the line of the Wantsum Channel, which once separated the Isle of Thanet from mainland Kent, the trail goes through the ancient villages of Minster, Monkton and St Nicholas-at-Wade, linking up with Regional Route 15 of the National Cycle Network at Reculver in the north and Pegwell Bay in the South.

Down the road from Pegwell Bay is Ebbsfleet, the site where two famous adventurers, Hengist and Horsa, are said to have landed in the fifth century. A full-sized replica of a Viking ship, the 'Hugin', which sailed from Denmark to Thanet in 1949 to celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of their landing is on permanent display on the clifftop overlooking the bay. (The trail was funded jointly by Kent County Council, Thanet District Council and the European Regional Development Fund.)

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SPOKES, The Canterbury Environment Centre, St Alphege Lane, Canterbury CT1 2EB Tel 01227 457009.

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