

SPRING EVENTS 2003

Rides coordinator: Austin Cassidy 01227 280135

SPOKES has included details of its committee meetings, which are open to members. Also included are dates for the newsletter copy deadlines if you want to write an article and the CTC rides.

Sunday 23 Feb 10am
Minnis Café, Minnis Bay, Birchington
 Circular ride of about 25 miles, lunch at Spitfire Museum, Manston
 Leader Colin Weaver 01227 740478

Sunday 2 March 10.30am
Now that spring is here
 This 20 mile ride is through a landscape which gives Kent its character; small attractive villages with vernacular architecture, quiet lanes, rolling countryside, orchards, hops and oast houses, open farmland, woodland, the chalk landscape of the North Downs and to cap it all, dramatic views of Canterbury Cathedral.

Sunday 23 March 10am
Mother's day outing
 Meet at the Tesco café, Faversham. Circular ride of about 25-30 miles stopping at a café for lunch. Leader Peta Masey 01227 740478

Sunday 6 April 10.30am
 SPKES 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.

● 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.
 ● SPKES 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.

Thursday 13 March 7.30pm
Spokes committee meeting Thanet
 Details Douglas Bush 01843 295811. Members welcome.

Sunday 23 March 10am
Safeway café, Wincheap, Canterbury
 Circular ride 25-30 miles stopping at the Lord Whisky Sanctuary, Rhodes Minnis for lunch.
 Sunday 27 April 10am

Sunday 1 June 10.30am
The Newington to Stockbury Ride
 Newington railway station
 Nigel, Nick & Keith will lead you on a 17 mile circular ride from Newington using part of NCR1 with short off road sections suitable for touring bikes. Lunch at a pub at Stockbury. Details Keith 01795 421414 or Nigel 01795 475399

Sunday 1 June 7.00am and 10.00am
White Cliffs Challenge
 East Kent CTC presents a choice of three rides. Choose 25 miles, 100km or 100 miles. Ride at your own pace. The ride will be marked with arrows and there is an entry fee of between £3 and £6. French and Belgian riders will be joining us. This is the first in the series of rides during the summer of "Les belles d'Europe" with other rides in Calais, St Omer, etc. Details see East Kent CTC website www.eastkentctc.org.uk or phone Lorna 01304 832492.

Monday 9 June
Spokes committee meeting Whitstable
 Details Nick Evans 01227 275157

NATIONAL BIKE WEEK 14-22 JUNE
Saturday 21 June BIG WHEEL OF KENT RIDE
 SPOKES CTC

More Rides with CTC
 East Kent CTC would like to encourage new members to join their weekly Sunday Rides. Rides leave at 10.00am for about 2.5 hours to reach a different destination each week, always a friendly country pub where we have lunch. The group is made up from people from Thanet, Deal, Dover, Canterbury and Home Bay so there is usually someone to cycle home with. We ride as a group at a speed of 11 mph. Tandems, racing and touring bikes are the most suitable. We are a sociable group and will make you feel welcome. For details of the rides either phone the runs secretary Lorna Stanley on 01304 832492 or see our website on www.eastkentctc.org.uk

Monday 22 September
In town without my Car! Car Free Day
 www.22september.org and www.itwmc.gov.uk

Tuesday 23 Friday 26 September
VELO CITY CONFERENCE PARIS 2003
 The theme of this years conference is: The bicycle is a tool for winning the city back. www.velo-city2003.com email velocity2003@maire-paris.fr

Monday 22 September
Pedal to Paris
 300 mile, four day ride from London to Paris for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. Entry fee £350 plus raise minimum sponsorship of £450. Details from RBL's Matt Taylor on 020 7973 7285 or mtaylor@britishlegion.org.uk

Thursday 4 - Sunday 7 September
Spokes committee meeting, Dover
 Details John Shirley 01304 210010

Thursday 21 August 7.30pm
Spokes committee meeting, St Alphege Lane, Canterbury
 Canterbury Environment Centre - members welcome

Friday 18 July 7.30pm
Autumn newsletter material deadline
 Articles welcome. Copy to Editor Sam Webb 01227 738296

Tuesday July 15
Rhino cycle challenge 2003
 The rhino ride is back, bigger and better! Start and finish at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, home to some of the world's rarest and endangered animals including the highly endangered black rhino. Fantastic prizes including disco and fireworks. 20 mile start 3pm or 70 mile ride start 12noon. Details Dee 01303 264647 or deer@howletts.net

Saturday 5 July Port Lympne 12 noon or 3pm
Rhino cycle challenge 2003
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Sunday 29 June 10.00am
Ashford domestic railway station
 30-40 mile circular ride with pub lunch. Leader Jason Wood 01227 740478

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Thursday 19 - Saturday 21 June
Bike to Brussels
 225 mile, three day sponsored ride from London to Brussels in aid of the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. Entry fee £330 plus raise minimum of £400 sponsorship. Details from RBL's Nick Hamner on 020 7973 7285 or nhamner@britishlegion.org.uk

London to Brighton Bike Ride
 The nation's largest mass bike ride is with us again aiming to raise £2.5 million for the British Heart Foundation. Places limited to 27,000 cyclists for this 58 mile journey. Call 09068 616077 or go to www.bhf.org.uk/events and print off an entry form.

Wednesday 9 April 7.30pm
Spokes committee meeting, St Alphege Lane, Canterbury
 Canterbury Environment Centre - members welcome

Saturday April 12
Summer newsletter material deadline
 Articles welcome. Copy to Editor Sam Webb 01227 738296.

Sunday 27 April 10am
Safeway café, Wincheap, Canterbury
 Circular ride 25-30 miles stopping at the Lord Whisky Sanctuary, Rhodes Minnis for lunch.

Saturday 3 May
May time goings on in the woods!
 Don't miss the 50th anniversary of the final closure of the Crab & Winkle line - the world's first steam passenger railway. Make this an event to remember. Much fun and goings on at the Winding Pond. All proceeds to the Lady Mayors' Charities. Rides start from both Canterbury and Whitstable. Robin Townsend 01227 831546

Sunday 4 May 10.30am
The Port & Castle sponsored ride
 A 25 mile circular ride suitable for the family starting on the Quay at Sandwich, taking in Deal and Dover, to raise money for the Martha Trust. Hacklinge nr Deal. Details and sponsor forms from Nick Evans - nickevanscomms@btinternet.com or 01227 275157. £2 entry fee payable on the day. Arranged to coincide with CTC's 125th birthday.

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Poetry portal - The Wild Rider

*I've been a wild rider for many a year
 And spent all my money on waterproof gear
 And now I'm planning my season once more
 And will get to play the wild rider, "encore".*

*And it's yeah! yup, ever,
 Always ever, and more,
 Will I play the wild rider
 Always ever and more.*

*I went to a bike shop I used to frequent
 And told the owner my money was spent.
 I asked him for credit, he answered me, "nay,
 Such a custom as yours I could have any day".*

*I took from my pocket ten sovereigns bright
 And the shop owner's eyes opened wide with delight.
 He said, "I have chainsets and gears of the best
 And I'll even sell you a nice thermal vest".*

*I'll start with a Spokes ride, then maybe two
 At the weekend it's all I can do,
 A tough End to End's worth aiming for
 But whether I'll make it, I'm not so sure.*

*I'll go home to my family, confess what I've done
 And I'll ask them to pardon their prodigal son.
 And if they forgive me as oftimes before
 Sure I never will play the wild rider no more.*

*With thanks to "Arrivée" Autumn 2002
 www.audax.uk.net*

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.

SPOKES

www.spokeseastkent.org.uk ISSUE 35 SPRING 2003



INSIDE
Gifford's Gadgets
Explaining the Rubber Glove Game
Thanet Draft cycle plan

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.

Reflective Snap Bands - two for £4.00!
 Wear a SPOKES hi-vis yellow safety waistcoat. A bargain at £10 each.
 Order by phoning 01227 738296.
 A full range of sizes on offer.

Contacting SPOKES
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 nickevanscomms@btinternet.com
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 samwebb37@hotmail.com
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 nickevanscomms@btinternet.com
RIDES: Austin Cassidy 01227 280135

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

Now's the time to be a SPOKESperson!

Name _____
 Address _____
 Postcode _____ Phone _____
 Email _____

Annual membership - please tick relevant box
 Individual adult £4 Family/household £6
 Senior citizens/unwaged/under 16 £3

Please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to the address overleaf. **SPRO3**

Congestion charge bids to break gridlock

By the time this SPOKES newsletter hits the streets a new traffic system will be in operation in London. Every day 250,000 cars, most of which carry only one person, drive into central London; an area roughly enclosed by Euston Road to the north, Shepherd's Bush to the west, the Elephant & Castle to the south and the edge of the City to the east.

These cars represent 15 per cent of commuters who arrive in the central area and the amount of congestion, and the delays caused to the other 85 per cent of commuters are incredible. More than one in seven cars in the central area are looking for somewhere to park. TFL's, or Transport for London's, D-Day is scheduled for 17 February.

Congested

London is the most heavily congested city in Europe. It takes just a couple of accidents or breakdowns to reduce whole areas to gridlock. Because of the congestion caused by unnecessary traffic in the central area, everything moves at speeds equivalent to those of 100 years ago, ie 8mph. Cars will not be banned in the area, they will be charged £5 for any journey made between 7am and 6.30pm. This is projected to reduce the number of cars by 10-15 per cent and the amount of congestion by 20-30 per cent making the traffic levels equivalent to those in school holidays.

TFL estimates that about 15,000 people will transfer to buses and 5,000 to the tube. Two hundred new buses are being introduced which will provide 20 per cent more capacity than needed.

How will it work? Ringing the central area are automatic cameras. These record every car number plate entering. If the fee has been paid the car is ignored, if not it is noted. If the fee is not paid by 10pm a £5 surcharge is added. If not by midnight a fine is levied. Penalties for non-payment are high.

To show the lengths some drivers will go to avoid parking in the right place, a woman car driver who parks everyday in Queen's Square, Glasgow has run up parking penalties amounting to £28,000. She has paid about £12,000. For the amount she has paid she could have bought a parking space in a nearby parking garage for the next 20 years.

Worldwide, city mayors, traffic planners and police forces will be watching what happens in London on 17 February with a great deal of interest. Details of the scheme are on: www.cclondon.com

SAM WEBB

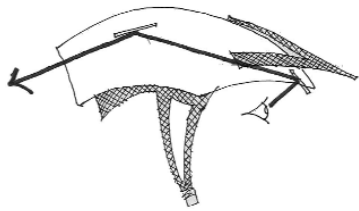
Gifford's Gadgets – an occasional feature reviewing some of the latest in cycling wizardry

It's all done with mirrors!

On the Spokes Stodmarsh ride on 2 January, a rider behind me, was startled to realise that without turning my head I knew how many fingers he was holding up (!).

How was this possible? Telepathy? Guesswork? Cheating? No simply my new Reevue helmet, a technological marvel. For little more than the cost of a standard helmet you can own one with a cunning system of internal mirrors enabling you to see behind without turning round. It's just like using the rear view mirror when driving a car; in fact I'm waiting to see if the manufacturers develop a tandem version, with vanity mirror installed for the stoker.

The Reevue is light, comfortable, and meets all the usual safety standards. I bought mine in Derbyshire, but I see they're now available locally too.



An on the ball report!

CHICAGO - Men who log 3,000 miles or more a year on their mountain bikes suffer scrotal damage which could reduce their fertility, a study has found.

The report, based on examinations of 40 "extreme" bikers and 35 non-cyclists, suggests that men who spend the most time on their bikes should invest in shock absorbers and suspension systems that could double the cost of a standard mountain bike, the study said on Monday.

Scrotal examinations of the bikers found that 88 percent had cysts, calcification, varicose veins and other abnormalities compared to 26 percent of the non-biking group.

Sperm samples showed that the extreme bikers had a count that was only a third that of the non-cyclists while bikers' sperm had less motility or movement than non-bikers.

"We believe extreme mountain biking results in semen alteration, which may have an impact on fertility," said lead author Ferdinand Frauscher of University Hospital in Innsbruck, Austria.

"We believe repeated mechanical trauma to the testicles results in some degree of vascular damage and may thereby cause a reduction in sperm motility," he said.

His report was released at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America.

So why do cyclists shave their legs?

In an unusual rush of blood to the head, particularly for a Saturday morning, BBC Radio 4 actually broadcast a programme about cycling.

In the studio with Sandi Toksvig were authors and cyclists Matt Seaton and Matt Rendell, joined by Dervla Murphy in Cork.

Matt Rendell cycled from Chile, through Argentina and on to Colombia and told Ms Toksvig, much to her feigned disbelief, that Colombia is the only country outside mainland Europe that has produced a steady stream of Tour de France cyclists.

One tiny village at 7,600m, sandwiched between a coalmine and a gold mine, has produced 10 of the world's greatest cyclists.

Cycling started in Colombia at the time of the end of the disastrous civil war 20 years ago when a local man thought of organising a bike race.

From that came the stream of Kings of the Mountains. After the invasion of Afghanistan a bike race was organised around Kabul to bring warring local factions together. Maybe Bush and Blair should try this with Saddam Hussein.

Dervla is an Irish granny in her 70s who cycles 50-60 miles per day on trips. She brought gasps of admiration from the two Matts when she said her average speed was 14mph. While researching for her latest book she was stopped by a bunch of incredulous UN soldiers in Bosnia going down hill at 67kph.

But of course Ms Toksvig's questions finally came to

those twin conundrums asked by non-cyclists of cyclists; what are padded inserts and why do cyclists shave their legs?

Matt Rendell said chamois inserts had originated after cyclists in the Tour de France used to stuff a piece of steak down their woollen and very itchy shorts. After 150 miles in the saddle sitting on it, they would give it to the team chef, nicely marinated, to be cooked for their supper. I'm not sure I believe that even now even though we have all heard it quoted many times before.

If you cycle any distance, padded inserts in your shorts are a godsend. They even out the bumps, and protect your delicate bones. If you've never tried them, believe us, they work!

Shaving legs is a different matter. Racing cyclists always shave their legs. Many answers are given. It helps to cut down wind resistance. It's easier to rub in embrocation. Cuts and grazes can be dealt with more hygienically. But the simple answer is shaved legs look better. The trouble is where do you stop shaving, just above the knee or halfway up the thigh?

If you missed the programme on 18 Jan you can still get it on the net in full. Just key in "BBC Radio 4 Excess Baggage". Matt Rendell's new book, Kings of the Mountains is out on June 26 and published by Aurum Press. Dervla Murphy's and Matt Seaton's latest books were reviewed in the last Spokes newsletter.

Sam Webb

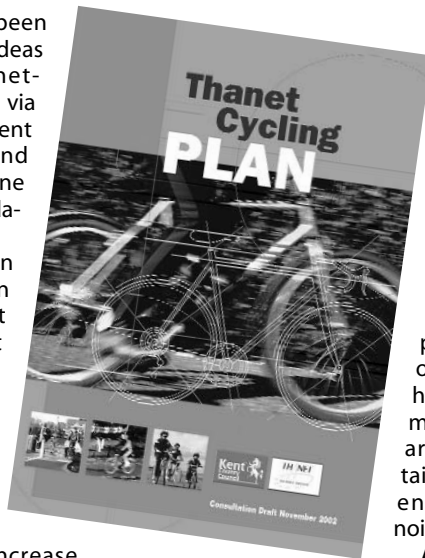
Draft cycle plan published in Thanet

Cyclists in Thanet have been asked to comment on ideas for improving cycle networks and facilities in the area via a public consultation document produced by Kent County and Thanet District Councils, in line with Government recommendations on sustainable transport.

The draft Thanet Cycling Plan outlines the place of cycling in the region's overall transport strategy and identifies eight key areas for action. These include expanding existing cycle routes, integrating these with public transport; making road networks more cycle-friendly, and improving cycle storage and parking. The plan also aims to increase awareness of the health, financial and environmental benefits of cycling, including leisure cycling, as a first step towards encouraging people to be more 'bikewise'.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to review their own car use, consider initiatives such as car pooling, and suggest new routes for commuter/leisure cycling.

The new plan builds on the work of the successful Thanet Cycling Strategy published in 1995.



This has seen the opening of the Viking Coastal Trail, linking Thanet's towns and villages, in 2001; the completion of a 'Safer Routes to School' initiative; and the creation of 66km of new cycle routes in Thanet. 'Toucan' crossings and cycle parking have also been introduced.

Phil Pittcock, KCC transport planner, said: "Cycling is not only great exercise, it also has many advantages as a means of transport. Bicycles are cheap to use and maintain, occupy little space, save energy and cause no air or noise pollution.

Around 75 per cent of journeys to work in Thanet are currently less than three miles long. Our aim is to increase the percentage of journeys to work by cycle to 12 per cent by 2011, in line with national targets."

The plan has been sent to 400 organisations in Thanet. Copies are available from workplaces, schools, colleges, libraries, public buildings and also on-line from www.kent.gov.uk and www.thanet.gov.uk.

Play the Rubber Glove Game

If you're bored when you are out cycling, unlikely though it sounds, why not play "Why do you always find a left handed red rubber glove?"

Score points for what you find in the road. Five points for a left handed red rubber glove. Why is it always left-handed? Low points and no use anyway because you wouldn't want to put your hand in it would you?

Six points left leather builders glove-more use, 100 points for a pair. This is like the Holy Grail; you can never find a pair.

Assorted nuts of the metal variety, 10 points. Pick them up, they can be useful. Hubcaps, one point - too big to put on your bike. Road kill, 50 points if it's intact and you can take it home and eat it, notably pheasants!

There's 2,000 points for a black Madison pouch containing two 700c inner tubes, a Campag bottom bracket spanner, a Leather Man with 15 blades and a map of East Kent. Let me know if you find it. It's mine!

John Hunt

What's it all about Tony?

As Spokes prepares to go to print the world prepares to go to war with Iraq. Well the US and Britain at least.

The Observer 19/01/03 interviewed 32 of the great and the good to get their views as to the reasons for why this is being done in our name. Few supported what is going on.

But perhaps the clearest message as to why Bush and his oilmen are doing this came from John Browne Chief Executive of BP or British Petroleum: "We have let it be known that the thing we would like to make sure, if Iraq changes regime, is there should be a level playing field for the selection of oil companies to go in there if they're needed to do the work there."

So now you know.

Sam Webb

Ride for the Rhinos is back

The rhino ride is back, bigger and better! Due to the success of the first ever Rhino Cycle last year, we are asking you to join in on the fun on Saturday 5th July 2003 and ride to raise funds for our 24 black rhinos at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park.

You have the choice of two bike challenges, this year with a difference: Port Lympne to Romney Marsh return (20 miles) or Port Lympne to Rye return (70 miles).

The routes take you over some of Kent's most beautiful marshland finishing the ride at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, home to some of the world's most rare and endangered animals including the highly endangered black rhino, the largest captive breeding herd outside Africa.

And we are offering fantastic prizes for all including a holiday for the highest fundraiser. The evening is set to be a grand show for all to enjoy with a splendor of entertainment including live bands, disco and a firework finale.

Call Dee in the Marketing Department at Port Lympne on 01303 264647 or email deer@howletts.net to register your details.

Not a shining example

A century ago Edward Redman was summoned for riding a bicycle in the Borough of Canterbury on the 11 December 1902 without a light.

Redman pleaded guilty and said someone had played a practical joke on him, and taken away his lamp. He did not know of this until he got home. The bench fined him 2s 6d and costs.

From Kentish Gazette, December 27 1902.

Challenges ahead – but some bright spots on horizon

It has been a challenging winter for all forms of transport. As an all year cyclist I carry weather protection in my panniers at all times in the form of wax cotton gaiters, hoodless cape, cap with a brim and for those cold days scarf and gloves.

This winter I have derived great pleasure from the distance of light thrown by the dynamo-hub powered three amp halogen headlight on my recently acquired Thorn bike. It actually slows down oncoming vehicles! Alternatively, taking a Brompton on snowy days means I can jump into a taxi should my train to work fail to turn up.

During this bleak midwinter, Spokes committee members have nevertheless been beavering away on behalf of the East Kent Cycle Campaign. Richard Gifford has helped form a working party on traffic management in Faversham, which will be proposing policy to Swale and KCC groups. Austin Cassidy and Lorna Stanley are now involved with the "Local Access Forum" in partnership with the Countryside Agency. We are planning to hold every third meeting in a different part of east Kent, to which of course everyone is welcome. Spokes has also written to PACE (People Against Canterbury Expansion), supporting its work with statistics gatherers Baptee to correct current invalid monitoring methods.

A couple of bright spots have appeared during this winter. In France, virtually all non-TGV trains now carry bikes for free and the SNCF has provided a compartment on the long distance express trains - marked on windows with a large bike sign.

Recently, I came across an autumn copy of Local Transport Today in which there was a big spread on Sustrans' and John Grimshaws' latest campaign to start changing the journey to work.

People should get their exercise during the journey to work rather than driving to the gym to get on a stationary bike. He stated he could name several counties where the hospital has the largest car park in the area. Ironic indeed.

Separately, there was an article about a proposed fifth EU directive on motor insurance which would extend compulsory motor insurance to cover personal injuries suffered by pedestrians and cyclists hit by a car. The cover would apply irrespective of whether the driver is at fault. Although not yet implemented, this is great news for those Spokes members who know of this law in Germany, Denmark and Holland and who have long believed a great deal could be achieved by this simple and relatively inexpensive change in the law. Cycling and walking would become a whole lot safer.

John Shirley

Latest in light reading

Mr Tom: The True Story of Tom Simpson by Chris Sidwells and foreword by Phil Liggett publisher: Mousehold Press £13.95

In his forward Phil Liggett writes, "I turned the television on at precisely 9pm, just in time to hear the newsreader say: 'The British cyclist, Tom Simpson, died today in the Tour de France.....I never took the shower; I just sat down and cried.'"

It was 13 July 1967 and Liggett had just come second in a race. He was the last journalist to interview Mr Tom in the UK, just before he went to the 1967 Tour which he was favourite to win.

Simpson was the greatest cyclist Britain has ever produced. He was the first Briton to wear the Yellow Jersey. No one can take that away.

Tom Simpson was Chris Sidwells' cousin and the book Sidwells has written is an intimate portrait of an exceptional man. Simpson had been World Professional Road Race Champion in 1965 winner of a Bronze medal at the 1956 Olympics. In 1962 he finished 6th overall in the Tour and on the day he died on the 13th stage he was lying seventh.

As Phil Liggett writes: "He was everything a young rider should want to be, and there has never been a rider to match him since, emanating from British roads. This is a beautiful book of our Tom, but, try as we would, it would always have a sad ending."

Sam Webb

To advertise in this newsletter, please call Andy McNally on 01227 713285 andy@room-101.freeserve.co.uk

Spokes needs your support

If you would like to join Spokes, please complete the form overleaf and send it with your subscription to:

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.