

AUTUMN EVENTS

Rides coordinator: Austin Cassidy 01227 280135

SUNDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 5.00AM
LES BELLES D'EUROPE RIDES 2003
 Contact Lorna Stanley 01304 210010

SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER
FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES BIKE RIDE
 Spokes supports this event to raise funds for local churches and The Friends of Kent Churches. Plan your own route to visit as many churches as you like. Details please contact the event co-ordinator Dr Muriel Hall 01732 842549

SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Star Burgers, Canterbury destination The Four Horseshoes, Graveneay

WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER
SPOKES AGM 7PM FOR 7.30PM
 Canterbury Environment Centre, Speaker Gary MacGowan, Promotions and Liaison Officer, "Going by Bike in London - measures to make changes", on what TfL is and what the Cycling Centre for Excellence has been doing.

SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER
THE ANNUAL CEREAL PALSY CARE 25 MILE SPONSORED BIKE RIDE
 The ride starts at Bradbury House, View Road, Cliffe Woods, nr Rochester - registration is 10.30 am and start at 11.00 am. The entry cost is £6.50 and this includes a basket meal at the end of the ride. You can enter by calling 01634 220330 for an entry form.

SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Yummies, Strand Street, Sandwich destination The King Ethelbert, Reculver

MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER
IN TOWN WITH OUT MY CAR! CAR FREE DAY
 www.22september.org and www.itwcm.gov.uk

SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Wingham Bird Park destination The Blue Anchor, Ruckinge

SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER MOUSCRON
LES BELLES D'EUROPE RIDES 2003
 Contact Lorna Stanley 01304 832492

SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER 10.30AM
WHITTABLE TO BIRCHINGTON RIDE
 Meet on the coast bound side of Whitstable station for this favourite jaunt along seawalls and quiet roads to Birchington for a pub lunch. Ride on after for the fitter. Leader Nick Evans, tel 01227 275157.

SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER 9.45AM
 Meet Wingham Bird Park, destination The Black Rabbit, Aldington

SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER 9.45AM
 Meet Yummies, Strand Street, Sandwich, destination The Fox, Temple Ewell

SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 11AM
 Meet The Lord Whiskey Centre, Rhodes Minnis, destination The Duck Inn, Pett Bottom

SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER 9.45AM
 Meet Wingham Bird Park destination The Gate Inn, Marshside

SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 10AM
SEASON OF MISTS AND MELLOW FRUITFULNESS
 Meet Canterbury West. 25 mile ride round the orchards of Blean, Denstroude, Herne Hill, Boughton, Selling, Shottenden, Chillham, Chartham and back to Canterbury. Lunch at the White Lion Selling. Leader Beatrice Shire 01227 766782.

SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Star Burgers, Canterbury destination The Rose in Bloom, Whitstable

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.

- 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.

SUNDAY 9 NOVEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Yummies, Strand Street, Sandwich, destination The Rose and Crown, Stelling Minnis

SUNDAY 16 NOVEMBER
 The Griffin's Head, Chillenden

SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Wingham Bird Park destination The Sun, St Nicholas at Wade

SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Wingham Bird Park destination The Walnut Tree, Aldington

SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER 10AM
WOODS AND CHRISTMAS TREE RIDE
 Meet Canterbury West Station. Ride to Clowes Wood, Thormden Wood, East Blean Wood, pub at Hoath. Ancient woodbanks, trackways and archaeological finds. Leader Beatrice Shire 01227 766782

SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Wingham Bird Park destination The Hope Inn, St Margarets Bay

SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER
 CTC CHRISTMAS LUNCH The Griffins Head, Chillenden

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Yummies, Strand Street, Sandwich, destination The Half Moon & Seven Stars, Preston

SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER 9.45AM
 Meet Yummies Strand Street Sandwich, destination The Gate Inn, Marshside.

SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 9.45AM
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More Rides with CTC

EAST Kent CTC would like to encourage new members to join their Sunday Runs. Rides leave at 10.00am 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 Herne Bay so there is usually someone to cycle home with. We 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

Under front page banner headlines: "Scrap seaton cycling bylaw!" the lead article read: "We asked you what you thought of the No Cycling bylaw along the promenade, and you have told us in no uncertain terms that it should go."

Hear, hear, we say. Readers are welcome to send letters to the Editor of both the Kentish Gazette and Whitstable/Herne Bay Times on and Herne Bay so there is usually someone to cycle home with. We 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

SPOKES

www.spokeseastkent.org.uk ISSUE 37 AUTUMN 2003



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.

Not everything is bigger in America!

In the USA, it has been decided to create the cycling equivalent of the Appalachian Trail, a footpath that follows the chain of mountains down the eastern side of North America.

The plan for the East Coast Greenway, as it is known, is for a foot and cycle path from the Canadian border in Maine to the Florida Keys. The aim is to pass the doorsteps of 30 million Americans by creating a route that goes through the centres of population and it will have links to 27 railway stations.

If this sounds familiar, it's because it is very similar to Sustrans' vision of the National Cycle Network. However, there the similarity ends, because after 10 years and over \$400m spent, there are less than 370 miles out of 2,600 completed. That's more than \$1,000,000 per mile! (About £650,000 at today's exchange rate).

Apparently, "reducing the need for foreign oil and promoting a healthier lifestyle" is the rationale behind the scheme (Note the oil comes first and health second). Being the home of the gas guzzler and the Sport/Utility Vehicle (SUV - another name for a 4-wheel-drive upholstered roller-skate), one has to admire the optimism of such a venture.

It is estimated that another \$1.5 billion will be needed to complete the route and a total of 23 senators have signed a letter, to President Bush, supporting the Greenway. Given George W's record on Global Warming and sustainability, I wouldn't hold my breath.

ANDY MCNALLY

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.

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

CHAIRMAN: John Shirley 01304 210010
VICE CHAIRMAN: Nick Evans 01227 275157
 nickevanscomms@btinternet.com
TREASURER: Terry Croft 01304 831887
LIAISON: Sheila & Sam Webb 01227 738296
MEMBERSHIP: Andy McNally 01227 713285
 andy@room-101.freeserve.co.uk
EDITOR: Sam Webb 01227 738296
 samwebb37@hotmail.com
DESIGN: Nick Evans 01227 275157
 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. **AUT03**

Cycle park regenerates old mine site

East Kent is soon to be home to the largest purpose built closed track racing circuit in the UK, part of an £18.7m regeneration. Based on the old coal tip at Betteshanger near Deal the site will include a 3.5km road circuit, BMX track and mountain bike trails.

When the Betteshanger mine closed in 1989, with the loss of 1,800 jobs, a derelict site of 290 acres (117 hectares) of spoil, product of nearly a century of coal extraction was left behind. After another ten years of neglect, the South East Development Agency (SEEDA) has put in motion plans for regeneration.

An initial meeting was held in the autumn of 2000 when Gary MacGowan the former Kent County Council cycling officer brought together cycling interest groups from all over the UK to meet with SEEDA at Betteshanger Colliery. Spokes was among them. Deal Velo Club helped guide the project through many meetings, winning over local residents who now give it their total support.

Malcolm Whitehead VC Deal President told local residents that a cycling circuit would be a valuable facility for their children and become a centre for developing Olympic talent. As well as the 3.5km six-metre wide cycle circuit with its eight-metre start and finish straight, there will also be a shorter loop for children, a sculpture park, playgrounds, educational facilities, a nature park with bird hides, educational facilities, a campsite and a business park. Some 300 new jobs will be created. The designers are Rummy Design Associates of Sevenoaks.

Negotiations are underway to link the project to National Cycle Route 1 from Dover and Canterbury. This will also make it accessible to cyclists from France. This route links with Deal Railway Station. The site could be ready in 18 months. If the Olympics come to London in 2012 Betteshanger could be the venue for cycle racing.

Spokes has also been involved in another regeneration project with SEEDA in the masterplan for the expansion of Aylesham. This will add over 1000 new houses.

SEEDA has other plans for the regeneration of the old mine area of Snowdown Colliery.

SAM WEBB

Lord Mayor on two wheels

Spokes roving reporter spotted Lord Mayor of Canterbury Nick Eden-Green with the Civic Bike enroute to the Cathedral with a group of Swedish visitors. The Civic Bike was donated by Spokes and it is used frequently for getting around the city.

The new coach pickup and drop off point is certainly curtailing the amount of illegal parking in the cycle lane leading to Canterbury East Station. Those that do block the lane end up with a whopping £80 fine.

Nearly 700 cyclists took part in the Big Wheel of Kent Ride this year. They came from far and wide, two ex-firemen from Manchester cycling back from Milan and the Giro d'Italia, but perhaps the ones who came furthest were three cyclists from Athens, Georgia, in the USA. They had flown into Heathrow that morning with their bikes and were en route to Munich in Germany. Overnight they camped in John Shirley's garden.

DOWNLAND CYCLES FOR ALL YOUR REPAIRS

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Jade's Crossing – a story of our times

My story is a sad one," began Jade's mother as she opened her talk to the Crab & Winkle Trust and Spokes members.

It happened to an innocent happy family when they moved to Detling, a village on the Pilgrims Way in Kent, in the Garden of England, split in two by the A249 and traffic speeding up and down a hill linking the M2 with the M20.

Caroline Hobbs and her family moved into their new house in 1987, a winter of snow. The road was quiet then. But they learned that the lady opposite had been hit by a car and killed on 16 December 1986. It was an ominous date. They heard of other fatalities and incidents and tried to put them out of their minds.

"We went through our days and nights with sounds of accidents, people knocking on our door, bringing people into the house, giving them cups of tea, including the police, who got to know us well. I would wait in fear as my two secondary school children and their friends would try and cross the road in the mornings to try and reach the other side to catch the bus."

Caroline decided to do something.

She told councillors and the press: "A child is about to die," little realising the awful prophetic ring her words were to have. She wanted a bridge, if not, warning signs and speed cameras. "Too dangerous to maintain them," said the Experts, and more ominously, "Not enough dead."

Pavement

On 16 December 2000, holding hands with her grandmother, eight year old Jade Hobbs, was waiting on the pavement to cross the four lane A249. Witnesses said she tried to pull her grandmother back because she hadn't seen the car. But it killed them both, just the same. Another statistic of death on our roads. Figures that make up the 10 road deaths everyday, 3,500 every year, many of them children. Hidden statistics. We mustn't upset the motoring lobby. It's worse than a war.

Jade's mother decided to act. If they wouldn't build a bridge she would. She didn't know how,

Port & Castle raises nearly £500



CYCLISTS enjoyed a warm spring day to tour 26 miles around East Kent to raise £480 for the Martha Trust near Deal in the Port & Castle Ride. Starting out on a circular route from Sandwich, they ventured south to Dover before making the return leg. The event was organised by SPOKES Vice Chairman Nick Evans and supported by the local branch of the CTC whose members made a number of donations.

Those taking part came from all over East Kent

and the money will be used to buy sensory garden equipment for the children of Frances House, Martha's purpose built home caring for profoundly disabled youngsters. Martha Trust is located at Hacklinge near Sandwich and Deal.

Nick said: "I'm very grateful to everyone who took part and gave donations or sponsorship. We were extremely fortunate with the weather and we had a very pleasant ride through some of the prettiest parts of the area."

What would you do with £7 billion?

On 10 July the government announced a massive increase in spending on roads and motorways, including the addition of an extra lane around the M25.

This is a complete reversal of the stance the government made when it came to power in 1997. Then, it cut road spending saying that building more roads was "not the answer."

All the usual suspects were paraded in front of the cameras to say the £7bn was: "A boon and a tonic to the motorists and a boost to industry."

Lauded as an investment, this £7bn is in stark contrast to the state of our railways and the pittance spent on safer cycling. Any money spent on them is always stated to be a "subsidy."

When will it dawn on road engineers and politicians the capacity of any ring road such as the M25 is directly proportional to the capacity of the primary and secondary routes leading to and from it? These roads can barely cope at the moment. So what will happen when the "capacity" of the M25 is increased by 33 per cent? Don't all rush to answer.

St Omer to Canterbury (via goodwill)

Rule number one when camping: test your kit before you go away. I ignored that rule one fine weekend in June when, at 11pm, in the dark, in France, I opened the packaging of my new tent for the first time – I didn't even know what colour it was.

But it wasn't a problem. Spokes members were there to help. That offer of help and kindness was the overriding theme of a most enjoyable weekend.

The Big Wheel of Kent on 21 June had Spokes riding to Canterbury from all over Kent and one from St. Omer in France. Gary McGowan, who organised the European leg suggested a camping trip. There were six of us, riding a tandem, a bike with a trailer and three bikes with panniers.

MICHAEL NEE

A big thank you to our members

A large number of Spokes member responded to the editor's heartfelt plea for renewal of their subscriptions. This has made a considerable contribution to our coffers. All the work we do is entirely voluntary and financed by your subscriptions.

The nights will soon be drawing in so why not invest in a Spokes reflective waistcoat and some snapbands. These will help you be seen in the dark and the snapbands can be used round your wrists to show traffic, which way you are turning. See box on back page for details.

And warm thanks to Dave Ashby

Sustrans recently contacted Spokes to say that Sustrans member Dave Ashby of Ramsgate wanted to paint the mileposts on the Crab & Winkle route.

Dave has made a splendid job of the ones around Thanet and on the Canterbury to Fordwich path, so thanks Dave for a splendid job and we look forward to seeing your latest work.

but she would. She raised £75,000 and did. It was opened on 31 August 2002. She set up The Jade Appeal, a charity which has given £5,000 to promote a walking school bus calendar which will go to 20,000 children in the Canterbury and Thanet area.

In her talk she asked: "Where is the money Tesco donated to Canterbury for the two bridges to link Whitstable to the Crab & Winkle Cycle Route? Why spend the money on another car park and bring yet more cars in?"

Caroline's moving talk is too long to print in our newsletter. For a copy write to Spokes. Or you can read it in full on our website www.spokeseastkent.org.uk.

SAM WEBB

C'EST LE TOUR DE FRANCE by Graeme Fife – part one

A few weeks ago, 180 professional cyclists set out from Paris on the centenary edition of the Tour de France.

In their wake, a vast entourage: team support crews – mechanics, soigneurs, drivers catering to their every need on and off the road; team directors in constant radio touch with every rider (they even have read-outs from individual heart monitors) – as well as the race organisation, publicity caravan and a small army of media – press, radio, TV journalists and cameramen.

Watching the race as it wound round the hexagon of France, from flatlands to rolling hills to the monsters of the Alps and Pyrenees, countless thousands of roadside spectators.

For, this, as ever, is the magic of the Tour de France – the greatest bike race in the world sweeping into cities, towns, villages and hamlets, a grand spectacle of sporting endeavour brought to a huge audience who see it free.

A hundred years ago, on 1 July 60 riders – sponsored professionals riding alongside independents – embarked on the first Grande Boucle ('the Big Loop'), a daunting 2,267km in six stages on roads which, when dry, spat thick dust and shards of loose bitumen into their eyes, mouth, nose, and, when wet, turned to mud. They carried all their own spare gear – tubes, tools, food – they were allowed no help at any time, and even slipstreaming was forbidden. The fastest endured up to 18 hours in the saddle over the final stage, 471km back home; the slowest a lot longer.

Commissaires lurked at hidden controls as well as in the canvas kiosks set up to sign them through. 21 made it back to Paris, the winner Maurice Garin, a chimney sweep by trade, in over 94 hours, the last man, Millocheau, a whacking 64 hours behind him. But, the freelance from Chartres made it and, in the century since that epic debut Tour, the truism has been constantly reinforced: this is a race like no other, an unparalleled extended test of resolve, physical strength and courage; no individual rider is greater than the Tour and none, not even the great champions, can say they beat the Tour, only that, this time at least, the Tour did not beat them.

Read more in two books by Graeme Fife: *Tour de France: the history, the legend, the riders and Inside the Peloton: riding, winning and losing the Tour de France*. Both published by Mainstream Publishing.

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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.