

SPRING EVENTS

Rides coordinator: Austin Cassidy 01227 280135

2004

Thursday 18 to Sat 20 March 10.30am to 4.30pm
 Canterbury Museum, Stour St, Canterbury
 Science Week featuring among other things, bikes from their earliest days and the Crab & Winkle's Invicta plus much more.

Sunday 4th April 2004 10.30am
 Darent Valley Ride
 Meet Farmingham Road Station (Canterbury East line), A 25 mile ride taking in a Roman Villa, two castles and an aircraft museum. Lunch in a pub. Camping facilities if you want to stay Saturday night. Leader Mick Ritchie 020 8302 5947

Sunday May 2nd 2004
 The Lady Mayores' Charity Ride
 This is a local 25 mile ride taking in Canterbury to Whitstable along the Crab & Winkle Way to Whitstable, Herne Bay and back to Canterbury. There will be three start and finish points. This ride will also coincide with the Crab & Winkle anniversary and Spokes' 10th birthday. Details: Lady Mayores Monica Eden-Green 01227 470416.

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.
 ● 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 7th March 10.30am
 Early Bird
 Teynham station at 10.30am for a circular ride of 20 miles with a pub lunch at the Chequers in Dodington. Details: Keith 01795 421414 or Nigel 01795 475399.

Thursday 12th June
 CPRE Kent Annual Bike Ride
 Details: Sandra Dunn CPRE (Kent), Coldharbour Farm, Wye TN25 5DB.
 Why not try cycling on the Romney Marsh with the Romney Marsh Countryside Project during National Bike Week with the big Shephway Cyclethon 2004.
 Sunday 13th June 2004 10.00am - 2.00pm
 SHEPWAY 2004 CYCLETHON
 St Martins Field, New Romney 10.00 am
 Lathes Barn Tea Rooms 11.30 am
 On the first day of National Bike Week, Shephway District Council and the Romney Marsh Countryside Project, will cycle the National Cycle Route 2 across the Romney Marsh by cycling from New Romney in a short, circular route around the Romney Marsh. There will be a stop at Lathes Barn tea rooms before arriving back at New Romney. As usual there will be a FREE T SHIRT, plus FREE grub at Lathes Barn tea rooms and at St. Martins Field, New Romney at the end.
 We will start at each of these places with a leader so join in the fun and don't worry there will be transport back if you get tired. Plus a bike doctor, courtesy of Romney Cycles and a bike trailer if needed be !! The fun will continue back at New Romney at 1.45 pm, where there will a small amount of grub for everyone. There will be transport provided for tired legs. Remember to bring a Owen keep those energy levels up on the way around. Details: Owen Leyshon, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934

Saturday 19 June
 BIG WHEEL OF KENT RIDE
 Choose your spoke of the Big Wheel. A dozen routes all converging on Canterbury where a big celebration with refreshments will be held at the House of Agnes in Canterbury. Typical rides from Rochester, Maidstone, Ashford, Folkestone, Dover to Canterbury. There will be a leg from St Omer to Canterbury. Details James Magowan 01634 854146 or email: cathy@lovenmac.freeserve.co.uk. Booking fee £3 or £4 on the day.

Sunday 20 June
 London to Brighton Bike Ride
 Organised by and for the British Heart Foundation. Enter to be among 27,000 cyclists heading out on a 58 mile route between Clapham Common and Madeira Drive. Entry fee £21.50 per head. Call 09068 616077 for entry forms – calls cost 75p per minute.

SPOKES
 Sunday 4 July 10.00am Canterbury West Station
 10th Spokes Anniversary Ride Cathedral to Coast 55 miles
 Ride the Cathedral to Coast Route Regional routes 16 & 17. 55 miles Canterbury-Elham-Dover-Canterbury. Riders can take the train back to Canterbury from Folkestone or Dover if they wish. Details: Sam 01227 738296.

Good news for Ashford cyclists
 The Government has announced a £1.6m boost to promote cycling and walking in Ashford. Safe Routes to Schools figure high on the list. Ashford is proposed to expand its housing stock by 40,000 homes in the next 10 years.

DOWNLAND CYCLES
 for bespoke fitting and
 bike building, repairs and
 maintenance courses
 We also offer hire, sales of cycles, clothing and accessories – all served with tea and biscuits!

10 per cent discount for Spokes members on clothing, repairs, accessories and hire. Join Spokes at Downland!
 www.downlandcycles.co.uk
 E-mail: bryan@downlandcycles.plus.com or julie@downlandcycles.plus.com
 Tel: 01227 479643
 10am to 6.30pm Tuesday to Saturday. (Closed for hols to 20 Feb 04)

More rides with CTC
 EAST Kent CTC would like to encourage new members to join their Sunday Runs. Rides leave at 10am 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 cycle at the pace of the slowest rider.
 Tandems, racing and touring bikes are the most suitable. We are a sociable group and will make you feel welcome! For details of our rides see our website on www.eastkentctc.org.uk

SPOKES

www.spokeseastkent.org.uk ISSUE 39 SPRING 2004

East Kent Cycle Campaign

Strategy aims to boost bike use in Thanet

The health, environmental and financial benefits of cycling are highlighted in the Thanet Cycling Plan, a new strategy document launched by Kent County Council and Thanet District Council.

In a survey carried out in Thanet during 2002, 87% of respondents said that they would like to cycle more frequently. The Thanet Cycling Plan identifies eight main areas of action and outlines initiatives that will make it easier for people to be "bike-wise".

These include expanding and linking existing cycle routes and introducing new ones; integrating cycle routes with public transport networks; making roads more cycling-friendly, and improving parking and storage for cycles. The plan encourages businesses to review employees' car use, and make it easier for their workforce to leave the car at home and travel by alternative means such as cycling.

You can review the policies and targets outlined in the Plan and provide feedback. Copies are available from workplaces, libraries, public buildings, schools and colleges, and also online from www.kent.gov.uk and www.thanet.gov.uk.

Comments can be emailed to cycling-plan@thanet.gov.uk, or sent to Phil Pittock, Senior Transport Planner, Kent County Council, on 01227 825362, or Stuart Smith, Community & Public Transport Officer, Thanet District Council, on 01843 577607.

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.



RoadPeace for children?
 Spring rides and Bike Week plans
 Thanet cycle plan boost

Picture © Julia Bayne/SUSTRANS

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 479643.
 A full range of sizes on offer.

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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 £6 Family/household £10
 Senior citizens/unwaged/under 16 £5

Please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to the address overleaf. **SUM04**

RoadPeace remembers the fallen

In the rough and tumble world of 40 years ago, when the Beatles were four unknown lads touring Hamburg, life was simple for children. They played in the streets safely, watched over by neighbours.

Girls played hopscotch, skipped, tied ropes to lamp-posts and made swings. As the seasons changed, boys piled up coats to make goals and chalked football, then tennis and later cricket markings on the roads. They all rode bikes and scooters, made go-carts and played conkers. Then came the car.

Children were chased from the roads, streets and pavements. They were too noisy. "They might scratch the paintwork." Then as the numbers of cars increased it just became too dangerous. Sometimes too dangerous to cross the road, as double lines of parked cars stopped children crossing alone. They couldn't see what was coming. They were too small.

There were other hidden dangers, the danger of pollution and as that rose, so too did the incidence of childhood asthma. Now another problem, equally invidious, which will have a major impact on society in years to come, lack of exercise and the growing rise in obesity among young children.

Over the 10 years of its existence, Spokes has worked hard for the promotion of safe routes for cyclists and walkers both young and old. The young are particularly vulnerable. We have campaigned for Walking Buses. This idea has been taken up with great success by the Kent Messenger Group and one of its sub-editors Simon Dalby. But there is something that needs taking on as a matter of priority – SPEED and the opposition to speed cameras.

Splenetic opposition

There is a splenetic opposition to speed cameras, fuel tax and anything which curtails the 'freedom' of motorists. Groups such as MAD – Motorists Against Detection – who go around vandalising speed cameras have caused £6m damage nationwide. They have even blown up speed cameras. London's Green Deputy Mayor Jenny Jones will be hanging 'Remember Me' signs around speed cameras as a reminder that they are put up in locations where people have died.

The signs are produced by RoadPeace and are the first ever nationwide public acknowledgement for those killed or injured on the roads of Britain.



Jones says: "Every time someone from MAD vandalises a camera they are showing contempt for the people whose deaths led to the cameras being there in the first place. The MAD group is a mixture of maniacs and dinosaurs who put speed before life and metal before flesh. Road violence is the forgotten crime, and even though there are more road deaths in London than murders committed, speeding laws have been watered down by the police."

Remember every time MAD gets more freedom, we get less. When a child is murdered there is huge coverage in the media, yet year on year 3,500 people die on our roads and 37,000 are seriously injured, most unnoticed. Of those deaths, 200 are children. As Polly Toynbee wrote in a recent Guardian article, "That's 13 Dunblanes a year."

In Medway last year 28 male drivers between 18-29 were killed and 38 pedestrians killed or seriously injured. Most due to speed. It is a carnage that would not be acceptable in war, yet we have become inured to it.

Read Polly Toynbee's article in full: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,1122712,00.html>

SAM WEBB, EDITOR

Make more of Maugham link

I first read Somerset Maugham in Africa – in 1970 The Uganda Bookshop was full of classic paperbacks at cheap prices; he wrote some wonderful perceptive stories about expatriate life.

When we returned to the UK and came to Canterbury I discovered a local connection which seems to be less publicised than the city's connection with Rupert Bear.

'Of Human Bondage' is an autobiographical novel about a disabled young man whose parents are dead; he lives with his aunt and uncle in the vicarage in Blackstable and attends King's School, Tercanbury.

The novel centres around the trials of growing up and dealing with family/teachers/colleagues/girls and so on, but in 'Cakes and Ale' he again writes about Blackstable while living with his uncle, the vicar.

In chapter five he describes how he was taught to ride a bicycle, and specifically about the joys of turning into Joy Lane by the Turnpike. Joy lane may not be as peaceful as in his time, but it's worth reading and following in his tyre tracks trying to imagine how it was. Perhaps we could use this famous connection to improve cycle facilities in the area?

BEATRICE SHIRE

Graeme Fife's book helps to bind us all

My Tour de France: the history, the legend, the riders has just been reprinted, three months after the new edition with the account of the 2003 race appeared; that's very pleasing, especially so, because Mainstream (who'd published my life of George Francs, the renowned boxing trainer) initially turned it down: no market, they said.

Well, every cyclist knows the misery of a headwind and the bloody-minded application it takes to battle through it. So with writing books and getting them published: it can be a slog but, hey, for a true cyclist, giving up isn't an option, now, is it? I am often asked how long it took to write the Tour book; not an easy one to answer.

It's a book I was, I believe, destined to write and is rooted in a long study of the great race, books and journals, many in French, over a long period. My first rides in the mountains – Alps, Dolomites, Pyrenees, in the early '90s finally translated the passion into my own words. I guess the seeds of what became the book were planted when I first followed the race closely, in 1975.

Bad timing: Did my eager support of my hero Eddy Merckx bring him ill luck and his first loss? Years later, after I interviewed Bernard Thévenet, Merckx' nemesis, I remarked that he'd been my hero. Thévenet looked at me, smiled and said: 'Désolé'.

That interview and several others are recorded in

Inside the Peloton (now also available in Dutch) and is testimony to my continued joy in the sport and pastime as well as a mark of the great privilege it has been to meet and spend time with some of the finest riders ever to have pushed a pedal.

Not one of them too grand to talk to someone (me) whom Chris Boardman once described as 'a fellow cyclist'. Please. For, that's part of what characterises this love of the bike that we all share: it is a true fraternity. Those times we're out for a ride, pick up with another cyclist, spin a few miles in their company, chattering away – and then saying goodbye when the paths diverge – the fellowship of two wheels links us all.

Many cyclists who were no more than names to me before I wrote the books are now acquaintances, not a few of them have become good friends, men to have around you in a crisis, men of enormous joie de vivre. Alan Bennett, whom I interviewed recently for a radio programme, rides a bike because it's practical, he has no romantic notions about the machine. But he did say that riding a bicycle often lifts his spirits and added: 'I don't think a car ever does that.'

While I have no plans to write any more books about cycling, it does seem that I can't escape revolutions of one sort or another entirely: on 29 January my study of the French revolutionary terror will be in the bookshops: The Terror, the Shadow of the Guillotine. Enjoy.

Get in the saddle for Mayoress' rides

The two Lady Mayoress' rides which Spokes are supporting and helping to organise are charity rides in aid of the Canterbury Hospice and the Samaritans.

The first on Sunday 2 May is a family ride starting at three points, Canterbury, Whitstable or Herne Bay. Total is about 25 miles so you can adjust to your ability. Details and entry forms: The Lady Mayoress Monica Eden-Green 01227 470416 also watch the local press for details.

The second ride – Canterbury to Reims – is for more serious riders. We leave early on

Thursday 6 May, cycle to Dover and then cycle from Calais to Aire sur la Lys-65 miles. On 7 May we cycle from Aire to St Quentin, 76.5 miles, and on Sat 8 May we cycle to Reims 67.5 miles, a total of 209 miles.

There will be back up transport for luggage and getting back on Sun 9 May. There is a £20 registration fee, £130 for accommodation/crossing/riders jersey, and riders will be expected to raise a minimum of £100 sponsorship. Details and entry forms: Mike Nee, home 01227 860632 work 01233 895636 or mobile 07980 621 241.

Paris to Brest and back – just for the thrill of the ride

An old man stands beside his bike at 2am on Tuesday. There are no buildings near. He's ridden out to watch us pass. In towns and villages people clap and cheer, at isolated houses they spill from front gardens inviting us to stop for water, coffee, food; but this lone witness is silent, entranced, as if we thousands streaming west in the first frantic hours of the great adventure are ghosts conjured from memory.

In England people want a reason. "Is it for charity?" Here they're content to celebrate the nobility of our pointless endeavour. Labouring in the hot sun, the chill dawn, to come back to exactly where we started. They fly banners, hang derelict, flower-decked bikes in trees, urge us to pause and join festivities.

"A glass of wine?" "No merci." "Just a small one?" "No merci." "OK, how about cider?"

Two days later the fastest are already home and the great wave has thinned. In the small hours

most pilgrims are catching heavy sleep, small knots of moving riders might be 15 or 20 minutes apart, yet country folk still keep from their beds.

What's the strange sound coming from a dark hedge? Just some scruffy young Breton playing her accordion to keep our spirits up. Their vigils surpass ours as they strive to wish "Courage" to every last lemming. The rider's optimistic reply is: "A deuxmil-sept."

Maybe I won't live that long, won't have strength or motivation, and if I do what about 2011, 2015 and beyond? Triumph is always provisional – only defeat is permanent. The true subject of any ride against the clock is mortality. Riders pass, spectators wither, but while there are pneumatic tyres and roads to roll them on the great tradition, the ordeal, will endure.

Thursday, dawn, in the cafeteria at the Tintenic control, fifty-some hours and 849 kilometres in, I draft a schedule to get home by 5am.

Friday, to put – for the first time – a number beginning with a figure seven on my souvenir medal. This means nothing, an old man's vanity; still after a breakfast of rice pudding and apple puree – baby food for morale – and a short nap, I press on regardless.

Arriving at Villaines la Juhel (1002 km) late that afternoon my feet are hot and beginning to hurt. The medical control, staffed mostly by well-groomed young women in close fitting jumpsuits, seems like a futuristic fantasy. I wanted a bowl of iced water, but in characteristic French style they prefer a technological solution and administer a prolonged dose from a can of cooling menthol spray which is very, very nice; especially on the soles.

PATRICK FIELD

Reproduced with permission of Cycle, the magazine of CTC, the UK's national cyclists' organisation. Patrick Field's account appears in the Dec 03/Jan 04 issue as part of a feature on Paris-Brest-Paris.

Belleville Rendezvous was unexpected festive TV treat

One of the treats of the Christmas TV schedules last year was the brilliant feature length animated film, "Belleville Rendezvous."

Champion, a morose young boy adopted by his grandmother, Madame de Souza, discovers

his aim in life when she buys him a bike. They live in a strange house on the outskirts of the city with the dog which as time passes slowly engulfs them and their house with the overhead railway tilting the house sideways. Every hour as the clocks strike the dog goes upstairs and barks



at the passing train. Every evening the champ comes home exhausted to be massaged and pummelled with the aid of a lawnmower and vacuum cleaner by his devoted Grandmother who has accompanied him on her trike all the time blowing her ferocious whistle. She never seems to tire. There are many characters and twists and turns to the plot-the wonderful Belleville Triplettes a 1930s song and dance act, gangsters, Jacques Tati, the Tour de France, Mont Ventoux, ocean liners and the frogs which the old ladies eat.

www.bellevillerendezvous.com/6k

It's Friday every day with this lightweight

In 2002 veteran cyclists Margaret & Graham Day visited Canterbury from Australia. They came with their Bike Fridays. These come apart for travelling and fit into a special case which can be fitted with wheels and towed behind the bike on tour. This carries luggage.

Have you ever wanted to ride off to tour and camp in faraway places with the greatest of ease? Have you ever wanted to shop at the market and carry everything home with the greatest of ease? Have you ever wanted the lightest, nippiest bicycle in the world? Have you ever seen a tandem which could suddenly become a single as well?

The answer is a Bike Friday, custom built to fit and guaranteed. These 10kg lightweights are sturdy and strong. These lightweights have standard components so any spares can be found in a good cycle shop.

These lightweights can be hidden in a travel case or soft bag so nobody on a plane or train or coach knows you are travelling with a mobility aid. Nobody can refuse you access to transport with a disguised Bike Friday.

So where have these ingeniously designed small wheelers been ridden? Everywhere.

Over Australia's Nullarbor Plain, over the Spanish Pyrenees, over the Swiss Jura, over the hilly route of Nova Colli in Italy, up and down New Zealand's hills, along many rivers in Europe and North America, over rough and smooth roads, marathon trips up to 8000 kms long. Even along the Crab and Winkle route in Kent. In fact, anywhere.

In Australia, people who own Bike Fridays gather for an annual winding in autumn, when there are tall stories of travels in tantalising places and apart from stories, there are long and short rides, fine foods to enjoy, coffee to be drunk and wines to sample.

The Australian Bike Friday Club meets in South Australia in April this year, last year we met in Victoria, next year we shall be in New South Wales.

If you want to know more, look at www.bikefriday.com/main.cfm?fuseaction=clubs.viewClub&ID=19.

MARGARET DAY

Mandatory helmet Bill set for Parliament

Eric Martlew, Labour MP for Carlisle, is to put before Parliament a Bill which would make it illegal for under 16-year olds to cycle without wearing a cycle helmet.

Not only will this apply to roads but to any park, garden or recreation ground where the public have access without payment.

The CTC says the Bill could badly damage the prospects for success of the National Cycling Strategy Board's initiative to encourage cycling to school, and also the Government's new Active Communities project which seeks to double by the end of the decade the number of people taking regular exercise. Everywhere that cycle helmets have been made compulsory, cycle use has fallen dramatically, especially among younger people.

Downland Cycles

Canterbury's official centre for:



Call in and see Bryan and Julie on the London bound platform of Canterbury West station, 10am to 6.30pm Tues to Sat. Tel: 01227 479643 (On hols to 20 Feb 04) bryan@downlandcycles.plus.com www.downlandcycles.co.uk

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.