

AUTUMN EVENTS 2005

Coordinator Beatrice Shire, 01227 766782

S Sunday 4th September

QUIETLY AROUND THE VILLAGE CHURCHES

An old favourite, starting from Canterbury West at 10.30am, the Village Churches Ride. Not the one you get sponsored for to help repair your church roof, but the original winner of Canterbury Cycling Campaign's competition to find a ride on quiet lanes to visit as many interesting churches as possible. About 25 miles, to Woodnesborough and back in a figure of eight with Adisham in the middle. Details: Beatrice Shire 01227 766782

Friday 9th - Sunday 11th Sept & Sat 10th - Sun 18th Sept

CELEBRATE NCR 10,000 MILES COMPLETION

Celebrate the creation of 10,000 miles of cycle paths in 10 years by Sustrans. There are two major rides - London to Cambridge and London to Preston.

S Saturday 10th 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. Lots of tea & cakes. For details please contact the event coordinator Carolyn Miller 01622 843383.

Saturday 10th September
THE CHAUCEUR CHALLENGE - CUTTY SARK TO CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

This ride is in aid of the Children's Trust which provides specialist care, therapy, education and rehab for some of the UK's most disabled children. Downlands Cycles are supporting this ride and will be on hand in Dane John Gardens and acting as mechanic for the Kent leg of the ride. Details of the ride from 01737 365021, or visit www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk or Downlands Cycles.

SPOKES

www.spokeseastkent.org.uk ISSUE 45 AUTUMN 2005

Prize for 1,000th SPOKES member - it could be you!



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.

East Kent Cycle Campaign

From bikes to electric boats

It was a Sunday in mid-July that we decided to attend the AGM of the Electric Boat Association, of which we have been members for several years but never attended any events, writes John Shirley.

We invited Isobel Stoddart of Sustrans fame to join us and used integrated transport to get to Cookham Reach on the Thames.

We cycled from Victoria to Paddington while Isobel went cross country from Richmond via Windsor and Eton Central to Maidenhead where we all took the branch line to Cookham.

Loaded with our picnic we descended to Cookham Reach Sailing Club where we shared an outdoor picnic lunch with the members of the association including lots of champagne.

At our table was a Mr Malcom Moss and his son Simon, owners of a solar boat called Callinda holder of the record for the first and fastest solar channel crossing and they invited us aboard for the afternoon cruise.

For two hours we cruised up and down, our conversations flowing freely without the noise of a diesel engine - and best of all it was our first trip other than by bike or foot creating no pollution.

Mr Moss built two of these craft; one for himself and one for the Maharajah of Rajasthan (of the famous magnificent white palace in the lake). Mr Moss has also built two solar bicycles and a car. Unfortunately for the Maharajah his craft arrived too late - climate change has resulted in his lake drying up.

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.

Sustrans RANGER news

Sustrans is working with KCC to improve cycle provision and has asked for help from Spokes and other cyclists. Attention is being focused on traffic free sections that cyclists may like put in place especially where these connect to the existing National Cycle Route, to viewpoints etc, safer alternatives or where no Sustrans routes exist. So if you know of a suitable traffic free route which you use and think others could please contact Abi Mansley 01622 696322 or email abigail.mansley@kent.gov.uk

KCC has an excellent website which is linked to Spokes'; www.kent.gov.uk/cycling There is also an excellent A4 leaflet "cyclekent" with tips for those new to cycling, map details and lots of very useful information about places to visit. KCC's Cycling and Rural Transport officer is Rachel Best 01622 221383 email: rachel.best@kent.org.uk

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 South Kent CTC rides 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 01797 367934 for details and ask for a comprehensive guided walks leaflet.

September 17th and 18th
CANTERBURY TO CHICHESTER CHARITY RIDE
About sixty cyclists of all ages are expected to take part in the first Canterbury Cathedral to Chichester Cathedral ride which is approximately 160 miles long. Organisation of the ride is by members of the Paris to Hayling Bike ride which has raised more than £700,000 since it began twenty years ago. It is planned that this will become an annual event. Further information from cc2cc2005@btinternet.com or 01243 789786.

Tuesday 27th September 7.30pm
SPOKES AGM

AGM

has written a cycling book, "The trouble with France," and "The passport - man's most travelled document," and Author Martin Lloyd will present "Scenes from my Canterbury Environment Centre with refreshments.

S Sunday 2nd October

WEST ASHFORD VILLAGES TOUR

A ride around the Ashford station at 10.30am start. A ride around the villages to the west of Ashford, without any significant hills, and the majority on minor roads. About 20 miles in length with a lunch stop well past the half-way point! Details: Chris and Maggie on 01233 633108.

Sunday 16th October 2pm
RMCP FAMILY MARSH PEDAL

Come and enjoy Romney Marsh Countryside Project's last bike ride of 2005. We will take a gentle, relaxing pedal around the lanes of Brookland, Snargate and Brenzett enjoying the first signs of Autumn on the Marsh. LEADER: Richard Haynes, RMCP (01797 367934). MEET: Brookland Church, Brookland, GRID REF: TQ 989258. DISTANCE: 12 miles (2.5 hours). Donation appreciated.

Sunday 6th November

COASTAL RIDE FOLKESTONE TO DOVER

Folkestone to Dover starting at 10.30am at Folkestone West, and following the coastal cycle route National Route 2 past Samphire Hoe. Return to start or get the train back from Dover. Note check on engineering work on railway tunnels. Details: Ian Rogers 01227 733792.

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

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.

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 _____
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. **AUT05**

Sign up and be our 1,000th member

SPOKES will soon clock up its 1,000th individual member. That's not bad for an entirely volunteer cycle campaign group, which started the year the Tour de France came to Canterbury in 1994.

We have achieved quite a lot in that period, putting cycling on the map not just in the Canterbury district but all over Kent.

Spokes helped in the planning and building of many local routes such as the Crab & Winkle and Canterbury to Fordwich routes, both part of Sustrans' National Cycle Route 1 - Inverness to Dover.

In fact it was due to SPOKES this prestigious route came through Canterbury on its way to Dover. We designed the Cathedral to Coast Routes 16 & 17 and were instrumental in getting Eurotunnel to lay on a cycling service where bikes are carried through the tunnel with their riders.

We have been instrumental in the development of many cycle routes in Ashford and elsewhere and our team of Sustrans Rangers work hard to keep routes litter free, cutting back undergrowth and clearing the route.

In previous issues you will have read about the cycle track at Betteshanger. Work is also underway on Canterbury's own cycle centre at the end of the city wall by the St George's Street roundabout. This will be a first not just for Canterbury but the UK as well. Cycle tourists, visitors to Canterbury, shoppers and commuters will be able to leave their bikes there, secure and undercover.

To achieve all this work we need the help of supporters. That means you - if you haven't joined yet but have just picked up a free copy of this newsletter from one of the many outlets we distribute to.

For the 1,000th member, SPOKES will give two free tickets plus off peak Travelcards for this year's Cycle Show - Cycle 2005 - which is being held at ExCell in the London Docklands from Thursday 13 - Sunday 16 October.

It could be YOU!

PS. Spokes would like to thank Malcolm Trott - who now lives in the West Country - for acting as creator of our web edition of the newsletter from its inception for all his help in the past.

SAM WEBB, EDITOR

City cycle survey highlights provision blackspots

In the middle of June's Bike Week, SPOKES undertook a survey of cycle usage around Canterbury.

The idea had been triggered by the discovery that a cycle group in Reading, Berkshire, had been surveying cycle use for ten years and had built up a useful body of data, which added weight to their discussions with the local authority.

Canterbury has no cycle-specific data, so after consultation with the appropriate council officers, SPOKES arranged to carry out a survey from 07:30 to 09:00. Enumerators were drawn from SPOKES members and cyclists were counted at 16 points, mainly the entry points into the inner city.

There is a severe limit to the conclusions that can be drawn from a single survey, but some interesting observations can be made. In total, we counted 1,025 cyclists in the 90 minutes. 27% of them were judged to be of school-age and the rest were adults. Top of the list for overall numbers was the point at the Westgate Towers (181 cyclists), with

Wincheap coming second (110). However, the important thing to note here is that there is much more provision for cyclists at the Westgate than there is at Wincheap. We didn't set out to record the numbers of cyclists riding on the footway, but most of us kept an informal record and, while there were some at each location, the majority of cyclists at Wincheap were riding on the footway.

SPOKES does not advocate pavement cycling and the conclusion here must be that Wincheap is a glaring gap in Canterbury's cycling provision; one which should be addressed with the utmost urgency if the city council is serious about reducing car usage.

It has been pointed out that most of Canterbury's student population had departed before 15th June, the day of the survey, and so we will probably repeat it in October. Trend analysis is a very important aspect of a survey like this, so it is intended to repeat it annually. If you would like to take part, or would like a copy of the full results of this year's survey, please contact us.

ANDY MCNALLY

Walking Bus group enjoys two wheel tour through woods



Children and parents involved in the Canterbury Walking Bus scheme, which helps ensure youngsters walk to school safely, enjoyed a bike ride along the Crab & Winkle Way between Canterbury and Whitstable and are pictured at the halfway point, the Winding Pond.

Poor road quality hinders cycle tourism

Chairman's Chat

A recent survey by the Asphalt Industry Alliance on the state of Kent's rural roads confirmed my views on their poor condition, writes SPOKES Chairman John Hunt.

The report said nonprincipal roads were resurfaced every 75 years and unclassified roads every 86 years! The importance of cycle tourism is underestimated in Kent. Could not designated cycle routes be given priority for resurfacing?

My thanks to all those Spokies who counted cyclists for the first Canterbury Cycle Census during National Bike Week.

By doing this every year it will provide hard facts on cycle usage and crisis points in the cycle network. An 'innovative' pedestrian and cyclists crossing is to be installed by the council offices at Fallala Way at a cost of £30,000.

Our survey showed 23 cyclists using this crossing yet 110 used the Wincheap/Ring Road junction, mostly cycling on the pavement. Although Spokes in no way condones pavement cycling it is all too understandable for Wincheap cyclists to do this to avoid the narrow railway bridge. The foot tunnel under the railway line should be unblocked as a matter of priority to give safe access at Wincheap. Cycle routes should be straightforward and direct to eliminate temptations to make shortcuts across routes not designed for cycle use and to avoid potential conflict with pedestrians.

JOHN HUNT

Ringing out them Belles



Spokes riders with their mystery trophy after the Calais leg of the Belles D'Europe.

At the beginning of June, Spokes with the East Kent CTC, ran the English leg of the Belles d'Europe series of randonnées for English, French and Belgium riders.

Eighty people completed different length rides between 30 and 90k on east Kent roads.

Circular routes using Sustrans routes 1, 15, 16 and 17 went from the headquarters at Crabble Athletic Ground, Dover to St Margarets Bay, Sandwich, Canterbury and back to Dover. Checkpoints were manned by Spokes members where riders were checked in and fed on Treacle Tart, courtesy of Hoppers Bakeries, Herne Bay.

The rides are a great way to get riding in our Euro Region. They're not races but cycle rides for all abilities. The next ride is at St Omer on Sunday 4th September with distances from 50k to 170k.

Spokes riders will be made very welcome on the 30th anniversary of the running of this event. Spokes members took part in the ride at Calais on 12th June and came away with a cup, they're still not sure what for!

JOHN HUNT

Bobbies back on bikes to beat crime in Bay



Police officers in Herne Bay have taken to the streets on two wheels this summer to fight crime.

PC Karis Ingledew, Neighbourhood officer for Herne Bay seafront and town centre, and PC Jason Heather, Neighbourhood officer for Greenhill, have started undertaking some of their patrols on specially equipped police mountain bikes.

The Neighbourhood teams were set up by the Kent Constabulary to build closer relationships with communities and provide reassurance through visible policing so were considered perfect for bike patrols.

The officers were issued with the special cycles earlier this year and now they are becoming an increasingly common sight around the town.

PC Ingledew commented: "The response from everyone has been really positive. Older people

are happy to see a police officer on a cycle again while children are really impressed by the high-tech mountain bikes. The bikes are quite expensive so just in case anyone gets too excited they have been fitted with Trackers.

"The bikes are good for areas like parks where cars cannot go. Often a group of kids up to no good will make off the moment they see us on the horizon but we can pursue them far easier on the bike. All police cyclists receive special training on matters like health and safety, the training even includes tips on how to cycle down steps."

Her colleague PC Jason Heather said: "Although the bikes are primarily for patrolling we can often be called upon to reply to emergency calls and assist our colleagues. Sometimes the bike allows us to get to incidents quicker than an officer in a car so we carry flashing blue lights to wear."

Slower pace means you can admire the scenery

Saturday 11 June was the day of this year's Big Wheel of Kent Ride, writes Sylvia McNally.

This year, I decided to ride the Ashford 'spoke' so that I could answer people's questions about the route with first hand knowledge.

I met two young lads, aged 6 and 8, with their parents. Alex and Gregory Hawkins each rode their own bicycle as can be seen in the cover photo.

Although it took a long time to reach Canterbury and we had lots of rests on the way, it was worth it to see the look of achievement on the boys' faces when we arrived at the White Hart. One of the advantages of riding with children is the slower pace and this allows you to be more observant.

Our group was able to point out things of interest to the children to keep them involved.

We saw a peacock, lots of farm animals, wild flowers and unusual buildings. These may not seem that interesting, but when you have the time to look they are remarkable.

I would thoroughly recommend Ashford as a start point to people in future years. Yes, there are a few hills (and one very long hill), but again the view from the top is fantastic: Dungeness can be seen, as can the hills outside Hastings and it makes you realise just how small we are in this island of ours.

So a big thank you to Alex and Gregory for allowing me the chance to really appreciate the countryside and not just dash through it. For those other riders who rode the other routes, I hope you enjoyed your ride and will join us again next year. Try starting in a different place and see different parts of Kent.

www.downlandcycles.co.uk

triathlon
road mtb
because we do it too

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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.