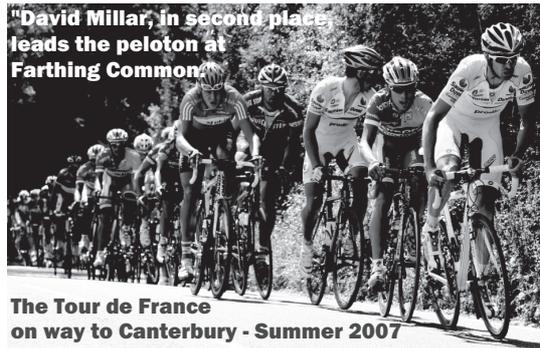


SPOKES

www.spokeeastkent.org.uk

ISSUE 50 AUTUMN 2007



David Millar, in second place, leads the peloton at Farthing Common

Photograph by Roger Marston

The Tour de France on way to Canterbury - Summer 2007

Gary MacGowan, a long term Spokes member and now a key 'mover and 'shaker' for Transport for London 'TfL', told the Spokes AGM meeting on the 12th October at the Friends Meeting House in Canterbury, how and why the Tour de France came to the UK this summer.

The idea began back in 2003 when Ken Livingstone and his transport team were trying to figure out how to get more Londoners on bicycles, with a budget of £10 million to spend.

It was finally decided that it would be worth getting the Tour de France to come to London. It was believed that the glamour of the Tour alongside other complementary cycling events would inspire Londoners to abandon their smog mobiles and embrace the humble bicycle. The longer than usual route of 216 kms was eventually agreed upon, which started at Westminster, headed

Continued inside

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.



Designed by Andrew Fenyo 01227 769940. Printed by Minnis Print 01303 840736.

East Kent Cycle Campaign

Contacting SPOKES

CHAIRMAN: Stephen Fawke 01227 830336
sbfawke@onetel.net
VICE CHAIRMAN: Beatrice Shire 01227 766782
beatrice.shire@tesco.net
MINUTES SECRETARY: Julie Jackson
01227 479643/07786 235203
bryan@downlandcycles.plus.com
TREASURER: Terry Croft 01304 831887
tcroft@creative.ac.uk
LIAISON: Sam & Sheila Webb 01227 738296
samwebb37@hotmail.com
MEMBERSHIP & RANGERS: Ian Rogers
01227 733792 ianrogers28@hotmail.co.uk
EDITOR: Emily Shirley 01227 830364
elugagnac@aol.com
DESIGN: Andrew Fenyo 01227 769940
andrew@fenyonet.org.uk
RIDES: Beatrice Shire 01227 766782
beatrice.shire@tesco.net

Find SPOKES on the internet at
www.spokeeastkent.org.uk
Find Sustrans at www.sustrans.org.uk



bryan@downlandcycles.co.uk

Now's the time to be a SPOKESperson!

Name(s) _____ AUT07
Address _____
Postcode _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Annual membership - please tick relevant box:
 Individual adult £6 Family/household £10 Senior citizen/unwaged/under 16 £5
Please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to SPOKES, PO Box 991 Canterbury CT1 9EL.

Undeliverable e-mails

Members who have supplied their e-mail address on their application form or renewal slip will receive e-mails from me from time to time. They are a very useful (and cheap) way of bringing things to members' attention between newsletters. A recent example was the information about pledging support for the local Connect2 projects.

Unfortunately, the mass mailing that I send out always produces a couple of dozen undeliverable e-mails. The reasons for these are several: mailboxes that are full, the address is no longer valid, SPOKES is not on the recipient's list of allowable senders, the message is incorrectly identified as spam by your mail server. I have sent out at least two such mailings since Christmas, if you haven't received them, but want to, or would like to start receiving them for the first time, send an e-mail to 'spokes@room-101.freemove.co.uk' with 'Yes please' as the subject and I'll add you to the list or correct your address if you have changed it. If you change your mind, send me an e-mail with a subject of 'No thank you' and I'll make sure that I don't trouble you any more.

SPOKES RIDES AUTUMN 2007

Coordinator Beatrice Shire, 01227 766782

SPOKES always welcomes non-members on its rides, but do consider joining! The more members the more weight we will carry in negotiations especially for new routes. The cost of newsletters is paid for out of our subscriptions. We print and distribute 12,000 copies a year not only to our members but many other bodies including local authorities.

Sunday 4 November 2007

Late Red. Ride to The Gate Inn at Marshside for lunch. Mainly following National Cycle Route 1 outbound and returning via Hoath and Broad Oak.
DETAILS: John Hunt (01227 769035).
MEET: 10:30 at Canterbury West station

Sunday 2 December 2007

A short ride to the Red Lion pub in Dunkirk for a Christmas meal. It would be appreciated if you could contact Beatrice in advance such that we may give the pub an idea of the number of people attending.
DETAILS: Beatrice Shire (01227 766782).
MEET: 10:30 at Canterbury West station

Saturday 8 December 2007

Climate Change Bike Ride 2007
DETAILS:
www.campaigncc.org/cycle.html
MEET: 10:00 at South side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

Further rides on the web:
www.spokeeastkent.org.uk

SUSTRANS RANGERS

If you fancy a bit of volunteering while out cruising the countryside we currently have vacancies on the NCN - R18 Wye to Ashford, RR15 Sandwich to Whitfield, and several vacancies in and around Ashford where our lone Ranger wants to put a new team together.

The main tasks are 'temporary' signing, vegetation clearance and reporting faults and you can have your own patch or be part of a group. Everywhere, we are always on the lookout for 'diplomats' who have the time to speak with council and other officials and at meetings and stand up for the often forgotten cyclist. Ian has just won an award from Sustrans for his Ranger activities over the years.

Please contact Ian Rogers, Liaison Ranger on 01227 733792 or by email ianrogers28@hotmail.co.uk if you want to get involved.

ACTION TIME

Each issue this slot will give details of one or two really simple things you can do to improve the lot of cyclists. (If you want to get more involved in Spokes campaign call any committee member - see list)

1. SAVE A FELLOW CYCLIST from serious injury by reporting a fault. Next time you see a horrendous pothole or other hazard on a road or cycle path note its location and size etc., and go online to www.kent.gov.uk/eFault/Application/FaultDetails.aspx, select a category e.g. potholes and follow the simple instructions. If it's on a road make sure to mention cycling somewhere; you don't want KCC to think you are (only) a car driver! The idea is also to show that there are loads of cyclists out there, especially on the NCN.

2. Keep up the PRESSURE on your local councillors about the lack of cycling facilities in your area. Write to your councillors and tell them what is needed in your area.

A new cycle route proposal: Canterbury to Bridge

Back in the carefree 1980's my son cycled to school (Simon Langton). Twenty years later I saw the light and bought a bike myself. I swapped the nose-to-tail traffic down the A2050 and New Dover Road for a fresh quiet ride via the orchards.

After talking to Martin Vye (Canterbury and KCC) and John Hill (Bridge) I found myself asked by the Parish Council to campaign for a safer and more direct route. The main road is narrow, noisy, dirty and dangerous, no place for school pupils of today. Route 17 is too long a detour.

Headteachers and relevant councillors supported the idea. Steve Fawke and the Shirleys passed me to Robin Townsend and John Hunt, full of experience with the Crab and Winkle Route.

The timing seemed propitious - Canterbury was abuzz over the yet untarnished Tour coming. Kent Highway Services last year said their priority was the Coastal Route at Reculver. I wrote again in May and Ruth Goudie met me for a cycle survey of the possible Routes.

The old Elham Valley Line runs past 2 schools, with a footpath link to a third. What an enchanting prospect if the landowner and farmers would agree to open this to walkers and cyclists! It could be the start of a greater project, linking Kingston, Barham, Elham, Lyminge, Etchinghill and Folkestone, even Coast to Coast.

Next we need to canvass support and count numbers likely to use this route. Then we can put pressure on Local Government to build on the buzz from the tour, and improve our environment.

Dermot Stewart

Editorial

A battlecry from our new editor
Emily Shirley

After years of dedication and hard work our SPOKES Chairman John Hunt and our newsletter Editor Sam Webb, have decided to stand down. John now has little time to spare as he is necessarily engaged as an ambulance driver which takes him all over the south east at 12 hour stretches. Sam must now indulge in relaxing stress free pastimes such as finishing his long awaited book on the architectural saga of Ronan Point. They both have done superb jobs. John has imparted upon the group his urbane, reasonable worldliness and Sam as editor, carried out his role with precision, thoroughness and tenacity.

Stephen Fawke is our new Chairman. He is fresh, enthusiastic and a willing and keen cyclist. He has long been involved in cycling matters. It is a good thing that he has agreed to take up the gauntlet. Sylvia McNally is stepping down as Minutes Secretary and being replaced by Julie Jackson. Andy McNally is handing over his job as Membership Secretary to Ian Rogers, but has now taken on the onerous task of Newsletter Distribution Co-ordinator. Both McNallys have put in considerable time and effort into Spokes over the years and have helped to make it the successful campaigning group it has become.

I am your new Editor. I have been a member of Spokes from the beginning. I edited the newsletter for a short duration in the early years.

Spokes has come a long way since 1994. We started with a handful of dedicated campaigners and we have become today, one of the most successful regional cycling groups in the country. The hard work that so many Spokes members have put

into the group is exemplary and this work must continue with the help of new and existing members, if our considerable successes are to continue.

Many challenges lay in front of us. We need to get people out of their cars and onto bicycles. We still have only a derisory percentage of people cycling in East Kent. A much greater sum of money needs to be spent on cycling by our local authorities. One just has to look to London to see how cycling has gone up a massive 86% since 2001. This is because cycling is now taken seriously. They have an impressive budget of £36 million and this is set to rise considerably.

The Tour de France passed through parts of East Kent with much excitement and expense. Sadly, the opportunity was lost by Canterbury council to use the event to get people out of their cars and onto bicycles. However, with more money allocated to cycling by our councils, our existing cycle routes can be linked up so that children and others can use them in greater safety. More cycle routes and shared crossings can be implemented. Speed limits can be reduced on our country lanes. More accessible cycle parking can be provided and congestion charging can be introduced. These are just some of the measures that we need to campaign for and for our councils to help finance.

Climate change is considered the greatest threats facing mankind today according to Sir David King, the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor. Cycling is a realistic, practical and enjoyable way to combat climate change and to reduce all of our carbon footprints. We have so little time and so much to do!

Drawing Breath: A Coastal Pushbike Journey

On the 16th July Spokes member Jean Fraser began a one-month coastal bike journey from Whitstable where she lives to Hastings. The journey was the central part of an arts and health project, Drawing Breath: A Coastal Pushbike Journey, which Jean has been working on supported by Arts Council funding.

A photographic artist, Jean was diagnosed with emphysema in 2000. She moved to Kent with her partner to escape London's pollution but finally left her NHS art therapy post at the end of 2005 due to ill health. Finding cycling easier than walking, Jean began to think about exploring the coast and so the Drawing Breath project was born.

Jean wanted her journey to promote both art and exercise to maximize mental health and combat the helplessness and isolation that chronic illness can produce. Along her route she met with several groups with interests in breath and breathing, including the excellent Betteshanger Brass Band, with its community history of occupational lung disease, and Hastings Urban Bikes who accompanied Jean into Hastings on the final uphill leg of her journey.

Jean's photo-blog can be accessed on her website www.drawingbreath.org where there is also a forum for feedback and comments, and details of future exhibitions and talks.



Photograph by Jean Fraser, Summer 2007

A foray into Suffolk

In late May Spokes members Mick and Mary Richie (who now reside in Woodbridge) organized a very successful five-day circular ride incorporating a good part of the Suffolk coastal cycle route.

Some thirteen cyclists took part starting on a VERY wet bank holiday Monday and then travelling onwards through torrential rain and floods to Eye via Easton and Debenham. Tuesday started wet and saw us travelling into a brisk northeast wind towards Beccles, going through Wingfield and Flixton, where we stopped at the nearby aero museum for lunch. Wednesday saw a change in the weather and in our direction, now going south towards Westleton and stopping for tea at

Dunwich followed by lunch at Southwold. After a visit to a very windy pier and its interesting 'water clock' we finished at Westleton. On Thursday the weather really improved and the sun shone! Showing us the way south by way of Thorpness and its house in the clouds through Aldeburgh, Snape (the Maltings) and into Orford for our final meal.

The last day saw a couple leave to go home and the rest of us cycling back up to Woodbridge via the Butley and Felixstowe ferries. The former being a voluntarily run operation with one man and his rowing boat ferrying us across two or three at a time plus bikes!

This brought us to the end of a very enjoyable and extremely well organized trip, whetting our appetites for future forays into the (relatively flat) Suffolk countryside.

CB

SUSTRANS NEEDS ALL OUR VOTES ON THE 8TH AND 9TH DECEMBER 2007

Connect2 is an exciting UK-wide project that aims to improve local travel in 79 communities by creating new walking and cycling routes for the local journeys we all make every day.

By building bridges and new crossings over barriers such as busy roads, rivers and railway lines, Connect2 will connect people to the places they want to go. Each crossing will link to a network of walking and cycling routes, taking you to your schools, shops, work and green spaces.

To make this happen we need you to get behind Connect2 because it is one of six projects competing for a single grant of £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The People's Millions. The winning project will finally be decided by a public vote on television in December 2007. Probably on the 8th or 9th of December but this is yet to be confirmed.

The Connect2 proposal for East Kent is to rebuild the two bridges along the Crab and Winkle Line so that cyclists can safely get right down into Whitstable Harbour. The second project in reserve, concerns building a safe cycle route through Dover partly alongside the river Dour.

Would you like to see Connect2 succeed in your area? Register your support by completing the form on the Sustrans website <http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/> so you can be updated about their progress towards the TV vote in December. Alternatively, just text Connect2 to 80010.

Tour de France in Canterbury (continued from front page)

towards Maidstone, across to Tenderden and ending at Canterbury.

In London, the Tour has left a very pro- bike legacy. Cycling has increased by 10% in London during the last year alone! The cycling budget is increasing, new events have sprung up such as the first Hovis Freewheel event which attracted near 50,000 cyclists. TfL will also now pay 50% towards cost of cycle lockers and showers to local businesses. All in all, a success story.

The tour came and went in Kent and no one is quite sure what the benefits were for cycling. Certainly, we are not seeing hoards of new cyclists about. It is now up to our councils to seize upon the enthusiasm for cycling as evidenced in London and replicate it down here. What are they waiting for?

BIKE IT! The benefits of having children cycle to school

The Sustrans Bike It project was first piloted in 2004-05 funded primarily by the bicycle industry through Bike Hub the industry levy. Initially, there were 40 schools in 4 sites across the country and the results demonstrated a quadrupling in the numbers of children cycling to school. As a result, Sustrans has been successful in securing additional funding to expand the project. Funding for the project comes from comes from Cycling England, the bicycle industry, local authorities and other partners.

As our Ashford based Bike It officer, Simon Allum will be working intensively with schools to empower children to cycle to school. In order to achieve this, He will be working closely with local authorities, the bicycle industry, the local cycling community and other partners to find practical solutions to overcome the obstacles that prevent children using cycling as a form of school transport. Simon is working with 12 schools in Ashford this school year. The work with schools includes not only explaining the benefits of cycling through his contribution to classroom work but also by practical advice and assistance to school management teams. Simon will

help co-organise fun events such as bike to school days and Dr. Bike sessions and address concerns about safety and liability.

Promoting cycling as a sustainable form of transport for children has numerous benefits for health at a time of increasing concern over childhood obesity and the detrimental effects of a less active lifestyle. In addition, cycling enables children to play an active role in tackling concerns about congestion and climate change. Importantly, Bike It is about forming positive habits. Evidence from European countries suggests that children who cycle regularly go on to cycle as adults.

On average 10% of pupils cycle to school at Bike It schools compared to the national average of 1%. In fact some schools have had as many as 50% of their pupils cycling to school for specific events e.g. "Bike to School Days". Bike It involves the whole community and if you would like more information or are interested in becoming involved it would be great to hear from you.

Simon Allum
Sustrans Bike It Officer (Ashford, Kent)
Ashford's Future,
7th Floor, Charter House,
Park Street, Ashford, Kent. TN24 8EQ.
Office: 01233 330829
Mobile: 07824399126
Email: simon.allum@sustrans.org.uk