

Public Right of Way fault report tool
Kent County Council now have an online tool to allow you to report issues with public rights of way (bridleways, footpaths, etc.). It can be found at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/prowfaults>. You can also call 0845 345 0210.

Cycling Embassy of Great Britain
On Saturday 3rd September, a day ahead of the Mayor of London's SkyRide, the *Cycling Embassy of Great Britain* was launched in London. The new group is independent from any officialdom and aims to bring about the conditions for mass cycling to exist across the country by adopting the best practices seen in countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark. The group's website can be found at <http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/> and they can be followed on twitter via @GBcyclingEmbassy.

Track your bicycle if it's stolen
An innovative new device, the SpyLamp Bicycle GPS Tracker, has recently come to market. It's a rear light for your bicycle with an integrated hidden GPS tracker. If your bicycle is stolen then you can receive a text message sent by then device to your mobile phone. The text message will give you the device's current location. The device is a little pricey, at £125, but it's great to see such devices coming to market now. For more information, visit <http://www.gpstrackthis.com/>

Great Stour Way benches and signs
Regular cyclists using the Great Stour Way cycle route between Chatham and Canterbury will have noticed a number of improvements over recent months. Small benches and directional signs have been added as well as a fantastic carved picnic bench, some interpretation signs dotted around the Hambrook Marshes, and a little cycle parking. Spokes contributed towards the cost of the picnic bench and cycle parking together with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership. Photos of all of these can be seen on the Spokes blog, <http://www.spokeseastkent.org.uk/blog/tag/great-stour-way/>

No To Longer Lorries Campaign
The CTC, the UK's national cyclists' organisation and whom Spokes is affiliated with, is campaigning against government proposals to allow longer lorries on our roads. Incidents between lorries and cyclists already represent a disproportionately high number of casualties and deaths to cyclists. Introducing longer lorries would do nothing to improve cyclists' safety, because they'd have an even larger blind spot. CycleNation, with whom Spokes are a member, has also expressed its support for the campaign, as has Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity that set up the National Cycle Network. For more information on the campaign and to write a letter to your local MP to ask them to oppose longer lorries please visit: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/>

alignment near Hythe
If you go cycling along beside the Royal Military Canal near Hythe then you may be in for a pleasant surprise. More of the route has been

Now's the time to be a SPOKESperson! #66

Annual membership - please tick relevant box:
 Individual adult £7.50 Family/household £12
 Senior citizen/unwaged/under 16 £5
Please make cheques payable to SPOKES and send to SPOKES, Maritime House, Snargate St, Dover CT17 9BZ

Frame Building and Repairs
Saturdays
9.30am Ride-Out
50 mile circuit
Tea/cake to finish

Spring/Autumn Sportive Series
Everything Cycling
Under One Roof
Call 01227 479643

www.downlandcycles.co.uk
The Malthouse,
St Stephens Road,
Canterbury CT2 7JA

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SPOKES

East Kent Cycle Campaign

ISSUE 66 Autumn 2011
www.spokeseastkent.org.uk

The Problem



Air pollution at an all time high in Canterbury-It is the invisible killer, killing more than smoking, obesity and car accidents together. The bad news is that the council does not intend to improve the current situation. The good news is that despite the council's inertia, cycling is up in Canterbury this year by over 16%.

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 CycleNation and Euro-Regio Velo.

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SPOKES RIDES & EVENTS

(Further rides on the website)
Co-ordinator: Ian Rogers 01227749598 Email: rides@spokeseastkent.org.uk

Sunday 4 December—Christmas Ride
11:00 at Canterbury East station Ride. Canterbury to Bekesbourne. Shortish ride. Big pub lunch (optional). Steve Fawke (01227 830336)

Sunday 8 January – Great and Little Stours.
11.00 Canterbury West station. Mainly level ride to Stourmouth through all the villages and back by another route. Tony Purchase (07905439033)

Sunday 5 February – Lord Whiskey
10.30 Canterbury East station. Up on the North Downs to Rhodes Minnis. Downhill all the way back. Ian Rogers (01227 749598).

Sunday 4 March
10.30 Ashford station. South and circular; not too hilly. Ian Rogers (01227 749598).

Saturday 7 April – France
All day. Early start from Dover (approx.8am) but see precise times and more details on website in March. Steve Fawkes (01227 830336).

NEWS . . . NEWS . . . NEWS . . . NEWS . . . NEWS . . .

FixMyTransport

FixMyTransport is a new website for reporting issues and praise with train stations & lines, bus stops & routes. The website launched on 30th August and has already had many items posted. It works by allowing anybody to post an issue. Then others can say that they agree that it needs to be solved. The issues can be discussed via the website and the appropriate contact at the rail / bus company is kept in the loop. The aim is to demonstrate to the train / bus companies that there really is demand for the issues raised to be solved. Currently the most popular campaign is for the cycle parking situation at Cambridge station to be improved. The website, developed by mySociety and funded through a recent win of funding from Ordnance Survey GeoVation, can be found at <http://www.fixmytransport.com/> and also followed on twitter via @FixMyTransport. Current campaigns in East Kent include a lift or bridge at Canterbury East: <http://bit.ly/n4At5L> and a campaign for a lift at Faversham station: <http://bit.ly/qQckrA>.

Stop Press! Lifts are now planned for installation at Faversham station. See: <http://bit.ly/tK9MI7>

Tweet Away- Spokes now tweets. You can follow us on Twitter via @spokeseastkent

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Tea/cake to finish

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[All email addresses are @spokeseastkent.org.uk]
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MINUTES SECRETARY:
Keith Hanna
minutes-secretary@
TREASURER:
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Editorial

Air pollution is killing people in Canterbury. It is also killing people in Dover, Margate, Maidstone, Tonbridge, Tonbridge Wells, Dartford and Gravesend to just name the key pollution hotspots in Kent. All the aforementioned towns/city have at least one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This means that the air quality there is not meeting legal objectives and that a plan has to be put in place by the local authority to work towards meeting the legal air quality objectives. To date no AQMA in Kent has managed to meet the legal air quality objectives. In fact it would appear that air pollution is actually getting worse in these areas. As a result, more people in Kent will continue to die directly and indirectly because of air pollution. Children will be born prematurely, heart attacks will become more frequent and lung diseases will increase. Why are so many of our politicians so dismissive about air pollution? Take Canterbury for example. In 2006, there were two streets that were designated as an AQMA, now there are 9 that will be so designated- in essence Canterbury is being strangled by air pollution. What are our leaders in Canterbury going to do about it well er...nothing actually. They have planned to keep levels as they are now until at least 2016! Related to this is the recent transport modelling that Canterbury City Council has paid for. The modelling called VISUM will be used to gauge how new development proposals in South Canterbury and elsewhere will impact upon the transport network. Surprisingly and contrary to Highways Agency guidance, cycling and walking have not been included as part of the modelling database!!! Apparently, cyclists and walkers are merely recorded as part of the 5% of people that do not travel at all. I suspect that the VISUM is unlawful in its current guise. More worrying still is the cavalier attitude of some of Canterbury's Tory dominated council. Kent County Council Leaders appear no better. It is high time that the irresponsible, car obsessed dinosaurs are removed from power.

Chairman's Ramblings

This year's AGM will be held on Monday December 5th and will be held at the Friends Meeting House. Doors open at 7pm and the AGM will start at 7.15pm so please make sure you arrive in good time as we are anticipating a full house for this year's guest speaker. The agenda will be put on the website no less than 14 days before the AGM. If any member has questions that they feel need to be raised at the AGM these need to be sent to me no less than 7 days prior to the meeting.

This year our guest speaker is none other than the famous and inspirational Rosie Swale Pope MBE. Rosie is an author, adventurer and marathon runner who has sailed across the Atlantic in a small boat, trekked 3000 miles through Chile on horseback and successfully completed a five-year around-the-world run for a charity. I could go on and list her achievements but it would be far better to attend this year's AGM and allow Rosie to tell her story in her own words.

In the last edition of ramblings I mentioned the gathering pace of two campaigns that are spreading out across the country; Twenty's Plenty for Us and Sustrans Free Range Kids. By the time you read this edition of ramblings Norman Baker MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department of Transport will have produced a new Traffic Signs Policy document that will make speed reduction and signage easier and cheaper to implement. Interestingly the European Parliament has also voted on a resolution for 30 km/h (18.6 mph) speed limit in residential areas and is calling for a road safety action plan as a matter of urgency across Europe. This is great news for our communities and the streets we live in, great news for the environment and for real social and economic sustainability. This could be a chance for local politicians to shine if they have vision and ambition for change. But don't hold your breath-

Do we have your email address? If not, please email our Membership Secretary with your membership number in the subject line so that we can contact you quickly regarding our campaigns. The email address is: membership@spokeseastkent.org.uk

16.8% increase in subversives*

In October, SPOKES commissioned 16 highly trained operators in an exercise code-named "spot the 2 wheeled subversives".

SPOKES operatives gathered intelligence about the numbers of 2 wheeled cycling subversives at large on our city streets.

Full protection was issued for this work including clipboards, pencils and oxygen breathing equipment for the most hazardous areas.

The threat levels imposed by these two-wheelers are mainly that they make no contribution to the levels of benzene, carbon monoxide, lead, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide levels in the air, nor do they help the Oil Companies' profits or the Exchequer with any fuel duty. Air pollution and congestion have almost become traditional values and could be under threat and subverted by these 2 wheelers.

That's why SPOKES counts and celebrates these agents of change for posing a threat to the established order (it seems) of ever more pollution and congestion.

If you have full security clearance, find out about SPOKES special services at www.spokeseastkent.org.uk/census.php

Robin Townsend

* Compared with last year, based in the same survey locations.

EU adopts 30km recommendation for residential areas

The European Parliament has recently adopted a resolution to encourage lower urban speed limits across Europe

The resolution "strongly recommends the responsible authorities to introduce speed limits of 30kmh in all residential areas and on single-lane roads in urban areas which have no separate cycle lanes."

This will make it easier local authorities in the UK to push for more 30kmh zones (20mph in the UK). Spokes is delighted by this resolution and hope it will spur on the UK's Twenty's Plenty campaign. Residential areas across Kent need to be reclaimed by people and liberated from car domination and pollution.

This resolution is part of a wide range of European measures to halve Europe's 31,000 annual road fatalities by 2020. A EU survey undertaken in 2010 showed that there was massive support across Europe for 30kmh.

John Shirley

Please get to the editor all articles and photographs for the next newsletter by mid December 2011.

NEWS . . . NEWS . . . NEWS . . . NEW

M20 cycle bridge opens

By the time you read this the M20 cycle and pedestrian bridge between Ashford's Eureka Entertainment Park and Warren Retail Park will have opened. This route replaces the cycle path which crossed the M20 J9 sliproads and will make many cycling journeys substantially easier. In Eureka Entertainment Park the bridge links up with the new Pilgrim's Cycle Trail, part of National Cycle Route 17. On the south side of the M20 the bridge links up with the cycle path beside Simone Weil Avenue.

Peter does LeJoG

I'm an older short-distance cyclist but I recently did the Land's End-John O'Groats trip. It was wonderful, especially because of my support party a.k.a Sue Lakeman. Here's the sum-total of 15.5 days of reflection on cycling, headwinds, lorries with trailers, where the next energy snack is coming from and related issues:



1. The UK has some great cycleways (thanks to some extent to the efforts of members of Spokes). I particularly liked, the Lune Estuary path, the Camel valley and Taunton-Bridgewater canal cycle paths and Tay Path around Perth and onwards through Dunkeld. There are some brilliant sections over the Grampians, apart from the bit that dumps you without warning onto a busy A9, a few miles south of Inverness. Bristol and Edinburgh are of course brilliant, and Runcorn and Widness are not bad.

2. I felt that the Lake District (Windermere to Thirlmere) could do with some work, and also bits of the South-West, where it is sometimes hard to avoid the A30. Are cycleways generally best where property values are lower?

3. The UK has so many glorious areas tucked away. Revelations to me were the White Esk valley and Etterickvale, due north between Carlisle and Edinburgh, and the floe country in Caithness, vast, flat and lovely, with a lower population now than some 3000 years ago.

4. Almost everyone is very helpful when asked directions, but almost no-one knows anything about cycle routes.

5. Is it typically the more expensive cars that are most inclined to whip past your elbow leaving three centimetres clearance on blind corners? Well I suppose pricier cars are generally wider than cheaper cars, so they need more of the road...

6. Why does John O'Groats get all the attention? Dunnet Head is further north, more spectacular and less commercialised.

7. There is a sign just south of the Forth road bridge: 'cyclists are required to use the pavement', a rather different approach from that of East Kent councils.

Peter Taylor-Gooby

Freshly painted Sustrans Mile Post. Work carried out by young volunteers Isobel Rice and Helen Delmar

Picture: Sam Webb

