

Police Bike Patrols Catching On

Police patrols on mountain bikes in Birmingham were started in 2000 and are now being extended as they have been so successful. The cycling cops can get to places that the cars can't and are often the first to arrive on the scene. An added bonus is that the patrols are much more visible and approachable.

Up to fifteen cycling bobbies can be funded for the cost of running a police car and they can approach quietly when necessary. With similar schemes being set up in other cities such as Sheffield we wonder whether Leicester will follow suit.

John said the local police in Leicester gave up using bikes because they kept getting nicked!!

Simon Thomas

Leicester Spokes, PO Box 30, Leicester LE1 9DG
www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

New Spokes Tours Coming Up

New tours are being planned for Spokes members to go to the Peak District and East Anglia, probably in June and September. More information will be posted on the website.

Jacqui's Tea Room


Morning Coffee
Light Lunches
Cream Teas

Leicestershire's legendary gateaux selection

Open Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holiday
Mondays, 11am - 6pm, closed January and first
three weekends in July. Tel. 0116 240 2276

Bob Warner Cycles

The best service and advice, close to the city centre
Monday/Saturday 9-1.30, 3-6pm Closed Thursday

Sparkenhoe St.  London Rd - A6.
Wheel Building, Cycle Sales
Repairs, Best Priced Spares
Technical Advice. Rebuilds.
Raleigh Dealer. Servicing.
Conduit St. BR STATION

35 Sparkenhoe St. Leic. 2627426.
Spokes Map Book Ref: Page 17,5 / H.

LEICESTER CYCLIST

for cyclists in and around Leicester

Shedbusters!

It's that time of year to bust your bike out of the dark and dusty confines of the shed and make the most of the up-and-coming good weather. Start now and by the summer you will be the envy of your car-bound colleagues with your lean tanned body, even



though you've been eating all the cakes at the country pubs and cafes like they're going out of fashion (it's just fuel for us!). So liberate your bike and get it checked over now ready for those hot summer rides and remember -

Great Legs Grow on Bikes!

Leicester Cyclist is the newsletter of Leicester Spokes Cycling Group
for more information visit our website

www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

Suffolk Tour Report September 2001

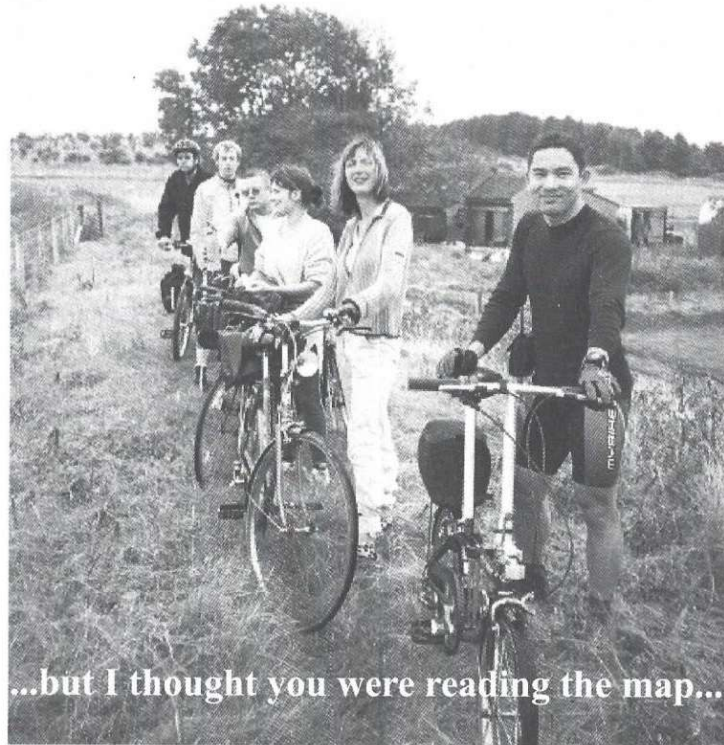
The organiser of this trip emphasised the absolute importance of making sure that bikes were checked and that brakes, tyres and wheels were in good working order. He was not going to stand for any nonsense or slacking from anyone. "Physician heal thyself," was the unkind and completely unjustified remark aimed in my direction on arriving back having myself broken three spokes, suffered a puncture, and having to borrow a bike in good working order for the homeward leg.

15 Spokes members visited Suffolk looking forward to an Indian summer of warmth in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The beauty was there in abundance but the warmth had to be generated from within through pedalling. The sun was rather shy that weekend. Of those taking part, six cycled to Suffolk and four cycled back. Andy and Richard covered no less than 350 miles during the six day period, raising funds for LOROS, the county hospice organisation.

Staying at Blaxhall Youth Hostel, which is close to Snape Maltings Concert Hall, we explored the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route. We went down as far as Bawdsey and north up to Dunwich. The Coastal Route uses a mixture of mainly quiet roads and well surfaced tracks, the main circular route being fully signed in both directions. There is no designated starting point. You can begin your journey anywhere along the route. For those wanting to explore the full circuit, all 88 miles can be covered in between two and four days depending on how many stops are taken at the villages and market towns along the way. There are no big hills, but enough gently challenging undulations to open up good views across land and sea.

One group was looking forward to an energetic start to the day and made at top speed for the Butley Creek Ferry, while a more reflective and relaxed team lingered at a tea shop enjoying some cake for an hour or so. "Let the speed merchants have their exercise," we in the tea shop agreed before setting out for a short ride through to Shottisham and back to Blaxhall via the Rendlesham Forest. To our complete astonishment we found the fast group, a little chilled by the breeze, and still waiting for the Ferry. The ferryman had decided not to operate that day. Of course we were very sympathetic and supportive as the disconsolate group filed past and we did what

we could to hide our smiles behind our hands. "If you're going to cross by Ferry, you really must first check to see whether the service is running," said one extremely helpful rider full of the warmth that only tea and chocolate cake can bring. The reply was lost and carried away by the breeze. The happy outcome was that the fast group did have the good fortune to find the Felixstowe Ferry, just south of Bawdsey, plying for business later in the day. That crossing of the River Deben in an open boat was one of the highlights of the tour. (Ferry price £1 each, plus £1 for a bike.)



The visit to Blaxhall Youth Hostel was a first experience of hostelling for some of our group. "Where is the wardrobe?" one bemused cyclist asked. "Do you mean I've got to leave all of my things down here?" "Who let that stranger in to our bedroom and allowed him to snore all night? Another of our members arriving by car, also hostelling for the first time, had had a difficult journey caused by a faulty exhaust pipe. He arrived at eleven o'clock with a triumphant "We're here!" only to find that the warden was at that moment locking the door for the night, thus separating him from his pyjamas still in the boot of the car.

Blaxhall Hostel was recently refurbished to a high standard with funds provided by the Millennium Commission. It is a good base for those who like the communal facilities on offer. The hostel has excellent storage facilities for bikes. However, there is some concern that the Youth Hostel Association will have to close some of its rural sites. The YHA had a very lean year in 2001 because Foot and Mouth Disease stopped visitors, especially overseas tourists, from booking. This was in spite of the fact that Suffolk had little or no countryside closed due to the precautions.

It was a good trip to an area full of interest. We saw sights ranging from castles and war defences to nature reserves. We can recommend it, either for another organised tour or a mini break of your own. If you would like information about the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route Peter Simmonds will be pleased to loan you a map. Further information is also available from Suffolk County Council's web site:-
www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/tourism/

Peter Simmonds

£2 million National Cycling Fund

The newly formed National Cycling Strategy (NCS) Board convened for the first time in January 2002, and outlined proposals for the provision of a cycling fund of up to £1million per year over the next two years. This will provide support for a range of cycling projects across the country, including new cycle parking areas, improvements to existing cycling routes and the creation of new cycle routes. Invitations to bid will be announced early in 2002.

The NCS Board was established to ensure the implementation of the NCS's outputs, aims and objectives. The main aim of the NCS is to quadruple the number of cycle journeys by 2012 (from 1996 figures).

Members of the NCS Board include Steven Norris (former Conservative MP), John Grimshaw (Sustrans), Oliver Hatch (Velo-City), Lynn Sloman (Transport 2000) and Christian Wolmar (writer and broadcaster).

Lutterworth Route Open

A new route has recently been opened alongside the A4304 between Lutterworth and Walcote. This is a well surfaced track, and gives cyclists from Lutterworth off road access to Sustrans National Route 6. The route is a result of enthusiastic canvassing by Walcote Parish Council.

Leicester Cycle Route Map Now On-Line

A map of all the cycle routes in and around Leicester is now available on the internet. Just follow the link on the Leicester Spokes website:

www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

Neil Talbot

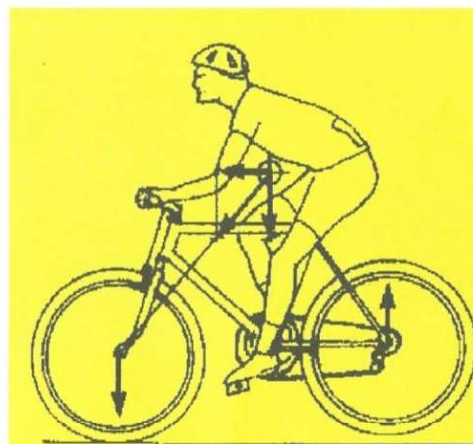


STONEHURST
Family Farm,
Café and Museum
delicious fuel for hungry cyclists

01509 413216
open 9.30am - 5pm 7 days a week
Loughborough Road, Mountsorrel,
nr. Loughborough. Leics.

Picos, Panniers and Paella

I'm not sure how it all started but eight of us are going to cycle round North Spain in May this year. One inspiration was the view from the plane window when I first flew to Spain ten years ago. As we crossed the coast, laid out below was a beautiful range of mountains. I worked out they couldn't be the Pyrenees; they turned out to be the Picos (de Europa) a wild National Park in the centre of the North coast, loved by the Spanish but not much visited by Brits (sounds good so far). Then the new Guggenheim museum seemed to be changing Bilbao from an industrial horror to a "tourist destination". Then I realised Rioja wine country was nearby, and also the pilgrimage route that leads west towards Santiago. Finally Go announced flights to Bilbao at £30 each way and that clinched it!



Desplazamiento de los pesos al frenar

Mid-May will be not too hot and not too wet (well we can hope), no-one will get sick, hills will be gentle and brief, bikes will be serviced in advance and not break down, punctures won't exist, food will be plentiful and delicious, also the wine, basic hotels will be vacant, cheap and clean, the natives will be friendly and all speak fluent English (.....we can hope and dream). One thing is certain though, as on all cycle tours, very little will turn out as planned.

Philip Draycott

(Editor's Note: - should he return, Philip has promised a full account of his adventure. He has also been tasked with liberating the secret recipe for the famous 'mountain stew' to share with you, dear reader.)

Cycling on the Railways?

Leicester Spokes members have recently been involved in a project to

JOIN NOW! to help increase the lobbying and campaigning impact of *Leicester Spokes*

Name I wish to join/rejoin* Leicester Spokes.
 Address £9 Family £6 Waged £3 Unwaged
 £2.95 Leicester Cycling Map†
 £..... Donation *Delete as appropriate
 Post Code TOTAL ENCLOSED £.....
 Please make cheques/postal orders payable to
Leicester Spokes, and send to:
 Leicester Spokes, PO Box 30, Leicester, LE1 9DG

†Leicester Cycling Map is published by Leicester City Council, produced by CycleCity Guides.
Data Protection Act: Your membership details will be held on computer

Members who give us their email address will be informed of more rides and events which happen at too short notice to be included in the newsletter. Your details will not be passed to any 3rd parties.

Leicester Spokes is a friendly cycling group for cyclists in and around Leicester. We run a series of free and easy rides during the year where you can meet new people while we show you the best bits of the countryside. Our ride leaders wont leave you behind and there's always a cafe or pub stop on the way. The rides are usually a mixed group and it's ok to walk up the hills.

Members also enjoy social events which can be anything from film shows and bike maintenance classes to curry nights and skittles. We also have weekend and longer tours both in the UK and abroad, and are keen to help new or returning cyclists to enjoy their bike to the full in good company. We take part in campaign activities and meetings with the council to discuss the design of cycling facilities. So get that bike out of the shed, dust it off and join in!



www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

travelers who want to use their bike as part of the journey.

Several members made journeys on the train to various destinations such as Nottingham, Matlock, Birmingham and Syston (except that train was canceled...) both at peak times and during the day or at weekends. They assessed the journey for several aspects such as ease of access to the train with a bicycle, availability of booking information, cycle parking.

Other groups around the Midlands are also taking part in the project, which is being run by the Rail Passenger Committee. All the information will be gathered into a report to go to various interested parties, MP's, rail companies etc. to show how improvements could be made to attract more customers with bicycles.

Long Distance Riders

Leicester Spokes has a small but select band who ride long distance 'Audax' events. Two 100km rides have already been completed successfully this year. Mark, Peter and Martin rode the Rutland and Beyond event starting from Leicester in February. A week later Mark, Peter and Neil joined 200 other cyclists on the foggy Cotswold Corker out of Cheltenham. Plans are being made for more rides through 2002.

Bike Maintenance Classes

Leicester Spokes first bike maintenance class took place in January. Twenty Spokes members met at Burton Overy, where Simon covered basic tasks like checking your bike over for problems and replacing an inner tube. Loose cranks, damaged headsets and faulty wheels were among the faults investigated. Further classes on specific topics may be held later in the year. Thanks to Simon for organising this event and sharing his expertise.

Neil Talbot

Note: in future there will be a £10 charge for non-members for the maintenance classes. Funnily enough, membership only costs £6 -Ed.

BMX Specialists
 Extensive range of
**Mongoose
 BMX**

On Yer Bike Full
 range of
**Dawes quality
 Hybrid cycles**

23 Stoughton Road, Oadby
 0116 271 2353