

For Sale

Falcon K2, 21 - speed hybrid style with mudguards and luggage rack, medium/large size - Price £70

Ridgeback 21 - speed hybrid, luggage rack, mudguards, chainguard. Medium size - Price £70

Tel. Michael Joseph on 252 2184 during working hours

Alloy black low-rider front rack for 26 or 27"/700c wheel. Price £10.

Tel. Simon Thomas on 229 9598



If you find that a Spokes ride is an exhausting experience, spare a thought for Goran Kropp (1966 - 2002) who once cycled from Sweden to Nepal (7,000 miles, he took the scenic route) climbed Everest without porters or oxygen (*if I were going to climb Everest, I'd at least need a butler - Ed*), then cycled back. Apparently he trained for Alpine climbs by sleeping in a gravel pit. No, we can't figure that one out, either, but I'm sure he had a good reason for it.

John Woodcraft from the Daily Telegraph

Thanks to Peter Simmonds and Mark Ingle who are now keeping the website up to date. If you want to know about additional rides (including longer Saturday rides) and social events, check it out now www.leicesterspokes.org.uk
Next short urban rides: Jan 8th and Feb 5th 2003, start 7pm London Rd/Ratcliffe Rd junction
Advanced news for next year: Possible Spokes tours of Northern Italy and Eire Spokesfest Human Powered Vehicle Festival: 24 - 27th July including Penny Farthing and HPV racing

FIVE colu

LEICESTER CYCLIST

Winter 2002

for cyclists in and around Leicester

Wot? - No Cycling Officer??!?!?

Just when you thought Leicester was about to become a cycling city, the City Council Cycling Officer, Sally Killips, leaves! What's going on, you ask? Well, actually she's moved on up to become a sort of Super Cycling Officer for the East Midlands. In her new role she will be reviewing the various councils' cycling strategies and infrastructures around the region with a view to getting them all up to the best standard.

With no sign that the City Council is intending to fill the Cycling Officer vacancy that is left, we have to ask whether her first job will be to highlight her previous employer's lack of commitment to cycling.

Mind you, if you think that's bad, they're going to build a car park on Aylestone Meadows and run trams down the Great Central Way.

Position Vacant

Simon Thomas

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

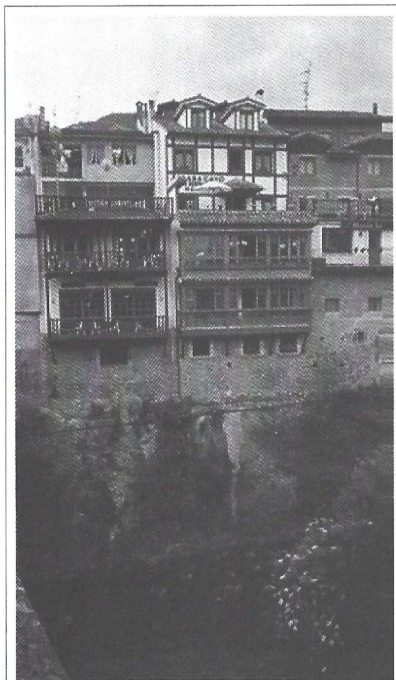
www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

Spanish Tour - May 2002

You've heard about our arrival in Bilbao (see Summer Newsletter; six bikes loaded on at Stanstead; five unloaded at Bilbao). Now hear the rest.

Northern Spain is mainly mountainous - across the whole breadth of the country is a band of high ground that is never less than rugged, and often quite wild. We were headed for the mountains of Picos de Europa which, although reaching just 2,600 metres, look Alpine in scale. First though we had to get a bike for Steve W.

We decided to split into two groups, one making for Haro (wine capital of the Rioja region; we got our priorities straight) by bus - the other to the local bike shop in Bilbao. Leaving the Basque capital by bus was definitely the right thing to do. The roads leading from the city are highly dangerous. Bilbao is set in a bowl created by the surrounding mountains and getting to the high country with as little risk as possible was a must.



Casa Cayo Hotel, Potes

Hiring a bike to replace the one lost by the airline was easy once we found an English speaking Shimano salesperson. Steve was kitted out and the second group caught the bus to Santo Domingo before cycling to Burgos where we all planned to meet up (thanks to mobile phones, brilliant on cycle tours).

Burgos offers the best city sightseeing in the North. The cathedral is fantastic. Burgos sits astride the Camino (Pilgrim's Way) which runs from Biarritz to Santiago. The city was briefly the capital of the kingdom of Castile and reckons to be El Cid's birthplace.

The following day we cycled a long way to Cervera de Pisuegra. We were lucky with the weather which remained cloudy enough to keep the worst of the heat away, but the group was glad to arrive in the small town set in the south-eastern foothills of the Picos.

The ascent of mountain pass and the sweeping descent into Potes was the highlight of the tour. It was a tough climb but the viewpoint at the top was staggeringly beautiful (see photos). After a photo call, a chat with some Welsh tourists and lunch we saw a young cow herder riding his horse bareback. It is held that I infuriated the guy by taking a photo which veered his herd away from their intended destination, but if that was so it didn't stop his

female companion from taking a picture of our group in that graceful panorama. The descent was the longest any of us had been in a saddle without pedalling. At least 30 minutes was occupied sweeping down the mountain road into the resort of Potes. Readers of this piece are urged to visit this place - we all enjoyed its atmosphere for the planned rest day. The cable car up to Fuente De is a must. It was here, too, that we had a taste of quad biking off-road over the rugged mountain tracks. Throughout this day, and the following day's cycle down to the coast we saw dramatic ravines, gorges and passes.

From Los Picos de Europa we descended to the coast at Comillas. This turned out to be a sporting interlude, the tone being set by the oldish patron of our hostel. He spoke no English but wanted to converse. His chatter consisted of British sports heroes. "Henry Cooper", he grinned, making his hand into a fist. Later, when we managed to explain that we came from Leicester his face, heavy with the concentration of trying to understand these crazy cyclists, suddenly cleared. "Gordon Banks!", he cried. He then disappeared into his room and emerged with immense pride with one of those tiny yellow post-its on which he had written the names of the entire 1966 World Cup England football team.

The sporting theme continued in the bar that evening when we were caught up in a promotion cliff-hanger. Racing Santander, the local team, would gain a Premiership place if they could only beat Atletico Bilbao. They did - but not without a build up of tension around us which dissipated into celebrations of noisy joy at the final whistle.

Following a stay for two nights in Santander the return to Bilbao was arranged by a narrow gauge train known as the "Feve". This is easily the best route back - taking about three hours, compared with the bus's one.

Quick word about the food. Paella with saffron rice is available of course but the best local foods are the tapas with cheese, vegetables, cooked meats and seafood. Chorizos, a spicy red sausage and tortilla espanol were favourites with our group. Being close to La Rioja, of course, meant that we were able to get on first name terms with this wonderful wine (plus excellent local brandy, somehow it seems hard to remember the name of our favourite...)

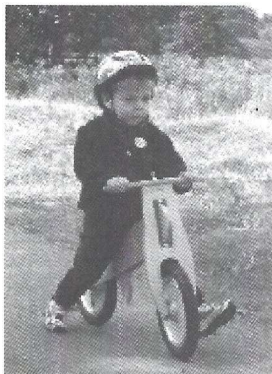
We all returned in one piece - able to fight another day. Where shall we go next? Watch this space.

Philip Draycott



The six Musketeers were: Andy, Dan (mechanical wizard extraordinaire), Pete (author of this report), Philip (organiser, leader and general Mother Hen), Steve S and Steve W (who was the one who suffered the lost bike).

Mike's Bike



The LIKEaBIKE is a modern day hobby horse for children. It has no pedals, you scoot along with your feet as was the fashionable thing for gentlemen to do around 200 years ago. It is made in Germany from high quality varnished birch plywood with bronze wheel bearings. The seat height can be adjusted by means of a series of holes on the seatpost. It has no brakes. This bike is built to last, after all if it gets that battered you can get the sander out and re-varnish it. If I had five children (which I'm certainly not!) I'm sure this bike would last through them all.

Michael (2 ½) really enjoys his bike. From a slowish start (simply walking with the bike between his legs) and a few wobbles we are now at the stage that there is some serious 'air' between each step given enough speed - something that is very easily achieved. Fears of

him shooting off into the nearest bush / lamp post / duck pond due to lack of brakes have been unfounded. The shoe / ground interface method works just fine.

Sharp intake of breath here... this bicycle costs either £127 ('race' with solid wheels - strip of rubber round edge) or £147 (for the 'mountain' version with real pump up fat tyres). Its worth every penny.

Notice I've not referred to the bike as a toy. Something that gives a child such confidence, freedom of movement and independence can never be a toy. It is truly like a bike.

The LIKEaBIKE is available from Yo Yo Trading, PO BOX 144, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7WA www.yoyotrading.co.uk

Steven Brandist (stevenbrandist@yahoo.co.uk)



No Such Thing as a Free Lunch?

Well maybe not, but the free breakfast is reality thanks to the Inland Revenue. In their attempt to encourage more people to cycle to work, the Inland Revenue now allow employers to provide six free breakfasts a year to employees who cycle to work on designated cycle to work days. Why not ask your employer if they'll take part in the scheme? Remember that you can also get 20p a mile allowance tax free for using your bike on work business. I notice that car drivers can claim an extra 5p a mile if they take a passenger on business with them. Does that apply if you take someone on a tandem, I wonder?

Simon Thomas

Urban Zeroes

On Wednesday 23rd October a group of city-slicker cyclists set out on the first Urban Zero ride - a short social ride to familiarise people with riding around the city. Initially the plan was to head across Highfields and then turn West towards the city centre. So in true Spokes style we immediately turned round and went in the opposite direction.

Passing through the bike path at the end of Kenwood Road, past the church then up the hill on Church Lane to Chapel Lane, which is quite a good East-West route if you're south of the city centre. We also avoided Queen's Road so as not to be tempted by the trendy new bar just opened, and hit Victoria Park across the bike crossing at St. Leonards Road. In fact, the route was so cleverly devised that one rider didn't realise we were at Victoria park (o.k. so it was dark, too.) By the way, the Engineering Building looks great in the dark.

We picked up some confused loiterers by the Swan and Rushes pub who had mistaken it for the start point (or so they feebly claimed) and after much debate managed to tear ourselves away to explore some more cycle routes around De Montfort University and Frog Island, before heading back into town through the Vaughan Way underpass and round the back of the Shires.

Strangely, we found ourselves back at the Swan and Rushes again and this time were unable to resist. By the way, they do a great choice in cold food and proper beer, and they even let us put our bikes round the back which entailed wheeling them through the bar, much to the bemusement of on lookers.

At this point Simon forgot to mention the competition to see if anybody can figure out the reasons (for there are three of them, dear reader) why he has called the rides Urban Zeroes. If you can figure out what they are he will buy you a drink (terms and conditions apply*). Next rides are 8th January and 5th February with more to follow depending on demand. Start 7pm London Rd/Ratcliffe Rd.

*No purchase necessary. Claims can only be made at the pub after the ride. This does not constitute an offer to enter into a contractual agreement. Choice of drink at the prizegiver's discretion. No cash alternatives. Bribery acceptable.

Simon Thomas

Bike is Best!

In a recent email poll by the

Bob Warner Cycles

The best service and advice close to the city centre

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

Name..... I wish to join/rejoin* Leicester Spokes
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 * delete as appropriate
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Leicester Spokes c/o VAL, 9 Newarke St, Leicester, LE15SN
 Your details will be held on computer but not passed to any 3rd parties

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.

Do you like to cycle at a gentle pace and take in the scenery?

Do you prefer to walk up the steeper hills?

Do you like to stop for a leisurely lunch?

- Sociable bike rides
- Weekend and longer tours in the UK and abroad.
- Regular Newsletters
- Social events.
- Bike maintenance classes.
- Cycle promotion events.

So get the bike out of the shed, dust it off, and join in!

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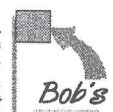


www.leicesterspokes.org.uk

radio programming, the bicycle was voted the number one invention of the last 150 years, gaining over 70% of the vote. Its nearest rival was radio, which gained only 5%, much to the annoyance of the radio show's presenters.

Monday/Saturday 9-1.30, 3-6pm Closed Thursday

Sparkenhoe St.



Bob's

London Rd - A6

Wheel Building, Cycle Sales, Repairs, Best Priced Spares, Technical Advice. Rebuilds. Servicing. Probike / Claude Butler Dealer

Conduit St. BR STATION

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

New Address for Leicester Spokes

Please note our new address...

Leicester Spokes
 C/o VAL
 9 Newarke Street
 Leicester
 LE1 5SN

Wigston Framework Knitters Museum

Last year one of the Spokes rides went to the Wigston Framework Knitters Museum in Bushloe End in Wigston, where the museum fronts directly on to the main road. Originally an old farmhouse dating from 1700's it was altered and extended over the years to take in the next door cruck cottage and eventually a separate two storey knitting workshop was built in the garden.

Leicestershire had a long tradition of worsted (woollen) knitting for socks and stockings and these were originally knitted on 6' high frames installed in the villagers own kitchens and must have taken up most of the space. When just one of the manually operated machines in the workshop was demonstrated, the percussive noise of the traverse was irritatingly loud. The original workers in the workshop would be surrounded by 6 or 8 machines and spend 12-14hrs/day in this cramped, dark, and noisy environment.

In the 1850's the frames were superseded by the Griswold circular machines, which were so much smaller that several could be clamped around the kitchen table, but eventually industrialists set up large factories and home working became largely uneconomic.

If you want to see the origins of Leicester's once great textile industry then spend a couple of hours here, listening to the enthusiastic curators who take you on a tour. There is a yard to park your bikes in.

Winner of County Heritage Award. Admission £1. Tea/coffee/biscuits available. Open every Sunday 2-5pm. also Bank Holiday Mondays. School Parties by arrangement. Tel 0116 288 3396

[Http://www.leics.gov.uk/p_t/tourism/a_to_z.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/p_t/tourism/a_to_z.htm) and look for the framework knitters museum

John Woodcraft