

## Abbreviated Minutes of Leicester Spokes AGM 1<sup>st</sup> April 03

### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM – Matters arising.

Library List – Greg plans to produce a list of all Spoke books that he has and make them available for any member to borrow on request. Newsletter costcutting – Two alternative quotes for printing were about same as we pay currently.

### OFFICERS REPORTS

Former chairman Simon was thanked for his contribution in single handedly producing the Newsletter and Ride Guide. Secretary Greg said that his own main activity over the year had been maintaining the Leicester Spokes Campaign Yahoo Group. For full participation in the discussions there you did have to enter into full membership. Membership Secretary – John said that current membership stood at 88. 48 members had email facilities. 28 Members were de-listed at end of Feb because they had not renewed despite 3 reminders. He drew attention to the several members who had given generous donations with their membership renewal.

Treasurer – Ned said that the current cheque A/C stood at £287.71 and the Deposit A/C held £982.35. Expenditure exceeded income by £405. A summary page of accounts was distributed and was accepted as true by the meeting. The meeting expressed thanks to John and Ned and also to the Ride organisers Ian and Peter for their regular Wed evg and Saturday rides respectively.

Philip told of his special "Green Bicycle Murder Ride" on Sunday 27 April 03 which eventually attracted 30 riders.. Mention was also made of Peter's Norfolk weekend last year and Philip's Spanish tour. He has arranged an Italian tour for this year.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS - all elected unopposed

Chairman – Andy Tokeley, Secretary – Greg Puczylo, Treasurer – Ned Rice, Membership – John Woodcraft  
Ride Committee – Simon Thomas, Andy, Mark Ingle, Peter Simmonds., Philip Draycott, Ian Nightingale, Liz,  
Ned, John.

Ordinary Committee mems—Steven Brandist, Peter Stanesby.

### THANKS TO RETIRING COMMITTEE MEMS.

Roger Lovell who also retired two months ago was thanked in his absence for his contribution.

INSURANCE. Members were reminded that affiliation to the CTC cost Spokes £28 and Organisers Liability Cover was £58. Members were reminded that the insurance we carry only insures the club and ride leaders/organisers against third party claims. It does not insure individual members against claims from third parties. At last year's AGM the club decided to discontinue the facility for individuals to insure for third party cycling risks through the CTC because the cost was increased from £3 pa to £10 pa.per member with no financial benefit to Spokes at all.. It was suggested that many members' household insurance policies probably included this cover anyway and should be checked..

NEWSLETTER. Darren Walker volunteered for the vacant editorship of this. There was discussion on the future form of the Newsletter as it is the dominant figure in our costs. It was felt that instead of the present print of 1100 copies being freely available to anyone we should have a restricted circulation of possibly photo copied sheets to members and supporters only with email versions to those members who had that facility. Mark I and Ned offered low cost copying facilities.

MEMBERSHIP FEES It was felt that standard membership had remained at £6 for too long considering that we are losing £500 pa in an average recent year. It was decided that from the start of our new membership year on July 1<sup>st</sup> the standard membership should increase to £8. Concessions for unwaged at £4 and family £12.

WEBSITE Thanks were expressed to Peter S and Mark for their excellent Spokes website. Mention was also made of recently received report and photos on the website of NZ from former webmasters Neil and Caroline.

### AOB.

There was also a discussion on the Spokes contribution to Spokesfest in July. This is being organised by a sub-committee of Philip, Steven, Ned. On behalf of Cyclemagic who are the organisers of Spokesfest. Simon said that it was a non-profit making venture subsidised by the efforts of himself and Roger, without any City Council.funding. A tandem which has been given to Cyclemagic by the charity Vista, is currently on loan to Spokes. It needs maintenance and it was agreed that Spokes make a contribution to this.

# LEICESTER CYCLIST

*The Newsletter of Leicester Spokes Autumn 2003*

## **Leicester Spokes - for Cyclists in and around Leicester**

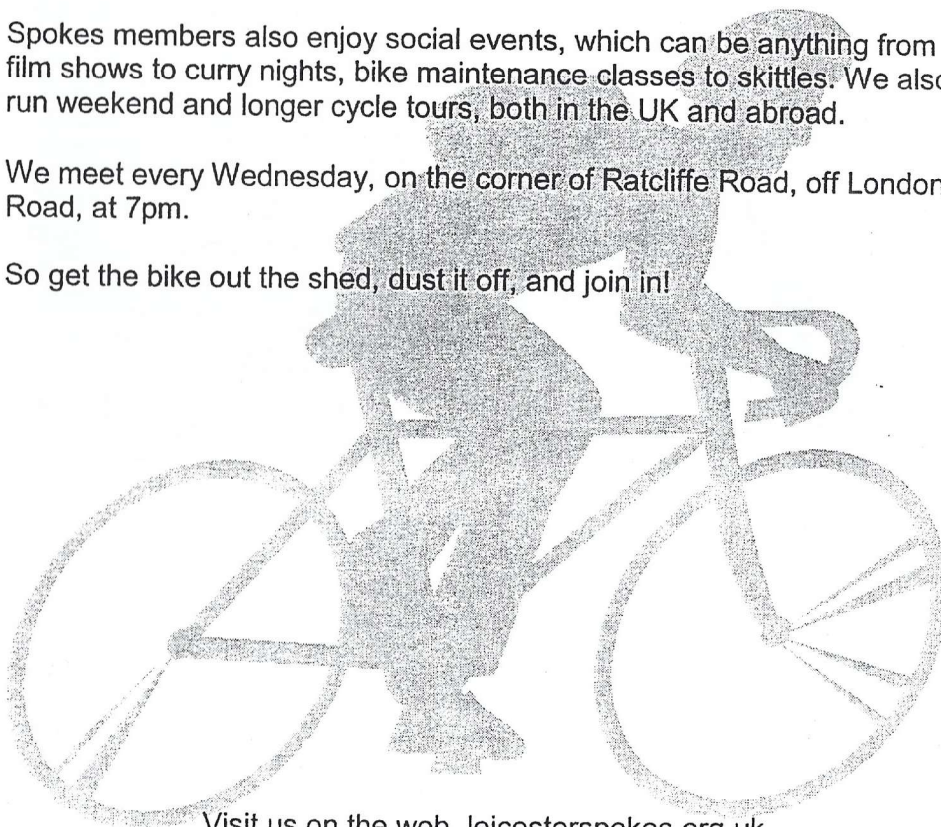
Leicester Spokes is a social cycling group for cyclists in and around Leicester.

We organise free, fun and easy leisure rides throughout the year where you can meet new people while enjoying the best of the Leicestershire countryside. We cycle at a relaxed pace, it's OK to walk up the hills, and there are regular stops at cafes or pubs.

Spokes members also enjoy social events, which can be anything from film shows to curry nights, bike maintenance classes to skittles. We also run weekend and longer cycle tours, both in the UK and abroad.

We meet every Wednesday, on the corner of Ratcliffe Road, off London Road, at 7pm.

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



Visit us on the web..leicesterspokes.org.uk

## The Tour of the Missing Socks

### Spokes Tour to Italy

The group arrived at six a.m., after a bleary eyed survey of the alpine mountains and road tunnels as we left Switzerland. Judging whether the 22 hour coach journey by European Bike Express was comfortable or not depended on who was asked. The older group members seemed to fall asleep for the night – while the younger ones were kept awake by the movement and noise of the vehicle. All agreed that it was well air conditioned with comfortable seats and service.

*On the ferry to Bellagio*



Arrival at Como just after daybreak was a great start. Energy was conserved by a downhill freewheel into the town and then taking the ferry to the steep streeted town of Bellagio. The cycling started there with the route via Lecce, and the first of our reluctant (ha!) and serious ice-cream stops, to the sprawling metropolis of Bergamo which has the most enchanting old city centre on a high rock plateau. In Bergamo Old Town that evening, possibly under the considerable momentum of Philip, we decided to go for a "white tablecloth" meal. It was probably the best of the tour, mountain delicacies and polenta, topped off with some delicious white wine from the Friuli region. Minicab back to the Youth Hostel via streets packed

with party people, realising that one of the big plusses of Youth Hostels is the price but one of the big minuses is the midnight curfew.

The ride to Lake Garda was eventful but rain-affected. First we rode in good weather to pay homage to the Giro d'Italia. We arrived about an hour before the tour was due, and managed to get a quick, simple, tasty lunch. Already the roads were closed and locals were waiting and chatting by the roadside in a carnival atmosphere. The two leaders sped through to warm applause and the main peloton followed a minute or so later. That was it. But what a wonderful sight.



After a drizzly afternoon and bright early evening we reached our hotel on Lake Garda, in Gardone Riviera. The Hotel Nord was typical of some of the accommodation mentioned in the Rough Guide. Inexpensive and very, very faded, even crumbling would not be unfair. We appeared to be the only guests, though the bar downstairs was well used by locals. The owner looked like an even older version of Peter O'Toole, just as charming and had learnt his useful English working at the Savoy in London.

The following morning we walked to Il Vittoriale, the preserved home of a crazed and entirely eccentric Italian poet-adventurer, Gabriele d'Annunzio. The house and park were created in the last years of his life in the 30's and donated by him

to the Italian State. In the park is an amphitheatre, a garden, various grandiose monuments including half a battle-ship, a beautiful 1930's wooden motor torpedo boat, and a ridiculous mausoleum. The gloomy villa, crammed floor to ceiling with mementoes and objets d'art, is a remarkable memorial to this strange man.

After joining a host of BMW riding Germans on the ferry to Torre del Benaco we settled into a pedalling rhythm to take us on to Verona.

Some of us felt that Verona was the most alluring city on the tour. Romeo and Juliet's city is as ancient as it is romantic. We were all captivated by the ice-green river rushing under the 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Bridge. The massive Roman Arena amphitheatre holds 20,000 people for entertainment beneath the stars. Two of our group members were due to return to attend an opera there later in the month. The heat really started that day and we discovered later that it was unusually hot for early summer - something which took its toll on us all.

After Verona, (and an evening watching the European Cup Final with a fair number of Inter Milan supporters), we were heading for the first of the bike contacts that Philip had made via the web with the organisation FIAB, which translates as "Friends of the Italian Bicycle", a lo-tech, non-racing group interested in bike commuting and touring, rather like a Latin Spokes. The Lecce member had advised us to ride down the west shore of the southern branch of Lake, rather than the much busier road to the east. This had been excellent advice.

The Verona member was unable to join us due to work commitments but had sent us a detailed route onwards to Vicenza, avoiding the busy S11 state road. So we left Verona slowly by a maze of little roads through estates and backstreets, then into countryside thick with vineyards. On through Soave, source of the famous wine, a dusty, agricultural little place dwarfed by huge medieval walls and watchtowers leaping up the hill. The sun got steadily hotter and hotter, the roads got smaller and smaller. We passed various Palladian country houses as we neared Vicenza. One house we were so taken by, we passed it twice!

At last we met Cheti, a police officer and part of the Vicenza FIAB group. She immediately took us on a guided ride and walk around the considerable sights of her town, including Palladio's famous Villa Rotonda and Basilica. Annoyingly for Cheti and for us, the Teatro Olimpico had closed for the day minutes before we got there. The B&B which Cheti had arranged for us outside Vicenza was undoubtedly the best of the tour, with a charming host who fed us bottles of his own Black wine (darker and stronger than Red wine, delicious) and a vast cyclists breakfast in the morning. Also, that evening, we met up with local FIAB

cyclists for a very friendly meal in a nearby restaurant, ending with a hard-fought and boisterous session of The Bottle Game (see photo). Unknown to anyone, Philip had brought a (genuine) policeman's helmet from the UK in his pannier, and after speeches were made, the helmet was ceremoniously presented to Cheti for all her help. Cheti declared herself delighted with her "English bobby-hat".

From Vicenza we were guided out to Bassano del Grappa for ..... aaargh!..... White-Water Rafting. The writer of this piece will have to admit that what followed was completely unexpected and terrifying. A white knuckle ride was anticipated - swooshing down by rocky outcrops in the foaming water. The reality was a shortage of water and an instructor at the helm who aimed straight at the boulders until we stuck fast. And who quite deliberately capsized the craft with most of us surfacing beneath the dinghy and swimming under water to get clear of it. First tip for cyclists on tour in Italy - stick to cycling. And if you are in the wonderful Bassano del Grappa spend your white water fee of 30 Euro's like our late Queen Mother; drinking her favourite after-dinner tippie, the eponymous grappa. Admire the graceful replica of Palladio's 16th century bridge *Ponte degli Alpini*. Just don't waste your time being scared to death miles from the bosom of your family.

Some of the group said it was all a jolly jape - but I saw their surprised (nay shocked) faces as they came up to the surface.

From the foothills of the Dolomites and Monte Grappa we approached the Veneto plain which is as flat as a pancake. Between the mountains and the plain the interest is sustained by the needle thin church towers and stone castles on bits of higher ground. On the journey to Montebelluna, we stopped at one of Palladio's most famous houses, the Villa Barbaro, with an enchanted interior painted by Veronese, all false doors and perfectly painted servants peering over painted parapets.

The distances planned were now much shorter. We had a night at a rather frosty modern hotel in Montebelluna, then on across the plains in the direction of Venice.

On the outskirts of Treviso, we were met by another FIAB member, Rossella, a language student. She had said no to a day at the coast with her family so she could meet us. We were impressed! We were offered delightful cooling drinks at her family home, then on to our only *Agriturismo*, which is a farmhouse bed and breakfast. That night, some of us learnt about mosquitoes, the hard way. Rossella kindly met us again in the morning and took us on a delightful round trip of Treviso, a prosperous town and the home of Benetton clothing. On being

shown a broad canal partly filled with the hulks of disused, overgrown, wooden barges, Pete cheerily asked when it was planned to be cleaned up, only to be told that it was a special wildlife area with a new walkway through it and the pride of the town! At one point we were blocking the path with our bikes and panniers and a local man came through calling out some choice words at us; Rossella laughed; she said the dialect of the Veneto region can be rich in colourful abuse.

Rossella advised us on a good route to the coast, partly using "white" (un-tarmacadamed) roads, but the holiday traffic on the sections of main road we had to use was heavy and made for some uncomfortable riding. Luckily in places the traffic was so dense it was stationary, which made it much safer! Finally, we made it to the Union Lido campsite in Cavallino, our final stop, where European Bike Express has a section of pre-erected tents, of which we had booked two. The tents were large and comfortable, the site luxurious and mainly occupied by German holidaymakers, but the prices in the supermarket never failed to make our eyes water!

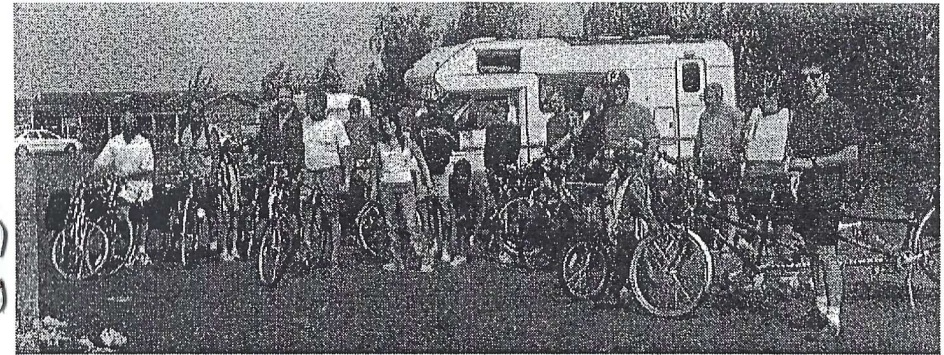
A bus and a waterbus the next day, without bikes, and we were in the heart of Venice, where we shopped, ate, visited St Mark's and art galleries, all the usual things.

Meanwhile, the one down point of the tour. Philip had started out adding glucose and also lo-salt to his water bottles, but then had stopped, plus because of the heat (and trying to lose weight!) was probably not eating enough, and became dehydrated. He had planned to stay out longer after the others had returned to the UK, but Pete did a brilliant job getting him back to the UK on a budget flight and his bike went back to the UK with the coach. In fact Philip rested up for a few days in the UK, saw his doctor who said he was fine to go back to Italy "but take more care of yourself this time"; he got another 30 Euro flight out again, without the bike, and spent two more excellent weeks in North Italy, travelling around by train, putting huge amounts of salt on his food and going to the opera in Verona (twice).

This account is all too brief. Sitting around enjoying a cup of tea (uh? Tea?) on a warm Cavallino evening the six of us relived the tour. Some titles for this article were ventured; *Venetian Adventure*, *Como to Venice*, *Palladian Pedal*. It was Dan who thought of it finally. 10 days living out of pannier bags is not always easy – we were glad to get to the camp ground and relax a bit.

A good tour, well researched and executed by Philip, hugely enjoyed by the six, and all safely home.

## Cycle Camping Taster Weekend 21-22 June 2003



Picture of Group just about to leave Bosworth Water Trust Camp Ground for the journey back to Leicester. In this picture Left to Right as far as I can tell are: :- George, Richard, (Two lads, Pat's sons), Pat, Norman, Hayley, Rammi, John, Raji, John, Phillip, Patrick, Pete, Libby, Tom, Bob, Jane and Chris. (Please send corrections and additional names to Pete)

No fewer than 26 people were involved in the Spokes Cycle Camping Taster Weekend. The weather was hot and the camp site was packed to the gunwhales. Not only was it midsummer weekend but there was also a popular Triathlon event underway. The sheer numbers involved tested the site facilities somewhat but a good time was had by all and it is generally agreed that we will camp again in September.

The 20 mile outward journey on Saturday had gone reasonably well although the weight of camping gear tested our bikes to the full. We were joined on the journey by non-campers, and others were to meet the group at the camp ground having travelled by car.

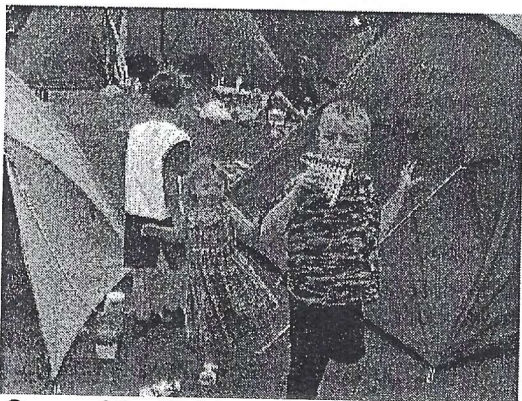
The return journey was in very hot weather. After a lunch stop in Thornton the group decided to make for a brand new cycle path to Ratby. Never had an idea been so ill conceived. The path we took started promisingly enough but something was clearly not right. The bikes were up to the axles in nettles, and we had to track along the narrowest of muddy paths

The weekend was perceived as a success and shall no doubt be done again. It was an experience and nice to see that Spokes attracts a variety of ages from the very young, to the very old (Sorry peter!)

Here's a few more pictures of the group..



*Jane, Chris, Libby and Tom Sherwood brought along the most comprehensive range of equipment in addition to the barbecue in the picture above, including a Trangia stove*

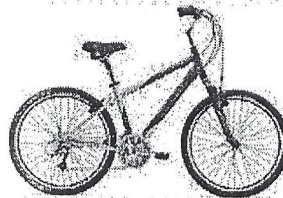


Some of the Children playing together and enjoying themselves.

## BIKE REVIEWS

I have added this section to the newsletter for those who are looking at buying a new bike, but are not sure what type. There shall be different reviews in each publication, with a variety of types and prices ranges.

### The Trek Navigator 300.



This Bike had a maximum 5 reviews and a stunning 4.4 out of 5 rating. It has an Aluminum frame and get probably be bought for around £300 - £350.

This review is taken from [www.roadbikereview.com](http://www.roadbikereview.com)

Reviewed by: **Recreational Rider**, from Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

#### **Summary:**

I mostly ride a road bike and wanted another bike for casual riding. Had an older Navigator and regretted selling it last year. Got my sweet bike back in this baby. It is no lightweight, nor is it a speed demon, but it is a VERY comfortable, versatile ride. I like the mountain bike tires for some rougher riding and though the front shock is not adjustable on this one as on the 300, I am happy. 21 speeds is enough for me for the purpose of this bike. I can upgrade to 24 later if I would like. Riding this bike is like sitting on a cloud and drifting along. Pedaling is effortless, the ride is springy, the upright position puts you comfortably seeing the surroundings. Not a bike meant for long distance cycling at fast speeds, though I might find myself not wanting to get off and covering a good amount of miles. I got the specially made Trek rear rack and plan to add a nice bag to this and a nice front handlebar bag. I could see myself riding the C & O Canal on this baby, a goal I keep inside my heart for the future. I am hoping to do lots of fun rides and exploring on this beautiful steed!

#### **Strengths:**

Alpha aluminum frame; SRAM/Shimano components; RST front shock; semi-slick tires for pavement or trail; neat rear rack arrangement; adjustable high rise stem. Comfortable, upright geometry. Beautiful Titanite gloss black color. It's just a darn fun bike to cruise along on. A blast! Trek warranty and service and reliability. I am one happy camper!

#### **Weaknesses:**

Preferred the old Trek Oasis webspring saddle as on my 2000 Navigator. Could

have used 2 bottle cages. Grips are not so comfortable to grasp as older Navigator grips were. I am fixing this problem with an upgrade at some point.

#### Similar Products Used:

2000 Trek Navigator 300-chromoly fork, 24 speeds-sweet bike that I sold and deeply regretted it. Hence it's replacement 3 years later! Trek hybrids, Specialized Expedition.

If you would like to submit a review of your bike, then please forward it to [darren.hayley@virgin.net](mailto:darren.hayley@virgin.net) and it will be used in one of the reviews.

Here are few places which may be able to help in your quest for a new bike..



[www.cyclemagic.org.uk](http://www.cyclemagic.org.uk)  
Unit 3, 72-74 Friday St, Leicester  
0116 262 5551 Appointment essential

Cyclemagic projects include special needs and disabled cycling, bike recycling, events, training for new and returning cyclists, and all kinds of unusual human powered machines such as recumbents, pedal boats and work bikes. Based in Leicester our cycling projects also cover Leicestershire and Rutland and we often attend events further afield.

The Bike Park  
Town Hall, Town Square  
Leicester Leicestershire  
LE1 9BG

Tel: 0116 299 1234

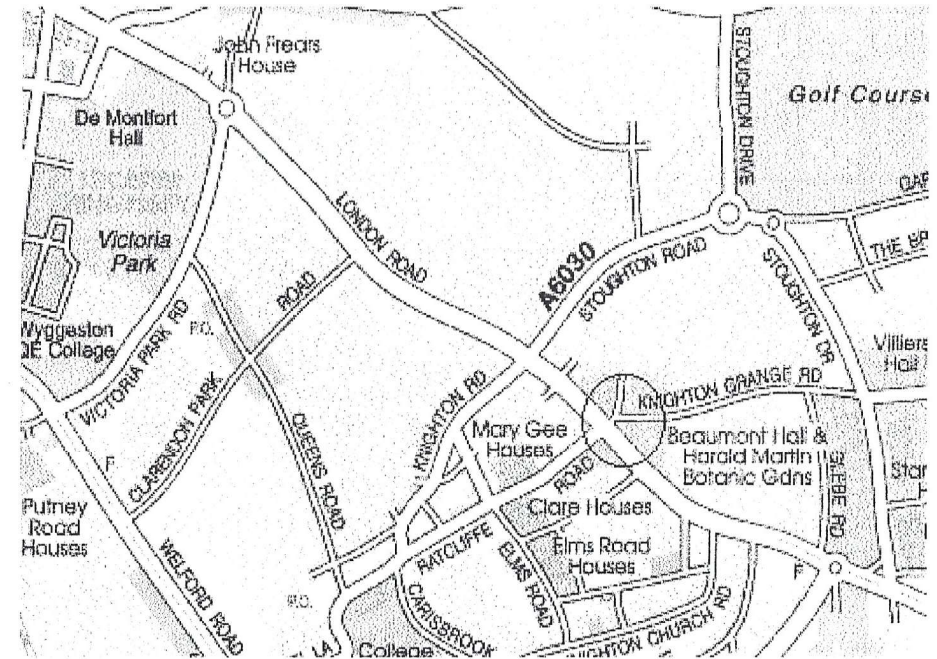
Webbsters Cycles  
134a, London Rd  
Leicester Leicestershire  
LE2 1EB

Tel: 0116 254 8065

On Yer Bike  
23, Stoughton Rd Oadby  
Leicester Leicestershire  
LE2 4DS

Tel: 0116 271 2353

Come and join us for a leisurely ride on a Wednesday evening at the junction of London Rd/Guilford/Ratcliffe Rds. 7pm Good lights essential Return may be after 11pm.



**Cycling History** Roger Lovell of Cyclemagic is applying for a £50,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to research, record and celebrate the cycling heritage of Leicester. The application is being supported with almost £50,000 of in kind match funding from Leicester Museums, Leicester City Council, Leicester University, BBC Leicester and the Mercury. The funding will pay for a series of free public events, a web based photographic archive and help for individuals, schools and community groups to become involved in the research and recording.

The project's aim is to look at the social history of cycling in the city from the world famous racing stadiums of the 1880's right through to the more recent times, including the history of clubs such as Spokes.

Although supported by all of the organisations mentioned above he would like to include letters of support from the community to help illustrate a demand for the project. Letters from individuals are welcome, and the address to send them to is Roger Lovell, Cyclemagic, Unit 3, 72-74 Friday Street, Leicester. LE1 3BW.