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# LEICESTER CYCLIST

for cyclists in and around Leicester

Spring 2005

## Abbey Park Cycling Festival

ORGANISERS of the popular Leicester based cycling events

Spokesfest, Park Sessions and the Leicester Bike Film Festival are teaming up to bring a new festival to Abbey Park on on Sunday, May 29th

Under the banner of 'Ride Leicester', the new festival will celebrate all things cycling related and offer visitors the chance to try out all kinds of bikes from Penny Farthings and BMX to Olympic-standard road bikes and rickshaws.

Free bike training will be available from the local Sustrans BikeIT schools project, and representatives from the British Cycling Federation will also be on hand to advise racing hopefuls how to get the most out of their sport.

Events planned for the bank holiday weekend include guided rides, competitions and the premiere of six locally-made cycling films as part of the 4th Leicester Bike Film Festival.

Local cycling clubs, bike projects and volunteers who want to get involved in the Ride Leicester festival should email [rideleicester@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rideleicester@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone Andy Salkeld on (0116) 233 2114.

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### What's Inside

*As Spring is just about here, and some of us are only just getting our bikes ready for the summer, in this issue we focus mainly on city cycling issues - what the Leicester City Council City Cycling Officer is doing for us, and how we can help shape and influence improvements to cycling facilities in and around our city.*

*We have also put in a list of events alongside which you can add to your diaries.*

Leicester Cyclist is the official newsletter of Leicester Spokes. For more details about Leicester Spokes, please visit [www.leicesterspokes.org.uk](http://www.leicesterspokes.org.uk)



Or write to  
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9 Newarke Street,  
Leicester, LE1 5SN

## SPOKES

### Interview

featuring Andy Salkeld,  
Leicester Cycling Officer  
interviewed by  
Elizabeth Barner

On a bright day in mid-February, I skittered up Granby Street to meet Andy Salkeld in his office at Transportation Development to learn what a Cycling Officer aims to do, and how Andy goes about it.

According to Andy, Leicester has had a cycling officer since the mid-80s. Andy was appointed the post in November 2003, after the position had been vacant for 18 months. He arrived with a background in traffic management and calming, recent work on the *Safe Routes to School* project and a passion and commitment to cycling.

The Cycling Officer attempts to look at broad issues of transport and traffic in the city, and include cycling in the larger framework of transport, addressing needs of all groups in the city and environmental issues.

The task has become more directed since a Benchmarking project overseen by the *Cyclist Touring Club* a few years ago. This project looked at Local Authorities across England and came up with ten criteria for performance. A lot of Andy's work is based around those criteria, with a progress review and goals for each year.

The criteria cover a range of issues including

- city infrastructure;
- maintaining commitment from the Council;

### Useful Contact Information

Report pot-holes, broken signs and glass:  
☎ 0116 252 7001

Report street lighting problems  
☎ 0116 223 2032 E-mail:  
[environment.helpline@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:environment.helpline@leicester.gov.uk)

Contact the City Cycling Officer  
Andy Salkeld on ☎ 0116 223 2114;  
E-mail: [salka001@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:salka001@leicester.gov.uk)

Report traffic concerns to the Police  
☎ 0116 248 2440

- marketing and promoting cycling;
- engaging and consulting with residents and interested groups; and monitoring all of these.

In addition, the Cycling Officer must have an overall knowledge of cycling issues in the city.

This is clearly a huge task, and one of Andy's approaches is to maintain and enlarge the Cycle City Workshop (*which Philip Draycott has reported on elsewhere in this issue -Ed*). This is a monthly meeting attended by representatives of various groups around the city, including cyclists and those interested in issues that often include cycling, such as safe transport, youth engagement, environmental impact, and generally having a pleasant city to live in.

Members of Leicester Spokes generally attend, and if you are interested, you are welcome. Former minutes can be viewed here: <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/departments/page.asp?pgid=8029>

For Andy, the *Workshop* is a way to get as much progress made as possible on cycling in the city. It is a partnership to promote cycling, facilitated by the City Council. All of the organisations and individuals involved generate ideas and carry through what we are able to carry through, with help from each other and the City. Andy's contact details are listed alongside.

Upcoming events are listed in the diary on the first page of this newsletter, and any updates will be posted on Spokes website - [www.leicesterspokes.org.uk](http://www.leicesterspokes.org.uk) Ω

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Articles and letters are welcomed, and contributions can be sent by post (address on front) or e-mailed to [markingle@fastmail.fm](mailto:markingle@fastmail.fm). Articles in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or of Leicester Spokes. -  
Temporary Editor, Mark Ingle



## Notice of Leicester Spokes Annual General Meeting 2005

Dear Leicester Spokes Member,

You are invited to the Leicester Spokes AGM to be held on Monday 11th April at 7:30pm, Complimentary light refreshments available from 7pm, Friends Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Leicester, located near the junction with Victoria Park Road.

Regards,

Greg Puczylo

Secretary, Leicester Spokes

### Agenda

1. Apologies
  2. Minutes of AGM 2004 (extra copies available at meeting) Matters arising and acceptance as a true record.
  3. Officers Reports:
    - Chair
    - Secretary
    - Membership Secretary
    - Treasurer
    - Newsletter Editor
    - Ride Organisers
  4. Election of Officers:
    - Chair
    - Secretary
    - Membership Secretary
    - Treasurer
    - Other Specialist positions
    - Ordinary Committee members
- Items for Discussion
- Newsletter
  - Contributions from members
  - Frequency of issue
  - Campaigning Issues

I wanted to pass on some information for those who are interested in purchasing a new bicycle and getting a possible reduction in the cost.

## Big BOOOST

There is a tax exemption, rooted in the Green Transport Plan, which the government has offered to employees via their workplaces. Boost ([www.boost.uk.com](http://www.boost.uk.com)) is a private company set up to make it easier for employers to administrate the scheme. Boost say that a saving of up to 50% is ultimately available to employees purchasing bicycles, with no loss to companies.

As I understand the scheme, the employer purchases bicycles (free of VAT where possible), which employees are in turn able to purchase through salary reductions taken before PAYE or National Insurance are calculated.

The cost of the cycle is paid off over a

'loan' period of several months to three years, depending on the company, and then the bicycle is made available for purchase to the employee at 'fair market value' which should be quite low because many bicycles depreciate quickly. At this point, any bicycle should be available through the scheme. Boost helps to administrate a home computer scheme along the same lines.

The scheme was quite recently introduced, and I do not know yet of purchases that are going ahead, nor what the experience has been either for employees or employers.

However, if all goes according to the stated plan, then it seems that Boost is something cyclists should know about and may wish to press their employers to explore.

– Elizabeth Barner

## Cycle City Workshop

Every month, Andy Salkeld, the City Council's Cycling Co-Ordinator chairs a "Cycle-City Workshop" at the Council Offices in York Street. It's a mainly informal, late-afternoon meeting round a big table of cycle activists and people involved in cycle projects in the city and the county.

In this article, Philip Draycott gives you a flavour of what was discussed at the last meeting (also attended by Ned Rice, though in fact there are usually three or four from Spokes). Details of the next meetings are listed on the Events diary on the front page. If you're interested and want to attend on behalf of Spokes, you'd be very welcome (and you get a free cup of tea/coffee). The venue is the Transport Dev't Meeting Room - 4th Floor York House on Granby Street.

At the last meeting, there were people there from Sustrans, CTC, Spokes, Cyclemagic, Bike IT Project, County Road Safety Education, Blaby District Council, De Montfort University plus the City Council Lead Councillor for Transport. The group is never the same from one month to the next, we've had a brave guy attend from the Highways Maintenance, also someone who has been involved in a scheme to install new bike sheds in six city schools and someone from the BMX-ers in Western Park who have money to start rebuilding their BMX track in the Spring; so it's very varied.

Highlights of the meeting were

- We had a presentation by someone from Boost (with three O's) which is an independent organisation that helps companies benefit from recent tax exemption schemes to help employees acquire bikes and PCs on an advantageous, tax free basis. The attraction is that it costs employers absolutely nothing and can boost the number of people cycling to work (there is far greater take-up of PCs than of bikes, but every little bit helps!) This is all aimed at large employers; the City Council, the County Council and De Montfort University all said they were interested. Let's see.
- A 10 minute rough cut was run of a video aimed at schools about the "Bike For All" scheme in Evington where asylum seekers and refugees rebuild salvaged or donated bikes which are then given away to people on needs-related benefits in the poorest 10% of wards. It provides training, skills, a qualification and possible future paid employment for participants. So far, 150 bikes have been given away. The guy who runs the scheme joined us to talk about it.
- Perhaps the two items above may not directly involve you as a Spoke member but then we got to more nitty-gritty items.
  - News about the replacement of the Upperton Road viaduct with a ground-level road. Work probably to start Summer 06, to take 12 months, with "a few weeks" of total closure. Cost: £18 million. Andy is trying to get a sophisticated warning system installed on the Great Central Way so that, as a cyclist you are picked up by the sensor some way away and the traffic is stopped and the crossing lights turn green just as you arrive at the crossing. Sounds great! Let's see.
  - Work to start on crossings (a complex of 14 of them!) at the Post House junction on Narborough Road, which is apparently the busiest city junction with no crossing provision at present. The CTC spoke up in favour of tunnels but apart from being very expensive, the city council is opposed on the grounds that cyclists, especially young cyclists, find them intimidating and dangerous. Plans for the alterations were passed round, as were early plans for the planned Office Quarter near the railway station.
  - There is possible planned expansion of use of city centre bike taxis.
  - In Beaumont Leys, Police have started bike patrols which have proved popular locally.
  - As reported in the Mercury, 10 security cameras, costing £200,000, are to be installed on the Great Central Way (described by the Mercury as "a notorious footpath").
  - Discussion (as there is each month!) about the cycle provision, or lack of it, in the Shires Extension. There is renewed hope of two way cycling being introduced



To enable members to get to know Spokes' committee members better, every issue we will be asking a member a set of questions. This issue, Ian Nightingale puts the questions to Andy Tokeley, the current Leicester Spokes Chairman.

**At what age did you first start cycling?**

The age at which I first started riding was certainly pre-school, on a hand-me-down red tricycle with a boot no less.

**What was your first bike? My**

first bike was a single speed Hercules, also hand-me-down. My first 'new' bike was a red racing machine bought for my twelfth birthday in 1962. I can't remember the make, but it had five 'benelux' gears with the gear-changer on the cross-bar.

**What was/is your favourite?** My favourite bike is probably my old 3-speeder, another hand-me-down, from an uncle this time. There's something so satisfying about the solidity of a 3-speed roadster; you feel you could just go on forever somehow.

**What has been your most memorable ride and why?** Memorable rides eh!, hard to pick just one--perhaps my first 100 mile ride. It was a charity ride[ I used to a lot of these at one time--a very good way to get into longer rides], for the British Lung Foundation at the NEC at Birmingham in September 92. I rode to the NEC - did a 28 mile sponsored ride-and then rode home again, clocking up the magic 100 as came around by Victoria Park.

**What was the most unfortunate incident you had on a bike (keep it as clean as possible!!!)?** Unfortunate incident mmmm,

**Q&A**

Apart from 'head-butting' a bubble-car when I did a 'header' over the handle-bars of my Hercules when I crashed into it as a child, and being knocked-off my brand-new machine in 1978, bought that very day as I made my way along the A6 in Oadby to show it off to my brother, I suppose riding my MTB through what looked-like a fairly shallow stream, but just got deeper & deeper. I knew I was in trouble when my front wheel disappeared under the surface and eventually I had to dismount and wade out.

**What piece of legislation would you bring in if you were the new minister for cycling?** Legislation eh!, Well I'd certainly ban near-side 'door-mirrors' for a start and I'd give every cyclist a 'Kalashnikov' to wear across their backs, they'd certainly see us then wouldn't they.

**What other hobbies do you have?** Hobbies, Well lets see--sleeping--music--pub crawls--walking--hosteling--reading, I think that's enough to be getting-on with just for now.

**On a date line how would you describe yourself?** Date-line, I would describe myself as the following-- 'Robert Redfords better-looking younger brother'.

**In im a cyclist get me oput of here what would be the two items you would take with you?** The two items would be the 'Spokes tandem' and a very fit 'captain'.

about the place with obvious puncture risks. A list of offending sites was passed back to the council.

- Finally, news that a City Cycle Coach has been appointed for Derby and he may be making appearances in Leicester.

Meetings are 4.30pm for tea/coffee for a 5pm start. Planned finish: 6.30pm.

Future meetings for 2005 are: 22<sup>nd</sup> March; 19<sup>th</sup> April; 17<sup>th</sup> May; 21<sup>st</sup> June; 19<sup>th</sup> July; 23<sup>rd</sup> August; 20<sup>th</sup> Sept; 18<sup>th</sup> Oct; 15<sup>th</sup> Nov; and 13<sup>th</sup> Dec (all are Tuesdays).

If you are interested enough to attend (either just once or regularly) please ring me on 0116-299 3262.

- Philip Draycott

**O**n Spokes rides do you ever feel that you've been over this route fifty times and isn't it time the leader found a new more interesting one?

Well I often think that, usually when I am the leader, and that's how I felt

as, en route for Mkt Bosworth in mid October, we rode out of Earl Shilton and turned left off the A47 towards Kirkby Mallory. I stopped at a bend in the road where a stony field track bore off to the left. I'd seen this on the map the night before where it was shown as a bridleway which would cut a mile or so off the road route. The surface was dry and didn't look too rough so off we went.

For the first half mile I was congratulating myself on having found an alternative to the road which was busy with traffic destined for the racetrack at Mallory Park.

Then we came to a field gate and there the track ended abruptly because the field appeared newly ploughed and planted. But a faint trail of footprints was discernible amongst the seedlings.

I decided that this was the time to admit defeat, but one of the ladies declared that we could do it. So wishing to show fearless leadership in the face of adversity I agreed and we plodded along the line of the path.

After what seemed like miles, we came to a field of full grown cattle maize with a gate in the fence where the map showed the path to be. Again, I had second thoughts but backing down now was harder and surely it couldn't be far to the road.

Well to coin a phrase "the corn was as high as an elephant's eye" while a hippopotamus would have felt at home in the mud underfoot. I adopted the tricky technique of jumping from one clump of slippery mud to the next whilst at the same time wheeling my bike over another set of clumps some feet away.

The route of the path was obvious but because of the height of the crop we could

**MUD Wrestling**

not see how far it extended but eventually we did come to a gate into a grassed field and could see the road through some trees three fields away.

Unfortunately when we got to the next gate, it too was surrounded by a sea

of mud. Don't farmers ever clean up?

To avoid this we had to lift our bikes over two fences to get back to the path, which was now through a field containing several young frisky horses who showed a great interest in the two of the ladies, so there was a panicky rush to get to the gate and on to the road. I could have pointed out that like the two ladies the horses were vegetarian, but most of my helpful remarks fall on deaf ears.

After this excitement it was decided that we should stick to the roads for the rest of the day so on through Kirkby Mallory, on to the A447, and left to Sutton Cheney, to Sutton Wharf where we'd been told of a new cafe.

Sure enough there was a very smart new building alongside the canal basin with plenty of outside seating for the summer. It was too cold to sit outside in October so we piled inside. Placing your food order at the counter was very slow but once ordered it arrived surprisingly quickly and the jacket potatoes with accompaniments were to be recommended.

Coming out we turned immediately right alongside the canal on to the tourist trail through Ambion Wood, which was allegedly the scene of the historic battle. This route although pleasant was designed for walkers not cyclists as we encountered three tight turnstile type gates in the one mile to the Visitor Centre. Back to Sutton Cheney, KM, Peckleton, A47, Enderby and home.

We never did get to my original intended destination of Bosworth Water Park but we'll do that on another day.

- John Woodcraft

*Cycle City Workshop (continued from page 3).*

on Churchgate, helped by the discovery that it isn't part of the Shires Extension area! The Extension apparently may not happen until 2008 anyway (is that goodbye to John Lewis coming?)

- Ride Leicester Festival on 29<sup>th</sup> May in Abbey Park will have BMX's, vintage bikes plus bike films upstairs in the cafe. I said that, as in previous years, Spokes would be happy to lead rides and we were asked if we might be able to help provide marshals for a planned mass ride by school children along Great Central Way on the day.
- There was comprehensive moaning about winter verge cutting leaving thorns strewn



# Structure Plan to Support Cycling

Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council are preparing a joint Structure Plan, setting out the strategic framework for the use and development of land up to 2016. Following a lengthy consultation process, it was adopted on the 7th March.

Amongst the policies on accessibility and transport, there is one on cycling, which states:

*"Provision for cycling will be made by:*

- a) *identifying, safeguarding and augmenting a network of safe, direct and convenient cycle routes which facilitate cycle access within and between major journey attractors; and*
- b) *ensuring that development proposals provide convenient and safe cycle access and facilities, including parking provision.*

*Links with the existing or proposed network of cycle routes will be made or maintained."*

The policy recognises the importance of defining and safeguarding a network of safe, direct and convenient cycle routes. These should improve access between residential areas, workplaces, shops, education, community and leisure facilities as well as public transport interchanges and the countryside.

The network will comprise, wherever possible, existing highways, which should be made safe and convenient for cyclists by

measures such as traffic restraint and calming and the allocation of carriageway space to cyclists. Where this is not possible, dedicated cycleways and tracks will be provided as part of the route network, but these should be carefully designed so as to avoid potential conflict with other users.

Like pedestrians, the needs of cyclists in new developments should be considered in the early stages of drawing up proposals. A well-designed layout that seeks to minimise journey distances, together with suitable facilities including safe and secure parking, will make cycling a more attractive option.

The policy requires local planning authorities to identify and safeguard a network of cycle routes to encourage more journeys to be made by cycle. Highway authorities will be expected to consider the needs of cyclists in the design of highway schemes, with safety being a key concern.

It will generally be the responsibility of district councils and the City Council to implement this policy through their new local development frameworks, and when granting planning permission for development. The County and City Councils will also need to take account of this policy when drawing up their local transport plan for the area.

You can help by looking out for consultation on local development frameworks and local transport plans, and checking that they cater for cyclists in line with the Structure Plan policy.

—Dr Andrew Simmonds

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ PostCode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Data Protection Act: Your details will be held on computer

Membership extends to June 30th 2006  
 I wish to join/rejoin Leicester Spokes  
 £12 Family  
 £8 Waged  
 £4 Unwaged  
 Donation £ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL ENCLOSED £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques/postal orders payable to **Leicester Spokes** and send to:  
 Leicester Spokes c/o VAL, 9 Newarke St. Leicester LE1 5SN

Last summer, I visited a few cities in Spain; and while most of you have probably heard about the Spokes tour to Spain led by Philip in 2000, this visit was a city break, rather than a cycle tour.

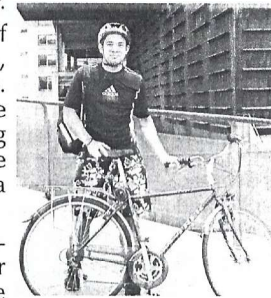


bikes with hotel branding. These bikes are available for residents to hire, and the charges are very cheap: 6 Euro for the day or 3 for a half day. I also noticed that quite a few other hotels had courtesy or hire bikes on racks by

the entrance. What a good idea! Unlike the UK hire places which tend to have mostly mountain bikes, virtually all the bikes available were Trek hybrids, though there were a couple of Raleigh shopper type bikes as well.

I had originally planned to take the car and my folding bike, but because the flights are very cheap, this did not make economic sense. I flew into Barcelona and back through Madrid, but my favourite city was Bilbao; funnily enough, of the cities I visited, this was the most cycle-friendly.

**Travel:** I found the best way of travelling in Spain is by train, which is relatively inexpensive. If you're on a tight budget, there are overnight trains connecting a few cities, which of course means a saving on the cost of a night's accommodation.



• Me and my hire bike

I chose the 'cochette' accommodation (available on the older style trains) where there are one or two beds to a tiny 'cabin', as it provided privacy and security for one's belongings, as well as a good night's rest. Well, maybe not a good night's rest - the ride wasn't that smooth; twice I dreamt I was experiencing an earthquake, only to wake up with the train lurching from side to side.

On a cycling note, on the train to Bilbao there was a whole group of cyclists who found the cochette accommodation ideal for storing their bikes, though getting the bikes in and out of the train was slightly tricky as the aisles are narrow.

When checking into the hotel, (the Barcelo Nervion which is located just across the river from the Guggenheim) I noticed a number of

The bikes seemed to be intended for city use as no pumps or spare inner tubes were available, though a lock was supplied; one is told to ring the hotel in the event of a breakdown.

The cycling facilities on road were quite impressive; there are cycling lanes on both sides of the river, that is, except at fiesta time where large areas beside the river are cordoned off for events (more of that later).

Some roads have cycle lanes, and in some cases these are separated from the main traffic with plastic permanent bollards. This prevents cars from infringing this space, whether driving on it or parking.

The new bridges that I cycled across had separate cycle lanes, and on one of them, the lane for pedestrians and cyclists was even covered!

While the city is generally flattish, if energetic cyclists want challenging hills, they needn't go far. There is a park up quite a steep hill which provides magnificent views of parts of the city; lazy or less energetic cyclists can still appreciate the views, bikes can be locked at the bottom of the hill as there is a funicular.

**Fiesta:** Though I had not planned it, my visit to Bilbao coincided with the fiesta, so there were huge numbers of people and many interesting events. Despite the thousands of people, the atmosphere was very friendly, and unlike, say Barcelona, I always felt safe. Of course Bilbao is known for the Guggenheim, but there is lots of new and old great architecture and design around; it is lovely city to explore - walking or cycling.



• It's fiesta-time: thousands of people and a tight squeeze but a great atmosphere.

—Mark Ingles