

CYCLISTS START SUMMERTIME **Now enjoy a cycle ride from Stevenage**

The clocks have changed and on Sunday hundreds of cyclists set out from Fairlands Valley Park, Stevenage to celebrate the start of summertime.



There were two century rides, metric and imperial. 84 rode 100 kilometres to Reed, Barkway, Saffron Walden, Braughing and back while 54 made it 100 miles by including Finchingfield and Thaxted.

A SSoSS Lite 66 kilometre ride to Reed, Braughing and Puckeridge attracted 74.

All were winners at Braughing where the tea stop helped raise funds for the church and made sure cyclists weren't hungry or thirsty.

There were challenge rides, part of Cycling UK's national series. Not races but there were maximum time limits. The Stevenage Start of Summertime Specials (SSoS rides) have been organised for many years. This year they were started by the Mayor of Stevenage.

Now we are into summertime why not enjoy a ride with the local Cycling UK group?

As well as the challenge rides there are at least three rides a week from Stevenage including many half day rides that would be ideal for newcomers.

EVERY Saturday afternoon there's a starter ride from Costello's. Meet them at Costello's Cafe in Fairlands Valley Park (SG2 0BL) at 2p.m. EVERY week. Saturday Starters have a leader and sweeper with a radio link, no-one gets left behind. Ride at a sociable chatalong pace, maybe a total of about 16 miles. Ideal for newcomers to group riding, the rides are FREE but bring money for a refreshment break. Destinations in the near future will include Ardeley (6th April), Letchworth (13th April) and Datchworth (20th April).



EVERY Wednesday there's an evening ride from the Old Town. Meet on the green near Springfield House Community Centre (SG1 3EJ) in time for a 7.15p.m. start EVERY week. Although there is now some light at the start please bring good lights. You can expect to be back at about 10p.m. after cycling 16 to 20 miles and a short break in a country pub.

There is a wide range of rides EVERY Sunday. Most will start from Fairlands Valley Park at 9.30a.m. but the distances, destinations and speeds vary. Best to check the programme which can be found on www.stevenagectc.org.uk Printed programmes are also available.

The Friday Flings start for the summer on 10th May. There will be at least one ride every day during the Spring Rides week (11th to 19th May) and during Bike Week (8th to 16th June). The next challenge ride will be the fifty mile Stevenage Circular on Sunday 16th June.

Young people are very welcome on Cycling UK but those under 18 must have permission from a parent or guardian and those under 13 must bring a responsible adult who will ride with them.

The Stevenage group of Cycling UK have 435 members and organise at least three cycle rides from Stevenage every week throughout the year. There's a huge variety from tasters and starters to quite challenging "A" rides and events. Most activities are free and new riders are welcome. You can try five rides before deciding whether to join.

You will find more rides and information on www.stevenagectc.org.uk

Remember Cycling UK ride with each other not against each other. Stevenage Cycling UK group rides have experienced ride makers, a leader and sweeper with a radio link, on the front and back – no-one gets left behind. You can get more details by contacting Penny (07787 816434); Jim (0793 968 7509); Nicola (0791 643 8610) or Tina (01438 235881), by visiting www.stevenagectc.org.uk or by emailing jim@stevenagectc.org.uk

Cycling with your local Cycling UK group is a great way to get fit and enjoy the local countryside in good company. Cycling is fun, it's good for the environment, sociable and

it's also good for you. Cycling UK Stevenage is the local group of Cycling UK – formerly known as CTC, the National Cycling Charity.

ENDS

More from JIM BROWN 0793 968 7509; Penny (07787 816434); or Tina Walker 01438 235881. For national information contact the national Cycling UK press office on 01483 238 315, 07786 320 713 or email publicity@cyclingsuk.org

The CTC, now known as Cycling UK, is the national cycling charity. It is run by cyclists for cyclists. The national website is at www.cyclingsuk.org

CTC/Cycling UK works to promote cycling by raising public and political awareness of its health, social and environmental benefits, and by working with all communities to help realise those benefits.

CTC/Cycling UK has been protecting and promoting the rights of cyclists since 1878. CTC is a not-for-profit organisation funded through memberships and donations. We focus on the social side of cycling as well as being a powerful and independent voice on behalf of ALL cyclists. CTC offers a range of benefits, including insurance and legal advice, for every type of cyclist. By joining CTC YOU are supporting UK cycling and giving us a louder voice on issues that are important to all users of cycles.

Notes to editors:

Cycling UK, the national cycling charity, inspires and helps people to cycle and keep cycling, whatever kind of cycling they do or would like to do. Over a century's experience tells us that cycling is more than useful transport; it makes you feel good, gives you a sense of freedom and creates a better environment for everyone.

Local Website www.stevenagectc.org.uk

To join Cycling UK / CTC visit <http://www.cyclingsuk.org> or 'phone 0844 736 8451