



Cycling UK Stevenage
(previously Stevenage & North Herts CTC)

News Release 1 February 2021

FANTASTIC CYCLING IN AND AROUND STEVENAGE SAY CYCLING UK – 10,000 Miles A Month In Lock Down

There is some fantastic cycling in and around Stevenage say the local group of Cycling UK.

Although it's only possible to cycle in ones and twos as we look after each other and those around us there are dozens of routes from our front doors to get good exercise, some fresh air and perhaps see things we've missed in normal times.

There are about 45 kilometres of cycleways in Stevenage and many miles of quiet roads around the town.

While the group activity many enjoy can't happen Cycling UK Stevenage have offered many opportunities, lots of variety, to get on their bikes and get fit locally. After nearly eleven months the variety is very welcome.

- The group published a route to take cyclists round the twenty Christmas topped postboxes during the festive period.
- Solo cyclists are publishing "where am I pictures?" pictures on the group's Facebook page. That's helping people become more aware of their local area and spreading ideas for their own outings.
- Cycling UK Stevenage helped to design, provided pictures for and are promoting the Stevenage Heritage Bike Ride. The 21 landmarks start in Fairlands Valley Park at Costello's Café (SG2 0BL).

1. Fairlands Valley Park. The 1966 New Town Master Plan outlined how the park would become the town's principal area of recreation, with artificially created lakes as well as green spaces and was created in 1971.
2. Polar Bear by Mark Harvey. The Polar Bear, made of Portland stone, is one of the best known sculptures in town. It was placed in the Glebe in 1964. Most of Harvey's sculptures have not survived because they were made of wood.
3. Three Geese by David Noble. This sculpture was made of reinforced concrete with a resin coating. Noble, who was part of Digswell Arts Trust, also sculpted Seated Figures, which is at The Towers.
4. Shephall Green. Shephall Green comprises the original triangular village green and settlement directly around it. The area was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.
5. Broadwater Neighbourhood Centre. Broadwater Neighbourhood Centre illustrates a Stevenage New Town neighbourhood. The neighbourhood approach to community living included a shopping centre, pub, green spaces, community centre, school, place of worship and other amenities.
6. Shephalbury Manor and Coptic Cathedral. This manor had many uses over the years. In its early days, it was a family home for the lords of Shephalbury, until it was sold in 1939.
7. Roebuck Inn. This is 1 of only 10 Grade II listed buildings in Stevenage. This beautiful timber-framed building dates to the 15th century, with 16th and 17th century additions.
8. The Fossil Tree by John Mills. The Millennium Milepost was unveiled in 2000 as part of the millennium longest cycle ride event!
9. Underpass Number 1. This is very significant in cycling history. It was the first underpass built after cyclists blockaded the A1 to demand their right to access, which resulted in the planning and construction of Stevenage cycleways.
10. Six Hills. Six Hills are a collection of Roman barrows that date from about 100 AD and probably marked the cremated remains of a local wealthy family.
11. FIRA Building. The New Town's pioneering post-war ambitions attracted the Furniture Industry Research Association to build their headquarters here, designed by one of Britain's leading postwar practices: HKPA.

12. John Lewis Warehouse/Costco. Stevenage also attracted John Lewis, who built this building in 1963.
13. Robot Family by Simon Jones. Simon Jones did a number of other sculptures in the Symonds Green area during his time with the Stevenage Development Corporation from 1974-1980, including Playing Cards, Wonky Clock, and others.
14. The Avenue. The gates to The Avenue were restored in 2015 by the Stevenage Society for Local History! Notice the panel at the entrance for more information on its history.
15. Town Centre Gardens and Women and Doves. The Town Centre Gardens are a fine example of the many green spaces provided through New Town planning. They combine both natural pre-existing features, such as trees and a natural spring, with landscape design.
16. Scenes from Everyday Life by William Mitchell. The cycleways' use of concrete, played with to create a variety of textures, must have intrigued the artist William Mitchell – a giant of post-war public art, who also worked extensively in concrete – because he was commissioned in 1973 to produce this relief about modernism and public life.
17. Joyride and Lewis Silkin. Located on the Clock Tower and Fountain is a bronze relief of Lewis Silkin, who was the driving force for the New Towns Act 1946 as Minister of Town and Country Planning. Adjacent to the Clock Tower and on the raised platform is the bronze Joyride sculpture, symbolic of the New Town being carried by the Old Town.
18. The Clock Tower and Fountain, Joyride, and surrounding buildings are iconic symbols of Stevenage New Town. The spatial planning and architectural design that went into the Town Centre was all very cutting-edge for its time.
19. St Andrew & St George. Stevenage's St Andrew & St George – the country's largest parish church built since the Second World War – was designed by the famous architects Seely and Paget and was both ceremonially started and consecrated in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.
20. An Urban Elephant. The elephant sits behind the church at the entrance to Stevenage Museum.
21. Totem Poles by Dennis Heath. These sculptures were made of Larch wood and carved with a chainsaw. Heath was a member of the Digswell Arts Trust at the adjacent Fairlands Farmhouse.

You can find the map here <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/leisure-and-culture/heritage-cycling-trail.pdf> Although the description starts from Fairlands Valley the route takes you back there so you can join in where ever you like, you can set off from home and you don't have to do it all at once.

- The 32 members participating in the Love to Ride scheme rode 10,000 miles in November and pretty much kept that average up in December and January.
- You can find many other local routes on the group's website. Some maps can be found here <http://www.stevenagectc.org.uk/maps.php>

To find out more about Cycling UK Stevenage visit their local website, go via the national website through <https://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/stevenage-north-hertfordshire>; find them on Facebook or ring Jim Brown 0793 968 7509, Penny Schenkel 07787 816434 or Tina Walker 01438 235881.

Cycling UK Stevenage have published a number of virtual routes on their website www.stevenagectc.org.uk which you can ride whenever you choose and they have been very active with their "Reclaim our Routes" campaign.

Normally Cycling UK in Stevenage organise more than 200 local cycle rides and events every year and thousands of people enjoy their activities. Of course Cycling UK Stevenage are looking forward to being able to publish a full programme again and being able to welcome people to turn up and join in when they can but at least the small group and virtual rides mean they can get out on bikes, get some exercise, explore the surrounding countryside and enjoy some company.

Cycling is a brilliant form of transport but it can also be fun and a great way to get exercise. The Local Cycling UK offer lots of opportunities. Have a look at their Facebook page Cycling UK Stevenage; visit www.stevenagectc.org.uk or contact Jim on 0793 968 7509; Tina on 01438 235881 or Penny 07787 816434.

To join Cycling UK please go to www.cyclinguk.org

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 (07775 538830 / 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@cyclininguk.org

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

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.

Cycling UK has been protecting and promoting the rights of cyclists since 1878. It now has more members than at any time in its history. 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.cyclinguk.org> or 'phone 0844 736 8451

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