

WELLS U3A CYCLE GROUP PROGRAMME 2021

The reports and photos from the Wells U3A Cycle Group rides in 2021 are collected together here and presented in date order. Rides were generally scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month and details were circulated by email to the group members around a week beforehand. In normal circumstances all active group members would be asked to organise at least one ride during the year.

Following the partial relaxation of rules for social gatherings due to Covid-19, the group started running rides again in the second half of 2020 with strict guidelines on social distancing and group numbers. "Lockdown" restrictions were imposed again at the end of 2020 and it was not until April 2021 that the group was given the go-ahead to arrange rides. As in 2020, we depended on volunteers to lead the rides and, until later in the year, numbers were strictly limited to a maximum of two groups of six. The places were filled on a "first come first served" basis. As well as the usual two rides per month, an extra two rides were organised by members in the autumn.

In the following reports, the leader of each ride is given after the date. There were usually two groups, but producing reports was entirely voluntary and therefore there may be one, two, or none for each ride. This is a public document, and members are therefore referred to by their first names only (with the first few letters of their surnames to avoid ambiguity.)

🚲 8TH APRIL 2021, RON

Team 1

The ride started at Lidl's in Wells with Team 1 consisting of Denise, Roger D., Chris, Peter W., Steve, and Ron as leader. We started off at 10.00am, 15 minutes before Team 2, and travelled North to cross the A371 and then to Wells Leisure Centre, picking up the Strawberry line through Haybridge. We then crossed the A371 and headed to Wookey, then to Fenny Castle and followed the levels lanes via Westhay to Shapwick and to the Avalon Marshes Nature Centre café where we had coffee and snacks. The café was surprisingly busy but we all managed to receive our orders fairly quickly.

After 30 minutes the second group arrived and therefore we headed off. Just as we left the café Chris had a problem with his bike chain so we waited until all was good and then headed to Burtle, River Bridge, Westham, Heathhouse, Sand and then down the B3151 to Sweet's café for our lunch stop in the open covered area in the field. Everyone purchased a drink and some purchased food from the menu, limited due to current restrictions. After about an hour the second group arrived so we decided to leave and follow our planned route back to Wells via the levels lanes to Upper Godney, Polsham and to Fenny Castle. Steve left us at this point to head home to Easton while the rest of us took the road to Burcott and finally to Wells.

Total mileage for the ride was 31 miles and everyone in the group enjoyed the ride, which was mainly flat with just a few gentle hills, and we kept off the main traffic routes as much as possible. Everyone maintained their "social distance" due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Ron

Team 2

There were six of us as in Team 1: John Wh., John Wi., John Sea., John Seb., Pete M., and Arthur as leader. We left at 10.15am to allow plenty of time for Team 1 to get ahead, and followed the same route travelling on the Strawberry Line trackbed to Haybridge, Wookey and on to Westhay. It was a pleasure to get out onto the quiet of the Levels. We met up with Team 1 at the Avalon Centre who obviously had made good time as they were champing at the bit to get on their way. (While there enjoying a snack, I suddenly realised that my old Vintage Motorcycle club were also enjoying a morning out too, so I had a chance to catch up with some of them which meant we left a bit late!) We also followed the same route as the others to Sweets café, but tried and failed to find the drove road from Sand which misses out part of the main B road; hence the hour's difference in arriving at the café. After lunch it was back on the familiar route back to Wells but taking a more direct line missing out Polsham.

Thanks to Ron for organising the familiar but pleasant ride; a good turnout.

(Addendum: I found the going quite tough and when I came to alter the bar position the next day, I found out why. The front disc was out of alignment and the pad was binding; all because I had altered the bar height and had to replace the front brake cable and so removed the caliper but failed to centralise it properly!!!)

Arthur

🚲 22ND APRIL 2021, JOHN WH.

Bright sunshine but with a cold east wind greeted us at Lidl's car park in Wells. Team 1 of Peter W., John Sea., John Seb., led by John Wh. met and set off before 10:30 closely followed and caught up by their fifth member, Steve. Team 2 of Chris, Ron, Roger D., Barbara, and Graham then arrived and set off fifteen minutes later.

The route took us past the Bishop's Palace and along the shared track to South Horrington. We then had the long steady climb up via East Horrington and Chilcote to Masbury for a welcome coffee break at Rocky Mountain Nurseries. We continued to the top of the hill, past the Wagon and Horses and descended through Waterlip to West Cranmore, and then on through Chesterblade, Evercreech, and Pylle, to the tithe barn in Pilton. We had a look around the inside of the 14th century barn with its recently restored roof and there was plenty of room for all of us to meet up and enjoy our picnic lunches suitably distanced in the sunshine outside. Arthur and Pete B. were also able to join us having come by a less hilly route!



22/04/21 - NEARLY AT THE TOP OF THE HILL



22/04/21 - PICNIC AT THE TITHE BARN IN PILTON

In the afternoon, we set off in our two teams, again separated by at least 10 minutes, and returned to Wells by skirting the festival site to North Wooton, Launcherley and Dulcote. The total distance was approximately 26 miles (42 km) with around 1700 feet (520 m) of climbing. Many thanks to John Wh. for organising an enjoyable ride.

Graham

🚲 14TH MAY 2021, CHRIS

After a very wet Thursday, it was a relief to find Friday morning dry if cloudy. Seven of us set out in two separate groups from Lidl - Arthur, Graham, Chris, Steve and three Johns (Wh., Seb. and Sea.) - and the first leg was a straightforward run along quiet drives down to Glastonbury, and then off-road through Ham Wall and Shapwick Heath reserves to the Avalon Marshes centre for coffee. Thence to Westhay and another flat section up to Mudgley Hill (John Seb. left us at this point) and down into Wedmore for a very agreeable lunch in the garden at Nanny Ida's, sandwiches all round and the weather improving all the while. The last leg was a longish gentle climb out of Wedmore, down Snake Lane and along the main road to Bleadney, then right to pick up the Burcott road and back to Wells, by this stage basking in glorious sunshine. A ride of nearly twenty-nine miles in all.

Chris

🚲 27TH MAY 2021, ROGER

Group 1

Thursday dawned nice and sunny and it stayed that way!

For the ride, we headed west out of Langport towards North Curry and Creech St Micheal, coffee being taken at the Willows Craft Centre. We moved on towards Creech and the canal (Taunton and Bridgwater), which we followed along the towpath until the lunch stop which was at the Maunsel Lock Tearooms. Both were very good and well organised.

After lunch we continued along the towpath until the turning to Fordgate. After that we were heading home with the River Parrett to our left we continued through Burrowbridge, Stathe and back to Langport.

28 miles of pure heaven with some wonderful views and flat lands.

We had split into two groups - one containing six and one of five. I didn't see the second group after our lunch stop – I hope they didn't get lost!

Roger

Group 2

In my guise as leader of the second group of six we set off from Langport carpark and avoided the main road by following the foot/cycle path to the river Parrett as the first group had done, but 5 to 10 minutes later to prevent bunching. We couldn't avoid the busy main road to the turn for Stathe however, but with care there were no casualties. Although I had a map and was reasonably sure of the route, our group was blessed by having Pete with us who had no hesitation as to where to turn off! We turned in to the Willows Craft Centre and refreshed ourselves with coffee and maybe a cake while the other group finished theirs and set off to the next destination.



27/05/21 - COFFEE BREAK FOR GROUP 2

We followed 10 minutes later, but first it was necessary to locate the road then track in Creech St. Michael that leads to the canal towpath. Fortunately there's a good marker, the Church, so you can't miss it. The towpath is a hard unsurfaced track which narrows and widens and of course there are other users to be aware of including fishermen on the banks, but the scariest bit of the path is where it passes under a road bridge: you have to remember to duck under the curved arch and hope the front wheel is going in the right direction or you end up in the murky waters of the canal!!

We arrived at the Maunsel Lock cafe and had an excellent lunch outside in the very warm sun; I was glad I brought some head cover with me. After lunch the group followed in the wheel tracks of the others and arrived back at Langport to be greeted by waves from the first group as they left for home.

Thanks Roger for organising a great day out, even though we didn't see much of you or your gang.

Arthur

🚲 10TH JUNE 2021, STEVE

We had a turnout of 7, with 2 more apologies saving themselves for the next ride. The riders were Steve , John Seb., Graham, Barbara, John Win., Chris, Ron.

Starting from Wells Lidl, we went off along the moat, then over the hill to Dulcote and on to Shepton via Church Hill and the old Shepton road. Coffee was taken early at Costa's, during which we had the only rain of the day. Good planning ! One rider left for home for another later event, leaving a group of 6. On to a hearty lunch at the Horse and Jockey at Binegar, on a pretty, undulating route via Cranmore, Stoke St Michael, and Oakhill.

After lunch we went on small lanes to Emborough, crossing the A39 halfway up Nedge Hill, and on to the Hunter's Lodge, for a speedy descent and split back to Wells/Wookey Hole/Easton. The looming clouds made this a good end point. Total distance read as 27 miles, with a pleasant set of ups and downs and enough sun to be pleasant. Not a lot of flat.

Steve

🚲 24TH JUNE 2021, JOHN WI.

Eight of us set off from Ashcott Corner at 10.30. Within minutes we were aware of some precipitation but bravely soldiered on to J's bistro at Chilton Polden. Fortunately the rain eased and we were able to enjoy coffee and cake al fresco. Another group of lycra lads arrived so service was slow and time wise we were a bit late leaving for the second part of the ride to our lunch stop at "Double Gates" cafe Godney.

The weather had improved and although it was a bit windy the ride was pleasant; improving as after a while we had the wind behind us. John Seb. decided however to return home to Wells rather than carry on to the lunch stop.

Lunch was very pleasant in the gardens although the drizzle was trying to get us wet but with little success. The soup was a disappointment as it was supposed to be carrot and coriander but ended up being pea due to a delivery let down. Poor old Pete W, this was the second time in recent rides that he had been let down on his soup!

Finally we set off on the last leg of the ride with Pete, Steve and Roger leaving us to return to Wells and Westbury. Continuing towards Glastonbury and then on to Ham Wall the remaining four arrived back at Ashcott Corner just after 3.00pm having covered a total of 31 miles. So, despite the last minute change of plan, the ride was very enjoyable if a little farther than anticipated.

John Wi.

🚲 8TH JULY 2021, GRAHAM

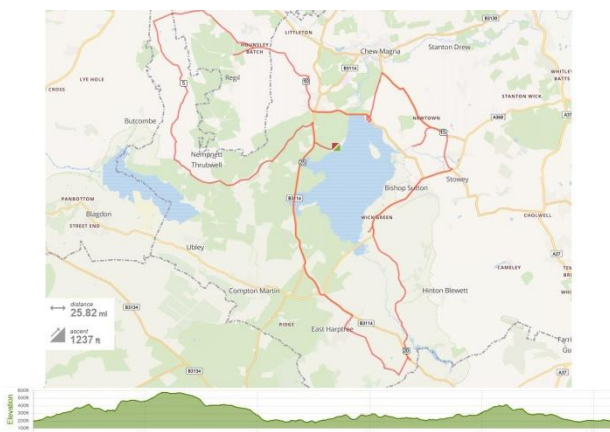
10 of us met at Woodford Lodge by Chew Valley Lake, 4 having cycled there from home. We had had continuous heavy rain less than 24 hours earlier, but it was dry all day and with the clouds gradually breaking up it was ideal weather.

We set off along a (mostly) quiet lane to Nempnett Thurbwell with occasional views over Chew and Blagdon lakes. Avoiding the steepest hills, we continued to Winford Manor and returned mainly downhill to Chew Stoke, although we had to retrace our steps once due to a navigation error (sorry). We crossed the dam for a welcome coffee break overlooking the lake at the "Salt and Malt" café.

Time was getting on so we missed out a planned loop to Chew Magna and Stanton Drew. However, on our way to the main road through Bishops Sutton, we had to haul ourselves back up a 1/2 mile descent down a narrow lane, having wrongly assumed the Road Closed signs wouldn't apply to us! We arrived only a few minutes late for our lunch stop at New Manor Farm shop where we met Jim and Jan who are compiling a promotional video for Wells U3A.

We were filmed leaving the café and then headed off in the sunshine down lanes towards Litton, and then along a back road to East Harptree while 3 left the group to tackle the north side of the Mendips on their way back home. The rest continued through West Harptree and back to The Woodford making use of the cycle path beside the road: a total of 26.5 miles.

Graham



08/07/21 - THE ROUTE



08/07/21 - COFFEE BREAK

🚲 22ND JULY 2021, JOHN SEA.

Even on one of the warmest days of the summer, 10 keen cyclists met at Castle Cary for the first of the group's rides since the relaxation of Covid restrictions. The 10 included 2 who joined the list of riders just the day before and a new member who came along on the day.

The first leg was fairly level on the lanes through North Barrow to Sparkford, where coffee and nibbles were taken in the café at Haynes Motor Museum just outside the village. A visit to the museum itself would wait for another day, but at least there was a Williams Grand Prix car on display in the foyer to admire.

The ride continued back into Sparkford and then out in the lanes via Weston Bampfylde and round to Queen Camel. After a few yards on the A359 we turned off towards Bridgehampton. The left turn back towards Mudford split the group with 4 going on towards Yeovilton, but after a head count the group soon reconnected. We continued, still on the level, to the edge of Mudford and crossed the A359 again. A mile or so further on at the start of the hillier second half of the day, the climbing temporarily split the 'peloton'. Descending into Sandford Orcas in Dorset, we turned to go back into Somerset and north through Corton Denham. The hills again slowed some more than others and lunchtime refreshment was calling, so some riders pushed on ahead. The last of the group arrived at the pub at South Cadbury just as the first were starting their beers and a very pleasant lunch was taken in the sunny garden under awnings. But all good things must come to an end, so water bottles were refilled and we mounted our bikes. The last push into Castle Cary was through the lanes from North Cadbury passing to the east of Galhampton. All 10 were counted back into the car park and several expressed enjoyment of the route and the ride.

John Sea.

🚲 12TH AUGUST 2021, PETE W.

The ride on Thursday 12th started from Winscombe rugby club where six of us assembled, and were subsequently joined by Denise and Paul who had cycled to the start.

We set off and were almost immediately beset by a rather heavy drizzle which required a brief stop for wet weather gear. We then proceeded along the route which took in Barton, Loxton and Bleadon before a careful crossing of the A370. (Thank-you to the unnamed but very polite driver). We then took the cycle route across Bleadon Levels having to pass through the numerous gates on the way to our arrival at the Uphill Wharf café, where we enjoyed a cup of coffee and cake in the now much improved weather meaning we could all sit outside with dry backsides.

Having refuelled we made our way along from Uphill to the prom at Weston, enjoying the now excellent shared cycle path. The journey along the prom was as busy as ever and some of the group chose to cycle along the beachfront road which was by far the safer option. Having negotiated Weston we now followed the Kewstoke road and dropped down into Sand Bay before heading out into the countryside at Ebdon, and Wick St. Lawrence before once again meeting the A370 which we followed for approximately a mile before our lunch stop at Carriages Café Hewish. By now the weather had much improved and again we enjoyed lunch outside.

We could now look forward to a nice flat ride through Puxton and Nye picking up the cycle track at Thatchers which we then followed back to Winscombe. The trip was one of contrasts and approximately 27 miles. As we left for home the sky opened. I only hope Denise and Paul survived the downpour.

Pete W.

🚲 26TH AUGUST 2021, JOHN WH.

Woodlands and lakes of Wiltshire (and a few hills)

The 26th August was set aside for an incursion into Wiltshire, meeting at Nunney but omens were not good for the drive to the starting point. The men from the Met didn't tell us to expect it to be very overcast with distinct dampness in the air! But by the time the eighth rider arrived the sun broke through and remained with us for the rest of the day.

Any feeling of morning chill was swept away on the gentle climb to Nunney Catch, followed by a drop down into Trudoxhill and on via little lanes through Marston to the coffee stop at the Lighthouse guesthouse, Tytherington. This seemed an unlikely place to be served coffee and cakes, having meandered around a number of out-buildings but we did eventually find the café, complete with a garden area equipped with picnic tables and a view over a small lake.

We restricted ourselves to little more than half an hour's rest because our planned lunch stop was known to be popular and it was thought wise to arrive reasonably early. We passed immediately into a narrow, gated road, more of a track than a road and with no cars at all. This was soon to change, though, as we had to cross the very busy A361 but immediately after that we continued along another gated track which led us onto route 24 of the national cycleway network.



26/08/21 - CLIMBING LONGLEAT HILL

The roads were becoming a little hilly as we were confronted by a bold no entry sign at the start of Longleat Estate but closer inspection revealed a tiny additional note 'except bicycles'. We were now at the start of a long descent through delightful forested area direct to Longleat House itself. We had missed the opportunity to peel off to the lion enclosure but that might not have been very wise anyway! What we did find was a stream of day trippers arriving bumper to bumper – all going in the opposite direction to ours.

Then came the big hill – a long upward drag with forestry to our right and a lovely view over the deer park behind us. What a glorious feeling to be on the level again as we left Longleat! – But one shouldn't speak too soon! There followed a nasty steep section as we headed through the forest towards Crockerton.

Just as we were coming into the village the leader brought the peloton to a halt for a warning about the route ahead. We were about to turn towards Potters Hill and this was no ordinary hill. It was narrow and only one car width and, most importantly, an incredibly steep descent – so hold tight onto the brake levers! Later John said that it was the steepest descent he had ever done on a bike and he likened it to abseiling!



26/08/21 – AT THE TOP IN LONGLEAT PARK

In no time at all we arrived at the lunch stop at Shearwater Tea Gardens beside the lake – a wonderful outlook as you munched a panini. The leader also discovered that they do a good pint of cider too – a bit worrying for those in the group who might have to find their own way back if they didn't have a map! After lunch we did a short amble down to the lake to admire the view and also the large number of huge fish right at the water's edge.

So, on our way – hic – a little uppity downity as we passed through the hamlet of Horningsham and more woodland. We were now in open pasture land for a short length of B road, heading for Trudoxhill but then our way was blocked by a 'road closed' sign and they meant it – even cyclists. This was the tar and chipping operation which, as was pointed out to us would end with us being tarred ourselves if we were to ignore the sign. So with only a slight detour, we were almost at Trudoxhill when we came across another length of recently chipped road which may have been the cause of the leader's puncture – luckily within walking distance of the finish. Back at Nunney we compared notes and found that the distance covered was only 25 miles even if it felt more!

John Wh.

🚲 9TH SEPTEMBER 2021, RON

After a few people dropped out due to the inclement weather we ended up with five of us meeting at Lidl's in Wells at 10.00am (Graham and Barbara, Roger D., Denise and myself). As it was still raining we had a discussion on whether to cut the ride short and cycle to Sweets for a brunch and return to Wells, do the whole route as intended or start a reverse route to Sweets and then decide if the weather clears to continue. In the end we decided to still do the whole route, and the direction was decided on by the toss of a coin, which was to ride the route as originally intended.

So, we set off along the Strawberry Line towards Dulcote, and then to Launcherley and Barrow before meeting the junction of the A361 at West Pennard. During this part of the ride we had various showers of different intensities. Our ongoing route took us through Coxbridge and on to our coffee stop at Baltonsborough Cafe. By this time we were all soaked and welcomed sitting inside the cafe out of the weather. The drinks and cakes were all up to the usual standard, and while we were there we had a severe downpour which seemed to be the end of the heavy rain from then on.

Our onward route from Baltonsborough was blessed with only light showers at times and the sun came out at various stages. The route to the outskirts of Street was flat and we crossed the A39 at a pedestrian crossing for our ongoing ride through Sharpham Nature Reserve pathway to the junction with Station Road, Shapwick. From here we headed to Meare and then towards Westhay and on to Sweets for our lunch stop at 1.00pm. By this time we had all mostly dried out and we sat undercover at Sweets to enjoy drinks and snacks from a limited menu.

On our intended route back to Wells via Fenny Castle and Burcott, three of us decided to take a more direct route home while the remaining two headed back to the start point. In total the ride was approximately 28.5 miles over mostly flat terrain. Apart from the morning rain all of us enjoyed the ride and it was good to have group company during the day.

Ron

🚲 23RD SEPTEMBER 2021, DENISE

Eight of us, Steve, Ollie, Roger D., Pete M., John Wh., John Wi., Paul and myself, left Wedmore car park at about 10.15 am. It was a pleasant enough morning with no rain, wind or extreme heat. We toodled along for 12 miles through Heath House, Burtle to Chilton Polden for coffee. The coffee house has been taken over from Liv, the previous owner/cyclist, by 'J' who calls it J's Bistro. Fortunately the coffee and cakes are equally good as before.

When we left there was a bit of unmade road at the bottom of an disused railway line to negotiate. This was a piece of cake due to the lack of rain in the past few weeks. Back on the road we divided naturally into 2 groups of 4 which helped with traffic easement on the way to Riche's Cider Farm - our lunch stop.....and very good it was too!

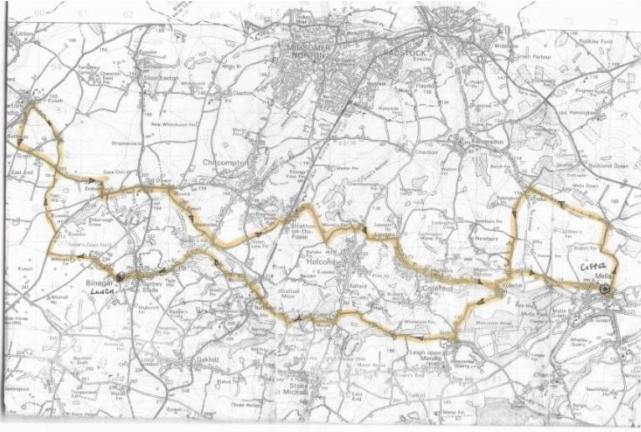
As the sun came out we discussed a slight extension to our ride which took us nearly to Badgeworth (North of Mark). Roger, with his photographic memory, looked at the map and lead the ride from Mark. It was lovely, not even being spoiled by the 'muck-spreading-stink' around Stone Allerton. We all arrived safely in Wedmore car park, most of us cycling home from there.

Thank you everyone for an enjoyable ride. Approx. 29 miles.

Denise

🚲 14TH OCTOBER 2021, ARTHUR

Thursday morning dawned bright and clear but chilly, so it was tricky deciding what to wear. Meeting up with the other six (two couldn't make it, but we gained another) at Chewton Mendip ford lane it became obvious that it was going to be a lovely day so warm clothes at first but gradually shed some as the sun rose. Before we left we met up with a wiry gentleman cyclist whose name was George Martin who knew Norman H. (u3a cycle group member) from his past club association and is now 90 and still cycling. In fact he was ahead of us and we didn't pass him as he turned off half a mile before us; we met again at Mells cafe!



14/10/16 – THE ROUTE AROUND THE EAST MENDIPS

Our route took us past the Old Down Inn, an old coaching inn, down Coalpit Lane, a relic of the mining industry in Somerset, to Stratton-on the-Fosse passing Downside School. We were heading for Mells, our coffee stop about 9/10 miles east, so by following various narrow lanes to avoid Holcombe, we eventually arrived at the village of Coleford. Beyond was the little village of Vobster where we crossed over the remains of the Coal Canal, a futile attempt to provide water transport for the mined coal which would link up with the Kennet and Avon canal to take coal to London, and on to our coffee stop at Mells where we were able to sit at an outside table in the small paddock by the stream.

The return leg took us up the hill to the Colliers Way, an old railway trackbed, for about a couple of miles to the bridge that took us back to Vobster and beyond to Soho, not the infamous area of London but a sleepy little village consisting of a pub and the odd cottage. Cycling further west to the lunch venue at Binegar took us through some quite hilly country where I was glad I had some electric assist unlike the other six. We arrived at the Horse and Jockey in Binegar about half an hour late but fortunately we were still in time to eat together in the restaurant, where later there was a discussion on future cycle group plans (coming to members in an email). At this point two of our number cycled back to Wells, the rest of us returned to Chewton Mendip via narrow lanes where we all went our different ways; two cycled back, the others in cars. Total mileage 26.7, a great day out.

Arthur

🚲 21ST OCTOBER 2021, DENISE

An extra ride

The day dawned cold and dark but eventually developed into, I won't say warm, a pleasant sunny day. I took off at 8am to be nice and early at the first meeting point: Priddy Village Green. After slogging up the Mendips for 3 miles I was stopped by a farmer moving cows. We chatted for 15 Mins. while his 170 cows slowly made their way through (talk about everything in Somerset being slow and easy). Paul came up the same bit of road and we waited another 5 mins. Graham, Pete M., Steve C., (a last minute recruit), Paul and I left at 9am....No other hold ups.

Both on the way there and the return journey, the sun was very low and without a visor, at times, difficult to see the road. However, the lighting was stunning!

We met John W., and Roger at Ston Easton as prearranged, leaving a tad after 9am. After the 'big lumps' in between Shoscombe and Wellow, we stopped off for a well earned coffee at Wellow riding stables (Rider's Rest - I think it was called).

Before the two tunnels, we turned right after Midford, cycled through the grounds of Monkton Combe School and onto the canal tow path. Plenty to see there with the rich and not so rich, playing with or living on their narrow boats.

We arrived in Bradford on Avon still on cycle route 24. We sat outside in the sunshine and had a pleasant pub meal near the canal. The way back was equally pleasant, although when we came to one of the last big hills out of Shoscombe Pete's chain came off and got stuck on the joining link and between the plastic guard. John and Pete managed to fix it and we were again on our way. We stopped once again at the Riding Stables for more sustenance and sitting in the sunshine.

There were seven of us with a variety of starting and peeling off points. We rode between 40 to 70+ miles. Thank you all for a lovely day.

Denise

🚲 28TH OCTOBER 2021, PETE B.

On a dull but dry morning, 8 met at Axbridge Reservoir, 4 arriving by pedal power and the 4 ebike riders in cars! We set off through Axbridge to Compton Bishop and on to Barton and Winscombe for C&C at the Strawberryline Tea Room, formerly Charlottes but still maintaining standards for cake!

We headed back towards Barton but soon turned right to cross the valley then left to circle around the hill to come into Banwell from a westerly direction. After a hectic road crossing in Banwell it was north to Puxton and with a very strong tailwind pedalling was hardly required. E-bike motors would certainly not work at speeds of over 15mph. We quickly arrived at Hewish Garden Centre for more refreshments.

After lunch, our morning jaunty speed was quickly reversed as we headed into the same very strong wind towards Sandford. Luckily the chance we took ignoring road closure signs paid off and we didn't have to turn back and retrace our wheel tracks. At Sandford we joined the Strawberry Line cycle route, which was much more sheltered, back to Axbridge; a good trip enjoyed by all I hope!

Pete B.

🚲 4TH NOVEMBER 2021, JOHN WI.

This extra ride of around 35 miles was organised by John Wi. Around six of us started in cool but dry weather from the RSPB car park, Ashcott Corner, and took the Ashcott road turning right to go through Shapwick, Eddington and on to Chilton Polden where we stopped at J's Bistro for coffee.

From here we headed to Cossington and then Puriton, down a lane unfortunately covered in fresh hedge clippings. We cycled through the village and found the lane to lead us to the footbridge over the motorway. After an unscheduled stop to repair a puncture, we headed towards Pawlett then Stretcholt and Huntspill and back out on to the A38. At Highbridge we took the cycle path along the river to the sea front. From here we headed out on the Berrow road taking a right onto the B4140 to Brent Knoll. After crossing the A38 we headed for Watchfield and Rich's cider mill for lunch.

We returned via Mark causeway and then right at the church to head across the levels towards Westhay and Meare, although most of us peeled off to ride directly home.

Graham

🚲 11TH NOVEMBER 2021, PETE M.

Remembrance Day

Seven of us met at Bretenoux Road, Glastonbury, and after a brief sojourn we found ourselves waking up the staff at the Balsbury, Baltonsborough, after an apparently very dull morning. They were very pleased to see us! We joined up with other members, and after coffee we found our way to the war memorial, only to find the villagers had already started their 2 minutes silence, which ended as the bell tolled 11. Nevertheless we were there.

We carried on incident free to South Barrow where the route headed north again. We arrived slightly earlier than predicted at the Cross Keys, Lydford, where some of us enjoyed the Feathered Steak wrap, even if we're still slightly unsure what we ate. Something to do with the cow's shoulders, presumably where the wings attach!

Back through Baltonsborough to Glastonbury, we arrived back with plenty of time to pedal home in the encroaching gloom. Only one minor incident: team navigator falling off ripping trendy new air conditioning vent in jeans.



11/11/21 - WAITING FOR LUNCH AT THE CROSS KEYS, LYDFORD

Pete M.

🚲 18TH NOVEMBER 2021, ROGER

🚲 9TH DECEMBER 2021, PAUL

Strawberries in December

Seven riders set off from Lidl in Wells along the Strawberry Line in bright sunshine. Joined by our eighth member at Dulcote, we continued along the recently finished extension to Charlie Bigham's, a first for most of us. Thence on the road to North Wootton climbing and descending again through Pilton and Pylle to our coffee stop at Thorner's farm shop. Cakes and tea cakes were enjoyed along with warming drinks. Briefly retracing our route along the A37, we continued via Evercreech then climbed to Lamyatt where we enjoyed views over the Mendips and Levels in the last of the sunshine.

Arriving at West Pennard, six of us stopped for lunch at The Lion, which gave us a friendly welcome. They offered an interesting menu (under new ownership) including pear and celeriac soup, enjoyed by several, although the rest of us chose less adventurous but equally tasty sandwich options.

The return to Wells and beyond was considerably damper and gloomier than our morning but we at had at least stayed dry till lunch. Just four stayed the course to return to Wells on the Strawberry Line.

Thanks for treating me gently on my first outing as ride leader.

Paul