

WELLS U3A CYCLE GROUP PROGRAMME 2019

The reports and some photos from the Wells U3A Cycle Group rides in 2019 are collected together here with apologies for any omissions. The rides are listed in date order and the titles include the ride leader. Rides were scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, but may have been moved because of, for example, bad weather. All active group members were asked to organise a ride during the year, the details of which were then circulated by email around a week beforehand.

As this is a public document, members are referred to by their first names only (with the first few letters of their surnames to avoid ambiguity.)

🚲 10TH JANUARY 2019, ROGER W.

🚲 24TH JANUARY 2019, JOHN WH.

🚲 14TH FEBRUARY 2019, ARTHUR



14/02/19 - COFFEE AT SWEETS IN THE SUN IN FEBRUARY

🚲 28TH FEBRUARY 2019, RON

🚲 21ST MARCH 2019, ROGER D.

(This ride was postponed from 14th March)

Eight of us gathered at the beginning of the Strawberry Way cycle path near the now closed Cheddar Cycles (Chris would have made nine but he unfortunately misread the directions), where we cycled the 10.5 miles to Yatton and the coffee stop (lovely cakes Roger W!). Retracing our steps to Congresbury to the A370 we then took the hairy r/h pavement for about a mile to the Puxton turn, facing the oncoming traffic with the path getting pretty narrow in places, I for one was glad when we reached the lane. Banwell was eventually reached where we only had to cross the busy road into High Street and the start of the climb up to where the famous Bone Cave is, carrying on through Barton passing Crookes Peak on our left, past The Webbington and on to the New Inn at Cross for lunch.

Deciding the route back to Cheddar after lunch was a no brainer, the shortest route via Cheddar reservoir which did mean lifting the bikes over the gate to gain access, two of which were heavy e-bikes; Dicks being an interesting ex Royal Mail one converted by Dick himself. Back at Cheddar, I clocked 28.5 miles, those who rode to/from Cheddar considerably more. Many thanks to Roger for a great run.

Arthur

🚲 28TH MARCH 2019, CHRIS



28/03/19 - DILLINGTON PLACE

Seven of us met at Langport in overcast but dry conditions then headed down the railway path south towards Ilminster where Chris took us to the Art Centre for coffee and cake: a place we have visited in the past.

Just beyond the Art centre is Dillington Place, a council run house and garden for various activities which looked lovely in the now emerging sun.

Our venue for lunch was to be Barrington Boar, a pub specialising in expensive but lovingly cooked food. Mine was a wild garlic soup with a mushroom and spice pate and sourdough bread. The return to Langport took us through Shepton Beauchamp and Muchelney: a ride of 28 miles. Thanks Chris for a very picturesque run.

Arthur

🚲 11TH APRIL 2019, STEVE

We had a good turnout of 11 at Ashcott Corner car park. The sun shone on us for the day, with the first leg to Somerton, taking the easier path round Ham Hill, rather than the more direct road over it. This was the first of several democratic decisions of the day.

The Buttercross in Somerton did us well for coffee and cakes, after which we set off through Charlton Adam, Keinton Mandeville, Baltonsborough to Butleigh for a good lunch in the sun at the Rose and Portcullis, after minor problems in 'last-mile' navigation.

A quick and flat return via Street and Glastonbury led us back to the start, with a slightly longer trip than usual at 32 miles but nice and sunny, and all finished ok, maybe with a few sore points and joints.

Steve

🚲 25TH APRIL 2019, LINDA

After a poor weather forecast I was pleasantly surprised to be joined by eight hardy souls in Glastonbury, several of whom had cycled to the start, two in shorts.

We headed off, clad in our waterproofs, not expecting a coffee stop only to find the Methodist Chapel in Keinton Mandeville offering coffee (to raise funds, on the last Thursday every the month). Refreshed, we continued through the odd light shower and one heavy, to arrive at the Fleet Air Arm for lunch, with plenty to choose from.

Deciding to start back, the heavens opened again so we sheltered before cycling back, mostly with a tail wind and in sunshine. 30 fairly easy miles. I thank everyone for their support with such a poor forecast.

Linda



25/04/19 - FLEET AIR MUSEUM

🚲 9TH MAY 2019, JOHN SEB.

It was wet and windy when I set off for Lidl's expecting to be home in about 30 minutes. Surprise, surprise I was joined by Ron, Graham and Linda.

After around 30 minutes and on the Launcherley Drove, Linda's rear tyre went flat. We all spent a happy half an hour in the rain fitting a brand new tube and getting lots of mud under our fingernails.

Due to the delay and slow progress into the wind we decided to change tack. Instead of Glastonbury, Ashcott and Shapwick we all voted to head straight into the gale force winds for a slightly earlier lunch at Sweets. This turned out to be a good move as the wind strength increased with every circulation of the pedals. Note! No electric bike to help us.

After a good lunch we headed back for Wells on one of the usual routes. We all admitted to enjoying the day with smug satisfaction when it was over! I recorded 28 miles.

John Seb.

🚲 23RD MAY 2019, PHIL

There were seven of us who started from Cannington. Both Rogers, John Wh, Linda, John Wi, Peter W and myself.

The weather was kind to us with mainly sunny spells and a light breeze as we set off towards Stogursey. We then headed south to Nether Stowey for a coffee stop, which was very nice sitting outside by the clock tower chatting to the passing locals. After refreshment it started to get a bit hilly as we headed down to Hawkridge reservoir which is a pretty spot. Now came the big climb up to The Pines Cafe for our lunch stop. After lunch it was mostly downhill which was very welcome and a bit of fun as we made our way back to Cannington via Four Forks. In all just under 26 miles.

Phil

🚲 13TH JUNE 2019, NORMAN

Norman's run on the 13/14th (Thursday was going to be wet but then so was Friday) did take place but with only three people turning up at Castle Cary. Because of the persistent drizzle the decision was to head for the Haynes Museum at Sparkford (the route I am unsure of), have a snack and then return to Castle Cary. They were met there by John S. who bravely splashed over from Dorset. The inner man now insulated from the weather they returned to Castle Cary, in all 15 miles.

Thanks for your efforts Norman, keep your intended route for another day.

Arthur

🚲 27TH JUNE 2019, JOHN WH.

Only six riders which was surprising on such a glorious day of sunshine. Graham was already at Nunney, having cycled from Wells and Barbara soon followed behind with their car. John S, Chris and John W had a pre-start coffee at the Moat and Turret café beside the castle and Linda soon appeared ready to roll as well.

Then it was uphill (a recurring feature of the ride) from the start via Trudoxhill and some minor roads to Horningsham. The proposed forestry track to the rear of Shear Water had to be abandoned owing to forestry clearance. Instead we did a short there-and -back along a tarmacked drive from the eastern end of the lake and savoured some lovely views across the water. Lunch, too, was taken sat in the open air beside the lake at the Shearwater Tea Rooms.

The return leg involved lots of forested lanes, a few more hills and a magnificent descent into Longleat estate. Only twenty five miles but enough to stretch the legs and a very varied ride too.

John Wh.



27/06/19 - LONGLEAT



27/06/19 – SHEAR WATER

🚲 11TH JULY 2019, JOHN SEA.

Fourteen riders (nearly but not quite a record for this year)* turned up at Langport. It was a dry day but mainly overcast in the morning, which made it slightly cooler than of late.

The first leg to Martock was gentle, pleasant cycling. Coffee at the George was good, although 14 cyclists turning up unannounced meant that the volunteers serving were challenged to serve everyone promptly. But we didn't feel hurried and enjoyed sitting outside, in due course setting off towards Stoke-sub-Hamdon. We took a rural narrow lane from Norton-sub-Hamdon westwards to Over Stratton that some of us hadn't ridden before. Then via South Pethererton and Shepton Beauchamp, again often on quiet rural roads, to our lunch stop at the Wyndham Arms at Kingsbury Episcopi. By this time the sun had put in an appearance and it was enjoyable sitting in the garden under parasols. Finally with no-one very keen to use the old railway line from near Muchelney we tackled the last 5 road miles to Langport. All in all a medium paced ride out in the South Somerset countryside.

John Sea.

(*a tied record with February's turnout – Editor)

🚲 26TH JULY 2019, PETE B.

Firstly a thank you to Pete B. who organised and ran our last ride from Castle Cary which was delayed to the Friday due to the high Thursday temperature. Fortunately it was a bit cooler and it attracted 12 eager folks, not quite the number for the last ride but very respectable nevertheless.

Our route took us south via Galhampton and Woolston to the delightful Chapel Cross tea room where we enjoyed some delicious cake and coffee which was needed after the distance we had covered - 5 miles!

Then it was onward south in a circular route to Haynes Motor Museum cafeteria through some lovely but probably quite expensive villages led by our leader who tried to ensure that number 12 was still with the group.



26/07/19 == CHAPEL CROSS TEA ROOM

The cafeteria despite its posh title did us proud with food and drink at quite moderate prices, so we all fed and watered preparing us for the final few miles back to Castle Cary where we arrived early to mid afternoon completing approximately 26 miles.

Arthur

🚲 8TH AUGUST 2019, DICK.

🚲 22ND AUGUST 2019, JOHN WI.

The ride scheduled for the 22nd August was organised by John Wi., but he expected he couldn't lead it as the builders were in, so I was asked if I would do so. However I was relieved to see that John was at the start after all so the pressure was off.

The route was a familiar one through Glastonbury to the cycle track and on to Ashcott where we stopped for refreshment at the Albion Truck stop (a shortage of cake there!) then on to Catcott and Chilton Polden. However as John had got wind of a road closure he took us on a devious route which circumnavigated the blockage and ended up at Sweets for lunch, not quite traffic free though even on the narrow lanes through Tealham and Tadham Moors. After lunch we all went our separate ways back home.

Many thanks John for giving an interesting run even taking us past his new (to him) house in Meare. My mileage was 26.5, others much longer.

Arthur

🚲 5TH SEPTEMBER 2019, ROGER D.

This extra ride went well, with seven of us turned up at the new venue on the Axbridge bypass with Roger D in charge. We rode to Yatton on the Strawberry Line path and by mutual consent went on to Clevedon and eventually found a well sheltered cafe on the front which was obviously popular by the number of people and cyclists already there. However, suitably refreshed we headed for our lunch stop at Sandford up the hilly suburbs of Clevedon and on over Kenn Moor to the Railway Inn which was also very popular, but we did eventually get fed and watered even though several of us had to make do with white bread as the kitchen had run out of the lovely seeded brown. Finally back down the cycle track to the car park where I recorded 26.5 miles and Roger quite a few more as he rode there from home as did Ron but he had a lift home.

Thanks Roger for organising the run and laying on the good weather

Arthur

🚲 12TH SEPTEMBER 2019, PETE W.

Peter W organised this ride, a local one with a few tweaks to keep us on our toes.

From Lidl's we aimed for Godney and the Double Gates cafe taking in the short stretch of cycle path by the leisure centre and on to Wookey but instead of the Long Ford route we doubled back to Burcott and on to Godney. Arriving there we were able to sit outside and as there were only another couple of cyclists there we were served pretty quickly.

From there we went west towards Tadham Moor but before we got there it was dodge the huge tractors and trailers transporting grass for silage! On up the hill to Westham where a little light electrical assistance was needed and on to Wedmore for the lunch stop at the delightful cafe opposite the Church, again in the garden.

Lunch was a leisurely affair enjoying the late summer sun but as there were still some miles to go before we arrived home we eventually mounted the bikes and set off for Bagley on the ridge and then dropped down a 1 in 4 hill onto the Levels and on to Wells, a distance of 26.5 miles with ten of us enjoying the ride. Thanks Pete for a local ride with a difference.

Arthur

🚲 26TH SEPTEMBER 2019, DENISE

The day dawned cloudy but the sun soon began to shine as we headed toward the rendezvous point in Wedmore. Expecting only 5 to 6 people, I was a bit surprised, and anxious as Wedmore car park filled up with cyclists. Fifteen in all started the ride.

We headed out on country lanes until we had a couple of miles through Mark on roads which weren't too busy. Three years ago I cycled a little way on the Panam Highway in Costa Rica. The road we took to Burnham was infinitely worse than that. Thank heaven it was only a couple of miles. Sorry folks, I was trying to keep the mileage down.

Our alternative coffee stop which was on the sea-front (forced on by the sheer size of the group) was delightful. We all sat outside in the sunshine. Then passing through Bream with a smattering of Ye! Ha! cowboys in evidence, we headed on Sustrans track 33 to Uphill. So up the Bleadon hill we went and down the other "Bleadon" side, to our lunch stop at The Queen's Arms. After a good repast we mounted our bikes and cycled lovely countryside through Loxton, Cross, Weare etc. and back past the golf course to Wedmore.

Thank you all for a lovely day. 32 miles was covered on this route.

Denise

🚲 10TH OCTOBER 2019, JOHN WH.

For one who is averse to cycling in the rain, I found it a bit daunting to see horrible weather, day after day, during the countdown to last Thursday's ride – but, Eureka! The weather men assured us that the sun would reappear for one day only and that, miraculously, would be on our cycling day!

Sure enough from early morning the sky was pretty cloudless and, at the Cranmore starting point, there were ten riders ready for the off. It was a bit chilly despite the sun, but we soon warmed up as we climbed through Waterlip, and then stormed (?) the big climb in Holford. Once past the quarries the lanes were more attractive as we descended into Radstock for the coffee stop at the Swallow Community café which is conveniently located at the Frome end of Colliers Way cycle track. This is run as a charity to support local people with learning difficulties and they couldn't have done more for us. It should be borne in mind for a future lunch or coffee stop! They can cater for large numbers too.

As we found our way onto the cycle track, the clouds had reappeared but without discharging their contents and it was a pleasant, easy potter beside the old railway (one track still in place). Back on the lanes we took a steep descent into picturesque Great Elm and then a steep uphill section into Frome for lunch at Sainsbury's. Actually the intended route here was via fewer town roads – sorry for my mistake!

From Frome we made our way through the lanes to Nunney, pausing beside the castle and on via Downhead and East Cranmore back to the start. So we had managed to do the circuit without a drop of rain and our technical expert (Geoff) could tell us that, included in the 27 miles covered, was a cumulative climbing score of just under 2,200 feet. Well I did say that the terrain was undulating didn't I?

John Wh.

🚲 24TH OCTOBER 2019, STEVE

Despite unstable weather forecast, we had a turnout of 10 riders ready to go by 10.15. We went off through damp and mud at good speed to arrive dry at the Buttercross cafe in Somerton for a welcome coffee and cake. After a good break, we set off in improving weather down the long hill to Low Ham and Henley Corner, with a well maintained speed and copious supplies of (more) mud. We flew up Pedwell hill to Ashcott, for lunch at the Ring of Bells. Not used this one for a long time, but worked out fine, despite obvious minor problems behind the bar.

The return to Glastonbury was in good sunshine, along the familiar nature trail, for a total around 29 miles.

Out of interest, we had 3 (30%) electric bikes, and 5 or 6 people opted to ride from home, so maybe our less than 30 mile yardstick could sometimes be exceeded. When sunny, of course!

Steve

🚲 14TH NOVEMBER 2019 (AGM), ARTHUR

The 2019 AGM was held upstairs in Pickwick's Café, Wells

🚲 28TH NOVEMBER 2019, ROGER D.

Roger's Tour de Mendips

15 of us left Wells Lidl at 10.15. Split into 2 groups, we passed the Bishops Palace and went via the footpath to the Mendip Hospital and then to East Horrington and the Rocky Mountain Café for coffee. Linda was waiting for us there. But we lost Barbara who cycled back home.

So, after coffee, 15 of us set off for Binegar and Gurney Slade. Again split into 2 groups, we continued up the hill to cross the A367 just north of Nettlebridge. We continued to just south of Holcombe where we turned right towards Soho. Along this road was the 1 in 5 hill which most of us rode up (I didn't). Around Halecombe quarry we headed back to Leigh on Mendip. The front group missed out the planned detour and went straight to Stoke St Michael (due to time going on). Luckily the second group which were some way behind did the same. Through Oakhill we headed back to the Rocky Mountain café for lunch.

After lunch it was downhill all the way via Dinder and Dulcote back to Wells. With a number of us going back to Wells via East Horrington, a number dropping out to go home at various points, there were only a couple of us who made it back to Lidl's! But all said that they had enjoyed this somewhat hilly route.

Roger D.



28/11/19 - READY TO GO



28/11/19 – DISTANCE 41.8 KM, 26.0 MILES; ELEVATION 644 M, 2113 FT

🚲 14TH DECEMBER 2019, ARTHUR

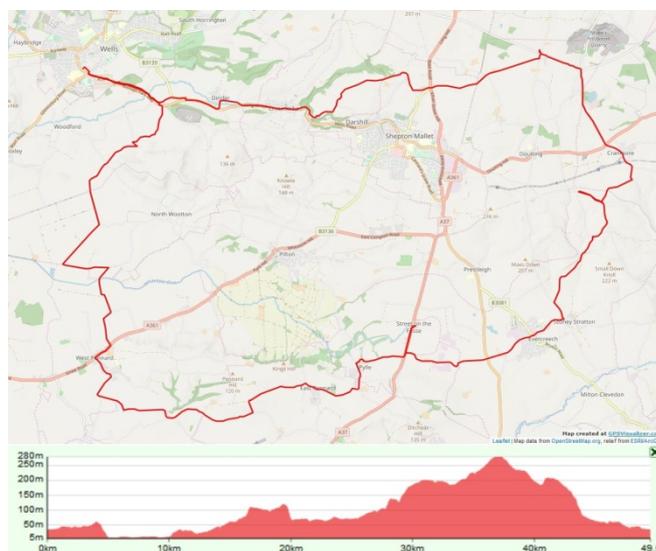
(This was postponed from Thursday 12th December.)

Arthur's Mini Mendip Tour

Despite the adverse forecast (strong winds, some heavy rain etc) on Saturday 14th, six of us met up at Lidl and set off east to follow the muddy railway track to Dulcote where we then headed south to W. Pennard and on to W. Bradley and beyond. The first serious obstacle was the short, sharp steep hill up towards E. Pennard. Easily negotiated by the three electric bikes and followed shortly after by the hard men we then set forth through the village, on down the steep descent to Pylle and finally the A37. To get to Thorners 'Den' café calls for care as it's normally a very busy road but being Saturday not much traffic.

Suitably refreshed we retraced our route to the turn for Evercreech and on to the village passing the old S&D railway level crossing after a bend. On to Stoney Stratton then north up the climb into the village of Chesterblade. Here it gets a bit messy for route-finding so I missed the right turn to Cranmore, only about half a mile UPHILL before we turned back to the correct turn (surprise, surprise no adverse comments!). Past the East Somerset Railway, over the A361 and on to the turn for the Old Frome road to the Waggon and Horses for a well deserved lunch.

After lunch it was all downhill to North Shepton and a lot colder, through the back lanes and a very steep, slippery, rough descent to Croscombe and home; about 31 miles and no rain!



14/12/19 – DISTANCE 49.3 KM, 30.6 MILES; ELEVATION 506 M, 1660 FT

On Thursday the 19th seventeen of us are heading for Sweets Emporium to enjoy our Christmas lunch and we shall be raising a glass to those of us who couldn't make it.

I wish everyone in the Group a very Happy Christmas and hope that 2020 will be as successful as 2019 was. Thank you all for your support.

Arthur