

WELLS U3A CYCLE GROUP PROGRAMME 2023

The reports and photos from the Wells U3A Cycle Group rides in 2023 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.

All active members may be asked to plan and lead a ride during the year, and so the more members there are, the fewer runs an individual has to organise and the more variety there is. The more informal arrangement of asking for volunteers a few weeks in advance of scheduled rides has continued to be successful.

In the following reports, the leader of each ride is given after the date. Producing reports was entirely voluntary and therefore there may not be one for every ride. This is a public document, and group members are therefore referred to by their first names only (with the first few letters of their surnames to avoid ambiguity.)

Mention should also be made of Denise, who cycled from John O'Groats to Lands End in September. This was in celebration of a significant birthday and to raise some money for Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. She had made the same journey 10 years ago but in the opposite direction.

🚲 26TH JANUARY 2023, RON H.

The ride started at Lidl's in Wells with Arthur, John Wh., Steve, Linda, Paul H., Paul W. and myself. The weather was unbelievably calm and sunny compared to the conditions that we have been having recently. We set off at 10.15am and travelled through Haybridge, Wookey, Fenny Castle and then across several droves and into Westhay, where we stopped for coffee at the Avalon Marches Visitor Centre arriving at 11.15am. There we met up with Denise, John Wi. and Ron S. who had travelled from their respective homes to meet the ride.

Following a relaxing drink in the warm indoor seating area the 10 of us then made our way through Burtle, River Bridge and headed through Westham, Heath House and the incline into Sand. At this point Ron S. left us to travel home as he had an pre-arranged appointment in the afternoon. The 9 of us then cycled down Mudgley Hill on the B3151, stopping at Sweets for lunch.

During our break the weather was slowly becoming cloudy and the wind was picking up and by the time we headed back on our return to Wells it was getting a lot colder. John Wi. headed to home from Sweets so we were left with 8 of us. The route back was a reversal of the route we had taken from Wells except taking the more direct route through Burcott.

Some of us decided to peel off for home destinations on route back to Wells and generally the ride went without incident, and was enjoyed by all who attended. We did approximately 30 miles in total.

Ron H.

🚲 23RD FEBRUARY 2023, PETE M.

Ten of us set off from Lidl, Wells along the Strawberry Line to Dulcote. The weather was cold, dry and windy with the wind mostly behind at this stage. We continued on to Worminster and a rapid descent towards North Wooton which we bypassed to head back to Launcherley and then another rapid descent to go along Long Drove to Glastonbury.

At Middlewick Farm, we were joined by members of the Yeovil Cycle Club who arrived shortly after us. Between our two groups, the café was quite full, and we were delighted there was enough cake to go around.

After our stop, two people turned off home but the rest of us continued on climbing to Ashcott and crossing to Shapwick. Unfortunately the wind was against us going down the hill, so no personal bests were scored. We had the luxury of an inside table at Sweets, and after a leisurely lunch, some of us returned to Wells, others turning off home on the way.

No rain and no accidents, a whisker over 30 miles.

Pete M.

🚲 2ND MARCH 2023, RON S.

Five of us set off on a bright, sunny morning from Cheddar Reservoir car park on our way to the Strawberry Line dropping down into Winscombe for coffee etc. at the Strawberry Line Tea Rooms.

We returned to the Strawberry Line as far as Sandford before exiting onto the road and had a very pleasant 8 miles or so ride through flat country lanes via Puxton, Wick St Lawrence and Ebdon. From here the plan had been to head out to Kewstoke and follow the coastline through Weston Woods to enjoy the views out to sea and then the descent onto Weston-super-Mare seafront. Unfortunately, at the last minute, I learned that the coast road through Kewstoke had been closed for the week to all traffic, including cyclists, for tree felling. Therefore, we had to 'muddle' our way through the town via seemingly endless housing estates to eventually end up at the seafront and on to Uphill and Bleadon for lunch at the Bleadon Farm shop.

After that 'drama' we were back on the planned route through Bleadon, Loxton and Winscombe to regain the Strawberry Line and retrace our route back to Cheddar Reservoir.

Apart from having to re-route via Worle and WSM town centre, we had a very enjoyable ride in perfect weather for 33 miles. Thanks to John Win. and Denise for pioneering the revised route via WSM housing estates and the other riders for joining on the day!

Ron S.

🚲 23RD MARCH 2023, ARTHUR

A ride to Castle Cary from Wells

Thursday the 23rd March 2023 was always going to be a day to remember because the forecast a fortnight before was wet at least for part of the day but undeterred I had decided that the ride from Wells to Castle Cary was what I would do, a ride of approx 30 miles with an extra loop through Wyke Champflower if possible. I had thought that the forecast would put people off but as the day got nearer more and more let me know of their intention to join until on the day twelve cyclists were raring to go.

The route was not complicated: the Strawberry Way towards North Wootton, through the outskirts of the village to The Crossways and up Westholme Hill to the coffee stop at the relatively new cafe behind the Methodist church in Pilton where we were greeted by Norman, a long time member. Unfortunately, Linda suspected a puncture, the first on this trip, so she and Geoff set to mend it before coffee.

About half an hour later we continued our journey riding past the Glastonbury Festival fields, which will be a hive of activity in June, to Pylle and the steep short climb on the way to Ditchet, famous for its riding stables. But after crossing the busy A37, two of our party were missing; another puncture! This was smartly remedied by Pete, so it was onward to our destination Castle Cary and the George Hotel reluctantly missing out a loop via Wyke Champflower as time was pressing. We sat down together in our own room at a long table enjoying whatever we ordered and each others company for an hour or so until it was decided to leave; but by this time the weather had deteriorated and we headed into light rain which became somewhat heavier.

Linda by this time had departed for a dental appointment which I heard later she had to cancel due to another puncture and a wet long walk!! As for the rest of us except John Wh. who rode back to his home at Pilton, it was a wet fast ride (electric motor on for me) along the B3153 for about two miles eventually turning off to Hornblotton and other villages arriving at West Pennard and on to Launcherly and Wells. Several others peeled off at various points so leaving four of us going to Wells, but before we got to the Strawberry Way, John Sea. had a puncture so was forced to walk the last mile to his car.

And so ended a varied and eventful ride of 31 miles with a record for us of four punctures and a wet ride home. Thank you all for your company; we can look back on this run now we are all warm and dry as an achievement.

Arthur

🚲 13TH APRIL 2023, PAUL W.

Unperturbed by the previous day's dire weather, and early morning hail, nine riders met up at Ashcott Corner car park to brave the blustery conditions with 30 miles ahead.

We rode up over the Polden hills at Ashcott and down onto the levels. Ham Hill loomed ominously ahead, but our route cunningly circumnavigated this to the coffee stop at Pitney Farm Shop. Replenished we headed west through Weare and Aller to Middlezoyland for lunch at the Windmill Retreat.

After a little confusion with orders and not ordered, we set off again on mostly quiet roads with wind now thankfully on our backs. Windmills featured again as we crossed back over the Poldens, this one missing its sails, but still a prominent and remarkable sight on the skyline.

The group returned to Ashcott Corner, in bright sunshine, with all saying they had enjoyed exploring some new routes and stops.

Paul W.



13/04/23 – CLIMBING WALTON HILL



13/04/23 – ALL AT THE TOP OF WALTON HILL

🚲 28TH APRIL 2023, CHRIS

Heavy rain on the Thursday meant that the ride had had to be put back a day, so it was perhaps unsurprising that there were just four of us who set off from Black Bridge car park, just outside Langport, on a grey morning but with the promise of better weather to come.

A largely flat ride down through Muchelney, Drayton and Hambridge took us to Barrington, where we had coffee and cakes at Barrington Court. The next section was rather more challenging - first to Shepton Beauchamp, then across the A303 and left onto a small road through Wigborough, which eventually took us to Norton sub Hamdon (this included a brief interlude where we learnt a bit about farm waste management, at the splendidly named Frogmary Green Farm).

Thereafter a short stretch to Little Norton, and then the steep ascent to the top of Ham Hill. From there an easy ride down to Martock for an agreeable (and sunny) lunch at Yandles, and then a straightforward run back to Langport via Coat and Kingsbury Episcopi. About 27 miles in all.



28/04/23 – AT THE TOP OF HAM HILL

Chris

🚲 11TH MAY 2023, LINDA

Nine people joined me for a pedal from Winscombe Rugby Ground, along the Strawberry Line to Yatton. From here we followed quiet lanes through Lower Claverham to our first stop at Cleeve Nursery on the A370 for coffee and cake.

Taking a loop away from the main road, Pete B. left us to make his own way back while the rest of us crossed the A370 at the traffic lights and made our way steadily up Brockley Combe and around the airport perimeter. A long freewheel down to Redhill, right to Wrington and on to Churchill for lunch at The Crown. Busy as usual, we sat outside in the glorious sunshine to eat our delicious sandwiches and choice of drink.

From here it was a short ride through Churchill, Sandford and back to the start at Winscombe. A few hardy souls had cycled from home and so they clocked up a few more miles but, for the main peloton, I made it 26.65 miles.

Thank you all for your support and your company today. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. The weather was amazing. (Those present were Arthur, Chris, Denise, Graham, Pete B, Pete M, Ron H, Ron S, Steve W & me.)

Linda



11/05/23 – COFFEE STOP AT CLEEVE NURSERY



11/05/23 – LUNCH AT THE CROWN, CHURCHILL

🚲 25TH MAY 2023, JOHN WH.

On a glorious sunny day seven keen members met at the free car park in Castle Cary with the Met Office's assurance that there was 0% chance of rain. John Wh. had chosen the route with the warning that it included some ups and downs but, as far as the coffee stop at Chapel Cross, there was nothing too demanding – just pleasant countryside. Formerly this café served coffee and cakes in a most atmospheric situation within the disused chapel but Covid has changed all that and it seems that it is just outside seating now, but on a day like this it was great to sit out.

Once recharged, the peloton continued through the very picturesque hamlets of Compton Pouncefoot, Blackford, North Cheriton and Horsington when the leader had to make the embarrassing announcement that he might have led the group 'off piste'. Once a check was made on line, it was decided that all was well. There were a few steep little rises before passing through Wincanton and on to the lunch stop at the Otter Garden Centre café.

The next leg was more trafficked than had been encountered up to this point and it was good to escape onto the quiet lanes to Pitcombe and Cole but then came the short steep hills before a long descent back to Castle Cary. A ride of 27 miles.

John Wh.

🚲 8TH JUNE 2023, GRAHAM

Seven of us (Linda, John Sea., Paul W., Ron S., Steve W., Barbara and myself) gathered at Lidl's for a ride around mostly quiet local lanes on an increasingly warm sunny day. We started off down Burcott Road; then turned left towards Coxley, crossed the A39 and carried on down to Long Drove and on to North Wootton. We then had the climb up to Higher Westholme and Pilton where we stopped at the Community Coffee Shop. Here, local resident and group member Norman joined us for our coffee break. In the wonderful view from the shop across the village we could see Worthy Farm being prepared for this year's festival.

While Barbara returned home, the rest of us set off, skirting the festival site to Pylle, across the A37, and on to Evercreech and Stoney Stratton. And then there was the next steep hill, climbing up to Chesterblade, followed by a drop down to Cranmore station and the Station Café. Although there was a cool breeze, it was now becoming uncomfortable to sit for long in the sun, so we chose a shaded picnic table to eat our lunch.

My plan had been to climb up to the "Wagon and Horses" and Beacon Hill via Chelynych along quiet lanes, but in view of the rising temperature I opted to take the shorter and steadier climb via Waterlip and the Old Frome Road. Perhaps this was a mistake as we had to contend with heavy quarry traffic. We crossed the busy A37 crossroads on foot taking advantage of a tractor and trailer pulling out and blocking the junction. After a final short climb, we freewheeled nearly all the way back to Wells through Masbury and East Horrington while enjoying the views across to Glastonbury and beyond.

Many thanks to all who joined me on this ride. The total distance was 42.9 km (26.7 miles) with 500 m (1640 feet) of climbing. I'll try to arrange a flatter route next time!

Graham

🚲 22ND JUNE 2023, DENISE

Thank you all for accompanying me on one of my favourite rides.

Nine of us started at Cheddar reservoir with Linda joining us at Winscombe. Because the big gate of the reservoir has been unlocked lately, and Steve W. had a back up key to unlock the it if needed, we rode around the reservoir which wasn't too low considering the lack of rain. Those of us who like birds saw a male red crested pochard duck - the first excitement of the day! The only puncture of the day was at the top of the hill out of Axbridge, but the 'repair team' quickly caught up. We cycled onto our first stop for coffee and cake at either the bakery or the Pantry in Winscombe. As some people were a bit bored of the Strawberry Line, we went over the top of the hill to Sandford and picked it up again just over the bridge (where the cider effluent comes out) turning right and following the Strawberry line to Yatton.

From Yatton we went to Kingston Seymour and on quiet roads to Clevedon. There were a few swimmers but no one was brave enough to swim from our group.... so not wanting to hold anyone up I didn't swim either. Ha! Ha!

We stopped for a nice lunch at the Moon and Sixpence, sitting outside in the sunshine.

After lunch we bypassed the Strawberry Line by taking the backroads to Sandford via Iwood Lane, Brinsea , Brinsea Batch and Churchill Green. Linda peeled off for home here as she had cycled from Weston-super-Mare.

From Cheddar reservoir to Clevedon and return, it was 36 miles.

Happy cycling everyone.

Denise

🚲 13TH JULY 2023, GEOFF

To Sherborne

The online weather forecast suggested morning light drizzle for less than an hour, and no rain for the rest of the day. Meeting at The Rural Life Museum for a 9:45am depart were: Geoff (ride leader) Linda, Ron H., Chris, and Steve W.; Graham and John Sea. arranged to meet up at Haynes Motor Museum for coffee at 11am.

After coffee, Ron turned for Easton and home as we pushed on to Sherborne.

The narrow country lanes were ideal for cycling except when we met a tractor towing a slurry tanker almost blocking the road. When the tractor stopped tight to its left, it was a dismount followed by a very tight squeeze past the rig's very big wheels, hoping they wouldn't move before we all got through. The steepest part of the ride was just after Sandford Orcas. Just short of 14%. (Note, I got off and walked up everyone else rode it.)

At The Three Wishes cafe we were made very welcome. Allowing us to park our bikes securely inside undercover. Our return journey to Glastonbury started off well until heavy rain started before we got to Sandford Orcas. As we turned right for Corton Denham we said our goodbyes to John as he turned for home.



13/07/23 – COFFEE AT HAYNES MOTOR MUSEUM

We followed the planned route through South and North Cadbury and onto Castle Cary. I thought about a coffee break, then decided to get back to the Rural Life Museum before it closed at 5pm. The total distance was 48 miles.

Thanks for joining me on the (I think) first ever U3A ride to Sherborne.

Geoff

🚲 27TH JULY 2023, JOHN WIN.

The weather forecast was not good for the morning but despite this we had a total of seven hardy souls turn up. From the small car park at Ashcott Corner we headed south to Ashcott with some very threatening clouds to the west of us. No sooner had we turned right in Ashcott than it started to rain. At first a light drizzle, which became heavy in no time and forced a stop for some of us to don waterproof gear. So we continued on through Shapwick, Catcott, Edington and, with some relief, J's coffee shop in Chilton Polden after 20 minutes enduring what I can only call Cornish caravan holiday weather!! We cheered ourselves up with coffee and a portion of their excellent range of confections. After a thirty minute break we ventured out again and although still raining, it was showing signs of cessation. So fingers were crossed and five of us soldiered on towards Cossington whilst Steve C. and Arthur retraced their steps having ridden from home.

Once in Cossington we took a right into Bell lane and began our trip across the levels, but not before gingerly cycling through some very soggy farmyard manure made worse by the rain which by this time had eased off considerably. We continued on along the droves and past Gold Corner pumping station emerging onto River Road where it crosses the river Brue.

We took the first right along River Bridge drove and left at the T junction onto Little Moor road. We followed this road to Mark where we took a left at the Pack Horse pub along Church road for about a quarter of a mile where we turned right along Vole road. This eventually brought us out at a T junction with Harp road where we took the left turn and the next right heading towards Mark causeway. On reaching the causeway, we turned right and were soon locking our bikes up outside Richs' restaurant. Fortunately for us I had phoned ahead from J's and despite being busy they were able to find us a table inside and we all enjoyed a good lunch and even a cidersShandy or two!!

The final part of the ride took us through Watchfield and onto Burtle via River Road and Mark Road. (It must be noted at this juncture that Ron S. left us after lunch having cycled from his home in Mark to join us at the start). So four of us cycled on through Burtle to the junction with Shapwick Road. We all turned left here as it was decided that the river walkway would be too muddy for the return trip to the car park. Cycling into Westhay, Ron H. left us to cycle back to Easton whilst Geoff, Steve W. and myself cycled along Meareway to Meare. I said my farewells to Geoff and Steve and they made their way back to the carpark along a much drier Ashcott Road.

A ride of some 30 miles which despite some early precipitation was very enjoyable!

John Win.

🚲 10TH AUGUST 2023, JOHN SEA.

Six members met at Mudford car park for a 10.00 am departure. The weather was warm with sunny intervals and stayed like that for the whole ride. The group set off towards Sandford Orcas and the coffee stop at the Lavender Farm/Story Pig came at about 4 miles. The view from the outdoor seating north towards Castle Cary drew the attention with Glastonbury Tor just visible on the skyline.

Setting off again, the route ran northwards through Sandford Orcas and Corton Denham. Turning north-east the lane was one which appeared to be rising but in fact, as confirmed by smartphone, was falling slightly. The ride continued east to Horton along a country road which was unexpectedly wide. This was the old A303, running close to the current dual carriageway A303 which one of our number had a hand in building a little while ago!



The route south wound along lanes through Maperton and Charlton Hawthorne. Somewhat flatter roads led through Milborne Wick and beside the London-Salisbury-Exeter railway line approaching Sherborne. Lunch was at the Digby Tap in Sherborne, a pub with a somewhat traditional interior.

Heading west, the route passed close to the ride leader's house and the offer of tea was accepted. Cake was also on offer.

Finally the six hauled themselves on to their bikes and completed the route back to Mudford. Measurements varied, but about 28 miles had been covered. Riders commented that the route passed through pleasant lanes and villages.

John Sea.

10/08/23 – RELAXING IN THE RIDE LEADER'S GARDEN

🚲 24TH AUGUST 2023, ARTHUR

I was responsible for our last ride, so here is my view of how it developed when nine of us met at Nunney Village car park to when we finally said our goodbyes, the majority heading for home in cars but Denise and Graham returning home via the Mendips on their bikes.

It was never intended to be an easy ride but more to riding in some of the best countryside in the Mendip area. The first six miles was primarily to get us to the coffee stop at the East Somerset railways H.Q. at Cranmore without using the busy A361; but the old Frome road, which we used, is a well used route for quarry lorries the principal industry in this area. However, once off the old Roman road used to shift the lead mined at Charterhouse over the centuries, it was all downhill to East Cranmore and on to the cafe.

We couldn't dally too long as it was going to eventually be a long slog to our lunch stop at the White Hart, Trudoxhill. After winding through the lanes to the east we then had the pleasure of a two and a half mile freewheel down beyond Stoney Stratton to the left turn into what was once an old country estate straight out of the 17th century, Spargrove Manor with its moated farm and village totally unspoilt. This led to our first obstacle, a one in four short climb, where some of us were reduced to walking including me with an electric bike! Once that hill was conquered despite the problem of huge tractors and trailers filling the narrow lanes, it was a relatively leisurely ride to North Brewham. Beyond the village the steady climb up towards Gare hill kept us all occupied until the turn left at Yarnfield Gate which became a lovely descent after all the climbing and on to Witham Friary, another village where time seems to have stood still. As the scheduled time for our arrival at The White Hart for lunch was overdue, it was necessary to use a short cut arriving twenty minutes before last orders. The pub was not busy by now so after ordering drinks we did not have to wait too long for our respective lunches which were most welcome after all the energy that had been spent.

Our group was the last to leave near 3pm, but as it was only a few miles back to Nunney we followed a circuitous route via Marston Bigot to the A361 and on to Nunney carpark, a total distance of 27.7 hilly miles. Thanks to all those who joined me on a very pleasant and dry ride.

Arthur



24/08/23 – A BRIEF REST AFTER TACKLING ANOTHER HILL

🚲 14TH SEPTEMBER 2023, RON H.

Wedmore to West Huntspill

Our starting point was Wedmore Free Car Park and eight of us met there: Steve W., Peter N., John Win., Linda, Pete M., Jane, Steve C., and myself. The route took us from Wedmore to Sand, then to Heath House, Westham, and to River Bridge. Once over the bridge we took a right turn onto Chilton Drove and eventually onto Chilton Road to make our coffee stop at J's Bistro. This is becoming a popular stop for cyclists as a group just managed to arrive before us, however we all managed to order our drinks and cakes in a reasonable time and all of us sat in a single outside bench in the warm conditions. (Bit of a squeeze)

After a quick phone call to our lunch stop to confirm numbers we set off again to Cossington, Woolavington, and into Puriton where we picked up Batch Road which took us North on a quiet road bordering the M5. The route took us to the junction of the A38 at West Huntspill and, not wishing to ride on the busy main road, we took a route through the village which brought us right to our lunch stop at The Orchard pub. We all ordered drinks and chose a bite to eat from the Lights Bite Menu which proved more than adequate.

Our return journey took us a short way North on the busy A38 before turning off to East Huntspill and then to Watchfield and via the quiet lanes to Mark. Once out of the village we took the route to Chapel Allerton where Linda left us to go to Winscombe where she had parked her car. The rest of us took the direct route to Wedmore via Stoughton Cross.

All in all the weather was perfect for cycling and although this was a familiar tour some of us had not cycled some of the route before. I clocked exactly 30 miles and I would like to thank everyone who supported the ride, we all enjoyed the company.

Many thanks,

Ron H.

🚲 28TH SEPTEMBER 2023, LINDA

On a pleasant autumn morning following the uncertainty of storm Agnes, six of us started out from Winscombe Rugby Ground under high cloud. Arthur, John Wh., Steve W., Peter N., Graham (who had cycled from home) and myself set off along the Strawberry Line and through the tunnel. Whilst in the tunnel, I suddenly spotted a loose dog in the low solar lighting and shouted but too late as Arthur almost came off but couldn't save his bike from going over, losing his wing mirror. The couple with the dog didn't even apologise!

At the road we turned right down the A38 to Cross. Through the village and on to Weare where we toiled up the hill and passed the Ashton Windmill before continuing to Wedmore for tea / coffee at The Bluebird Cafe which was very welcoming with a good choice of delicious cakes. Ron H., Steve C. and Denise joined us here having cycled from home and Pete B. met us on his bicycle just for coffee and a catch up.

Refreshed, nine of us left Wedmore heading for Mudgley where, unexpectedly, "someone" was photographing us as we approached the crossroads. It was Pete B. who had taken a short cut and arrived before us. What a surprise!

After a group photo (thank you Pete), we continued on our way down Mudgley Hill towards Westhay where Denise left us, exhausted I imagine after returning from cycling John 'o' Groat's to Lands End only a few days earlier.

We turned right through Burtle, Mark, Vole and Rooksbridge to arrive at the Frankie Howerd Café in Loxton for lunch, now eight in number. A table was laid for us and we enjoyed tasty food and good company in the restored old barn. Before setting off again, I took a group photo at the entrance, and then we made our way back to Winscombe via Webbington, Barton Road and The Lynch.

Steve C., Ron and Graham set off for home along The Strawberry Line and Arthur went with them to look for his mirror in the tunnel.

The sun had tried to come out which made for a very enjoyable day out. Thank you for joining me,

Linda



28/09/23 – AT THE TOP OF MUDGLEY HILL



28/09/23 – THE FRANKIE HOWERD CAFÉ, LOXTON

🚲 26TH OCTOBER 2023, PETE M.

Against all odds the weather turned up trumps for the eleven people who met at Lidl, Wells. Unfortunately Paul got stung by a wasp while waiting to head off and as he was concerned about it giving him a problem he set off in search of antihistamine, so leaving a party of ten. The route took us via Nth Wootton, past Greenacres camping site and on to Long Drove (two and a half miles long). From there it wasn't too far to Middlewick, Farm, Wick, for the coffee stop with a lovely view north in the sunshine.

Lunch was to be at Sweets emporium so our route took us around the western side of Glastonbury on the bypass cycle way and onto the levels at Sharpham where we headed towards Ashcott instead of using the old trackbed. Following a convoluted series of lanes, Ashcott was bypassed and we eventually popped out at Shapwick. From there it was a straight forward ride through Westhay to Sweets and a welcome lunch.

Our return to Wells shortened the group somewhat as various folk found their own way home. We ended up with three of us arriving at Wells; our mileage was 31 relatively flat miles. Thank you Pete M. for organising firstly the unexpected fine weather and secondly a route which, although familiar, was nevertheless enjoyable; it must be the company of like minded souls!

Arthur

🚲 9TH NOVEMBER 2023, ARTHUR

Annual Meeting of the U3A Cycle Group held at Sweets Café

(Our thanks go to Vicki at Sweets for letting us meet there this time.)

- 1). Arthur as group leader welcomed everyone, sixteen in total, a good turnout considering the weather forecast. An apology was sent by Denise and a later apology from Paul W.
 - 2). Although not intended to be a competition, a chart of the group's activities throughout the year was circulated and a record showed who were the most active members. But to be fair some members listed had other interests, family commitments, or had joined later in the year, so this was circulated for interest only.
 - 3). Ron H. has agreed to act as Arthur's deputy and take on, where necessary, some of the administration work in the event of him being indisposed due to holidays, illness etc. Also Arthur said, having reached the ripe old age of 82, he would have to think about retiring from the post as Group Leader sometime in the not too distant future. So please consider that someone will need to take on that role, or maybe the job could be divided, to ensure the continuing success of the Cycle Group.
 - 4). The meeting agreed to keep on the method of organising the rides throughout the year (two per month from April to October, one per month Nov. through to March) by emailing a few individuals to ask if they could cover a specific date. Please notify Arthur of personal dates that need to be kept clear.
 - 5). A post-Christmas lunch was agreed to be held at The Horse and Jockey, Binegar, at the end of January or early Feb. This has proved popular in past years. The invitation includes your wife, husband or partner.
 - 6). The question of visiting new cycling areas was raised, for example North Somerset, the Wiltshire border, West Somerset etc. Maybe they can be incorporated in the coming year's itinerary. Also the possibility of a few days away with overnight accommodation was suggested. Ron S. agreed to look into the feasibility; Norman suggested the use of Youth Hostels etc. Linda raised the idea of using the West Somerset Railway to take a group either from Bishops Lydeard to a further station or the reverse, and cycling back, as the group has twice done in the past. Arthur agreed to look into it.
- Also, John Wh. has agreed to look into the possibility of another cross Channel trip to Brittany which was a success several years ago.
- 7). Any other business. Ron S. expressed concern that some ride leaders were failing to consider the last person on a ride who could potentially get lost especially in a large group. A person should be delegated to bring up the rear who has a note of the route. Alternatively at each turnoff the group should wait for the 'All here' from the delegated last person. Arthur reminded all ride leaders to take a hard copy of the emergency contact numbers or the numbers on their smart phones in case of emergency. *(An up-to-date list of email address and emergency contact numbers will be sent out over the next couple of weeks to all cyclists in the Cycle Group. Included will be the dates for the 2024 rides.)*

Business having concluded, the traditional ride out attracted 10 of us. The morning ride of 13 miles to Cheddar was delightful: across to Mark, through Chapel Allerton past Ashton windmill, Stoughton, Crickham, Clewer to The White Hart for lunch where we met Norman.



09/11/23 – ON THE WAY HOME IN THE RAIN

The afternoon however was the complete opposite. At Bradley Gate the rain started and continued with strong winds and it was very dark for all of us who returned to Sweets or who found an alternative way home. Steve W. however had the misfortune to jam his chain so he couldn't ride and had to be rescued. I hope you all arrived home safe and sound albeit wet and cold.

P.S. How many of you who were on the ride had their lights with them, after all it is late autumn and winter is around the corner?

Arthur

🚲 14TH DECEMBER 2023, PAUL W.

Winter Warmer: Wells to Pilton and Glastonbury

Despite the early drizzle, eleven riders departed from Lidl, suitably wrapped to brave the weather, and with the promise of later sun.

We travelled a well-known route along the Strawberry Line, and then via North Wooton ascending to Pilton for coffee and cake at The New Rooms. We were joined here by Graham, swelling our number to 12 for the ride onward through Pylle, a stiff climb up to East Pennard, and then westwards, gradually downhill and across the levels to Glastonbury, by which time the sun had made a welcome if belated arrival.

The Middlewick Farm Café provided a fine lunch, fueling us for the return to Wells. With both our intended route and the reserve flooded, we had to resort to a brief section of busy A39, before quieter roads again, past Fenny Castle. With various riders peeling off homeward, just five returned eventually to Wells, but all seemed to have enjoyed the opportunity for a mostly dry December outing of around 27 miles.



14/12/23 – MIDDLEWICK FARM, GLASTONBURY

Paul W.