

# News for April 2009

What's been happening in April ?

Three of our regulars are suffering at the moment from various complaints that are keeping them off the bike. Alan Bracey is waiting for a hip replacement (which may have happened by the time you see this), John Killick has developed a bout of pneumonia and Brian Trott has discomfort sitting on a saddle that is best not spelled out in too much detail. I sure that all will join me in wish them well soon.

Luckington lane - which goes past the Badminton horse trials course between Badminton and Luckington - is now open again with a nice new bridge at the Luckington end. There are signs up to say that it will be closed on Saturday 9th May while the horse trials are on (7th to 10th May).

**2nd April.** Two dozen seems to be our magic number as twenty left Rexam with John Tyler leading and picked up three more at the Severn Bridge for a trip via Mathern and Caerwent to Magor. The weather forecasters were predicting 16 degrees but although a few brave souls were in shorts, longs were much the popular choice as the mist kept temperatures down. After an excellent lunch at the Golden Lion the sun was out for the return trip along the cycle track by the Severn Tunnel railway junction, Portskewett and past St Pierre golf course.

**7th April.** The first of the 2009 longer Tuesday rides got under way from Congresbury when ten starters set off in cool but dry conditions for a tour around the Somerset Levels, lunch at Ashcott and back on the Strawberry Line. Despite some threatening clouds we only had a brief shower, although puddles showed that we had missed some heavy rain between Cheddar and Congresbury. Thanks to Ian Fulcher for leading when Brian Trott was unable to ride. See the Photo Gallery for some pictures.

**9th April.** Alex von Tutschek planned and led the first motor assisted Thursday ride of 2009, starting from Langport. Nine riders braved the wet weather for a trip taking in lunch at the excellent Greyhound at Staple Fitzpaine. I must mention Wayne Tasker who kindly transported John Bishop and John Turton plus their bikes - although they may not have realised beforehand that they would have to sit on the floor in the back of the van with no windows. Wayne was on his mountain bike tandem with teenage daughter Faye as stoker. What are the chances of having a puncture, then getting out your brand new tube to discover that it does not have a valve? Of course all the others had the wrong size tubes so it was out with the patches. By the end of the ride Fay was worn out so Wayne was doing the pedalling for both of them - keep smiling mate, you enjoyed it really.

**16th April.** Jane Chapman was the leader for thirteen riders from Ashton. In Long Ashton high street we picked up another three non-regulars and took the newish cycle path through Long Ashton coming out at Wild Country Lane - cutting out the busy traffic usually encountered along the High Street. Then we took an imaginative route of just under twenty miles staying fairly flat through Chelvey, Claverham, Wrington and Rickford before the one serious climb into Blagdon for lunch at the Queen Adelaide. About three dozen cyclists had their lunch there. Although it was fairly

bright and not cold there was not much sunshine before lunch. Then on the way home the sun put in an appearance at around two o'clock for us - fine for the area South of Bristol but apparently there were heavy showers to the North so luck was on our side.

**21st April.** John Killick had planned a 75 mile loop around Monmouthshire but was unable to ride on doctors orders so Bill Balchin took over the leader's role. Fortunately John provided good instructions as signposts are notoriously absent on some of the Monmouthshire countryside. Ten started from the Aust cycle track through St Briavels and Clearwell to Monmouth, then over rolling hills in bright sunshine and crisp visibility to Raglan garden centre for lunch. We parked our bikes against a building that reflected so much heat that both Den Harris and Dave Ashton had their computers cooked! Back through Bettws Newydd and Usk before another loop Northwards and a tough climb to Trellick and then a blast through Devauden and Itton where you could keep thirty mph on the clock for long stretches. Some pictures in the photo gallery.

**23rd April - St Georges Day.** The mid-April weather seems to have settled into a pattern of bright sunshine, blue skies but just a chill in the air that needs more than one layer. And today was just the same as Mike Chouings led out seventeen riders from Bitton on a twenty five mile route to the Queen Vic at Priddy taking in Saltford, Marksbury, Priston, Clutton and Hinton Blewitt before coming out half way up the big climb out of East Harptree. The extra few miles, a tardy start and hills meant that we did not arrive at the pub until about 12:45 which worked out well as the Bath contingent had already been served and the staff coped better with the staggered arrival. For the first time this year we sat outside to eat before the return trip down the Wellsway and through Chew Magna and Norton Malreward. See the photo gallery for some pictures. Den captured the trip on video using handheld camera, pole mounted camera and helmet cam - should be interesting viewing.

It was good to see both John Killick and Brian Trott out although neither rode with the group. John put in an appearance at the start and Brian turned up for lunch.

**30th April.** Rexam was the starting point on a damp Thursday for ten riders with Dave Ashton in the lead. As we rode along Swan Lane, Frampton Cotterell, Nibley Lane, Mapleridge Lane and up Horton Hill the rain was spitting and the roads wet but no running water. The rain eased off as we turned left into Hawksbury, across to Didmarton (on one of the roughest road surfaces around) and left to Leighterton and the Royal Oak. By the time the Bath riders plus a few others arrived we were about two dozen strong. The staff got the meals out quickly and you could see that the sun was trying to come out. But after leaving the pub the rain moved up a gear so it was a wet descent of Tresham, down Nind Lane to Kingswood and Wickwar as people split off for home.