

## News for June 2010

### Thursday 3rd June - report from Pete Campbell:

It was forecast to be the warmest day of the year so far (25 degrees predicted), and I think the temperature got that high by lunchtime. Jane Chapman led the ride, not via her usual tour of the mountains, but along this year's Get Gorgeous route (which ends with the climb of Cheddar Gorge, so is a sort of mountain tour). She invited two women riders from this year's event, who rode well, and didn't seem to be bothered by being seen out with a load of pensioners.

I hadn't realised how much dedicated cycle path exists between Bristol and Cheddar. We soon turned left off the main Long Ashton road, going through back streets, building sites and assorted badlands. Then back to the main road to Flax Bourton, the resurfaced cycle path by the railway with its new crop of weeds, then Backwell, Claverham and Yatton, and onto the Strawberry Line. Twelve riders started at Ashton, and by the time we reached the Lamb in Axbridge the group had grown to 20. There were at least another 15 at the pub, and around 20 civilians. The Lamb performed very well providing food for everyone quickly.

Up the gorge, Tony Conibear suffered a broken spoke but was able to remove it and carried on with a wheel that was not quite true but hopefully good enough to get home on.

Some riders decided the good weather needed celebrating with an afternoon tea stop - a good decision, I thought. So, passing through East Harptree, South and North Widcombe, we went to the Stables Tea Rooms at the New Manor Farm shop, near Chew Valley Lake. What a treat! A choice of at least six different home made cakes, teas, coffees, seats in the shade. We stoked ourselves up for the final ride home.

A meteorological note: the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre forecasts that this year will be the warmest ever recorded, so in a months time we may be longing for the cool day out to Axbridge.

[Click here for a map of the route from Ashton to Axbridge.](#)

**Thursday 10th June - report from Bill Balchin:** After a spell of warm weather the British Summer returned to normality with an overcast but dry day for our ride from Rexam to the Lammastide at Brookend. Fourteen assembled at the start with Dawn leading the way. The numbers soon increased by two when Jane arrived after being delayed by locking her bike as she stopped on the way but then having to return home for the lock key. A little later Arnold chased us down - I have not seen your note yet.

The problem with this journey is to make a decent length ride between two points so close together, but Dawn was up to the task taking us along the Old Gloucester Road to Tytherington, left and right up New Road and past Wyevale Garden Centre, then through Rockhampton. At Ham we took the left turn towards the old power station

before making a tour of Berkley and on to Brookend arriving about a quarter to twelve with twenty miles from Rexam. Great to see John Bishop back on his bike after suffering from pneumonia. Several people asked me how my trip to Poland went - well it didn't. Our flight was cancelled at the last minute because of the ash cloud so we spent a week climbing the hills of North Devon. We had lots of sunshine, unlike Poland where they had snow and floods so maybe the volcano did us a favour after all.



There were forty four cyclists and friends at the Lammastide eating and drinking, the most I have seen for some time. But the pub coped admirably, the first meals arriving within minutes, plenty of seating and a fine selection of local ales from Great Western Brewery, Wye Valley and Cottage Brewery. As we got ready to leave several of us admired Dennis from Bath's new limited edition Colnago. Black with gold fork legs, rear stays, lugs and handlebar tape. Eleven speed Campag, one piece carbon fibre aero handlebars - it cost more than my first house!

An unusually large group left the pub together and made their way back through Berkley, over the A38 by Applegates bus depot, through Wick and Tortworth before the splitting up for the homeward journey. Despite the lack of sun all day and a cool breeze - another excellent biking day out.

[Click here for a map of the route from Rexam to Brookend.](#)



**Tuesday 15th June - report from Bill Balchin:** This was the ride postponed from the previous week after Tony cut his hand and torrential showers were the order of the day. With a healed hand and a dry day forecast we were expecting great things - and so it turned out. The scenery around the Brecon Beacons can hold it's own with anywhere in the world, and it is almost on our doorstep.

The first leg took us along the route of a canal to Brecon for tea in the cathedral cafe. Gentle hills mainly with superb views. Sector 2 provided the longest climb of the day as we approached Builth Wells, at least there was a rip-snorting descent to follow - but what's this? Recent surface dressing on a 25% drop, no way am I going fast on this lot. Luckily it was only for a mile or so and we were able to enjoy the rest of the swoop into Builth for lunch at the Drovers cafe. Sector 3 provided another change of pace as we followed the river valley on quiet roads and cycle tracks, again with superb scenery to the Three Cocks garden centre for tea and cake. The final section

usually passes to the East of the Langors lake but Tony had found a less busy route to the West, courtesy of Pegman - the little yellow bloke on Google street-view.

Through Bwlch and back to the start this must be a contender for "ride of the year". No rain all day, no punctures, few potholes, great scenery plus the chance to visit Nelson cycles and stock up on cheap inner tubes, brake blocks and lube. The only downside - just five on the ride. Not that it worried us, but we would have liked more cyclists to enjoy such a great day out. A few pictures in the photo gallery.

**Thursday 17th June - report from Bill Balchin:** Twelve starters were all set to leave Mangotsfield at ten o'clock when John Upward rolled up to make thirteen. I am not superstitious but it was unlucky for John as by Coxgrove Hill his cassette worked loose and forced him to turn back. The rest continued on a route jointly devised by Martyn Hallett and Mike Chouings up Hinton Hill and then fairly flat through Burton to Yatton Keynell. Then right through Biddestone, over the A4 and then a Mike special through Westrop, Neston and Atworth all on back lanes before joining the main road almost in Bradford.



We arrived at the pub just after twelve thirty - the expected time for a thirty mile trip. The Canal Tavern had no problem coping with the official twelve plus another two dozen including Tony Tape, Dawn; Alan and John, and a few other groups. Plenty of seating both inside and out in the sunshine, my only problem was finding somewhere to stand to take a group photo - preferably without falling in the canal.

The homeward leg was the flattest possible route following the canal towpath into Bath then the railway path for Bristol. Although the Bath riders left Bradford separately they joined us again at Bathampton for a while. It was a leisurely return trip in the sunshine - you can't get much speed up along the towpath, just one of those days that you don't want to end. In fact several of us extended it by calling in to Bitton station for tea and cake - and met the Bath riders yet again. What a great day, some pictures in the gallery.

[Click here for a map of the route from Mangotsfield station to Bradford on Avon.](#)

**Tuesday 22nd June - report from Bill Balchin:** Another Tuesday, another bright sunny day and again just five riders for one of our longer excursions. Maybe the start at Upton on Severn was too far, although from junction 14 of the M5 (Falfield) it was

forty miles in forty five minutes. Most of us got there half an hour early expecting a longer journey.



John Upward lead us towards those big hills and soon we were on the slopes entering Great Malvern for an early coffee. In bright sunshine we cycled on gently rolling, quiet lanes gradually working our way round the Malvern Hills in an anti-clockwise direction. There are plenty of fruit farms to see and several of the strange structures shown in the photo (no not the people). I believe they are old ice cream factories and were used to store the cones - you may know better. On to the quaint town of Ledbury with its main street full of

black and white buildings leaning at alarming angles, John found us an excellent pub for lunch serving home made pies and a nice pint of Wye Valley ale.

After lunch the temperature had gone up but not enough to be uncomfortable as we negotiated Dymock and Newent, an afternoon cup of tea (or bottle of beer) in Staunton garden centre and back to Upton by half past four to complete sixty miles of very pleasant cycling. Upton on Severn is the start for the planned Thursday motorised ride on 15th July although on a completely different, shorter route.



**Thursday 24th June - report from Bill Balchin:** Has somebody been making deals with the devil? England have qualified for the knock-out stage of the world cup, the extra tax on cider has been scrapped and we had another warm dry Thursday for cycling. Brian Trott took another seven of from Ashton Gate out through Backwell and over the moors through Kingston Seymour and Clevedon with barely a hill to climb. On such a nice day I wondered if the sea would be blue, but no, brown as usual - but I did see it blue once, honest. A bit of climbing got us through Clevedon and the horrible rough road surface to Walton in Gordano has been resurfaced, then the climb along the coast road and a flying descent (where John Bishop claimed to have been held up by a car) and we arrived at the Windmill for lunch just before noon.

That was the ideal time as it gets so busy just after twelve. Normally we take over at the lunch stops but there must have been about a hundred customers altogether with

cyclists and friends only a small proportion. The Windmill was having a lot of building work done the last time we were there and it seems just about finished now providing more seating overlooking the estuary on two floors both inside and out. Plenty of room for everybody and no delays waiting for meals. Despite being geared up for food the ale has not been neglected with plenty of choice including Butcombe and RCH. I didn't notice what the cider was but both Martyn and Mike managed a couple - Mike told me later on the way home that it had affected his handlebars!

Today would have been ideal to extend the day with a stop at the buttery in Bristol docks - but it is closed as a result of an arson attack. Apparently the water boiler exploded during the fire and helped put it out. There was a big split up for home at Portbury - I managed to use most of the Avon cycleway after crossing the M5 bridge then taking the cycle track past the flats at Lawrence Weston and turning left into Kings Weston Lane over the M5 and M49. If you then turn right past the amenity centre you can carry your bike for a couple of yards through a gap next to a gate and get onto Lawrence Weston Road which has a big gap where the bridge over the M5 has been removed. Then a lovely trip through Hallen and Easter Compton.

[Click here for a map of the route from Ashton to Portishead.](#)