

Wessex Region Ride Report January 2014

The gales and rain of recent weeks stopped just in time for Wessex's first ride of 2014. Led by David and Alison Martin, the group of four tandems and two solos left Romsey at 10am in bright sunshine and meandered through the outskirts of the town then via various villages onto the Sarum Road into Winchester. By now we were more than "warmed up" as Sarum Road in particular provides plenty of ups and downs. Then we entered the southern outskirts of Winchester and enjoyed a coffee stop at Hilliers garden centre, opposite the hospital (or beside the jail depending on one's choice of landmark!). Then steeply down to enter the cathedral grounds for a short walk along the front, then back on wheels through the back streets to get to the new cycle path beside the River Itchen which led us up onto a viaduct path and a short stop for the obligatory photo.

Soon we passed through the village of Shawford to Twyford, where we noted a coffee shop which Lesley told us is good. But we tore ourselves away and headed via Colden Common and past Brambridge garden centre. Here the small and narrow bridge which carries the road over the River Itchen must have taken some punishment in the recent floods. At the end of Kiln Lane we said goodbye to Peter who headed back home to Winchester and we continued to the top of Otterbourne Hill where we declared a lunch stop by a bench in the sun. We did not delay there however as despite the sun, a slight breeze took the edge off our comfort. Then we crossed the M3 into Chandlers Ford where we took various suburban roads before a brief comfort stop and then used some cycle paths to return via North Baddesley and back to Romsey, arriving just before 2:30pm. 27 miles done in bright sunshine, often a bit too bright and low for easy visibility!

Top marks to Peter Hawker for starting his day by cycling to Romsey from Winchester, and to Dave and Anne Friend for adding at least 10 miles to their day by cycling from and to Chandler's Ford. And thanks to David and Alison for some neat route planning.

