

## Worcester and Malvern CTC Annual Report 2017

The Welcome description of this member group on our website is a perfect summary of what we are about:

“We are a friendly bunch and don't leave anyone behind! All cyclists are welcome on our rides. We try to use the quieter lanes rather than the busier roads. Remember it's not how quick you ride, it's all about enjoying it”.

We are a traditional touring club and our activities across the year reflect that. This was highlighted when the South Worcestershire CTC scrapbook 1974-94 came to light recently and created much interest (it is now available on our website). The type of rides and destinations then are strikingly similar to nowadays and we also still visit the same pubs on Wednesday rides! Ride Leaders were actively sought in 1977, just like 2017.

We are lucky to be surrounded by beautiful and varied countryside, places to visit, friendly cafes and pubs, and quieter lanes – tempered as ever by potholes and inconsiderate motorists.

We have had rides on just about every Saturday (and occasional Sundays), with length varying typically from 30 to 60 miles (no 100-milers this year). Also sociable rides on alternate Tuesdays, meeting at a cafe and riding to lunch. Wednesday evening rides have comprised both joint and separate Malvern and Worcester destinations (it's said that Malvern won't cross the Severn and Worcester will only go where the lights of the Wychbold transmitter can be seen). There have also been several popular weekends away, with Shropshire, Yorkshire and Wales being favourite destinations. Numbers on rides have been fairly consistent – around 10 on Saturdays, 12 on Wednesdays and 15+ on Tuesdays – but we remain dependent on ride leaders coming forward and are grateful to our Co-ordinators (Martin Staines – Saturdays; Gez Hoare/Graham Nevett - Wednesdays; and Edward Shirley – Tuesdays) for encouraging and cajoling members. Martin Staines is now stepping down, with our grateful thanks for his work this year. The Saturday Co-ordinator is arguably the most critical role in the group.

Some other snippets from the year:

- Seven of our regular riders are women and five have led or co-led rides
- The club jerseys we had printed last year are popular and seen on all the rides, and we may need to order some more
- Some of the Sunday rides have joined with Kidderminster CTC

We also enjoy regular social activities arranged by Steve Gardiner, which are popular and well-attended. These have included faggots & peas; 2 Barbecues (one dry, one wet); annual Skittles match against Kidderminster CTC (we came second); three pubs and a curry; and a Christmas Do (on a Father Ted theme; special mention of Richard Davies whose outfit was so realistic that one regular at the Fox though he was a genuine vicar!). During the winter months there have been slide shows arranged by Graham Nevett on alternate Friday evenings. I am always impressed by the high quality of photographs and interesting locations presented in these shows.

Lyndon Bracewell continues to be active on the campaigning front, keeping a watchful eye on the County Council and especially the planned cycle bridge over the upgraded link road. Lyndon also publishes the PushBike! website, which lists details of all cycling activities in Worcestershire.

Our activities are all co-ordinated and published only on our excellent website, using Google Calendar and managed by Gez Hoare. We also have a Facebook site, great for publishing photographs from rides as well as some gentle banter. One welcome development during the year has been a short write-up of some rides on Facebook, forming an adjunct to any photographs and Strava recordings of popular routes. They have added serendipitous observations from rides such as: a glorious sunset, a visit to a rock star's grave or seeing Little Owls perched on a telephone post. I think taken together, these capture the fundamental ethos of what our Cyclists' Touring Club is about. Facebook is now our club scrapbook.

A highlight of the year was the Eddie Bray memorial ride in September, when 40 riders met up for a gentle spin round the lanes, followed by a cyclists' tea provided by the lovely ladies of the Upton Hot Peppers WI. No-one went home hungry, many with cake in a goody bag. We hope to repeat this event in future.

Worcester and Malvern CTC is a Member Group of Cycling UK. The ongoing changes at Cycling UK have not affected us greatly, and we are lucky that Dan Howard – Chair of the Board of Trustees – is a staunch member of Kidderminster CTC and has our interests at heart.

Thanks are due to all the Committee, whose hard work and dedication has kept the pedals turning for the group. Also thanks to the ride leaders for coming forward willingly.

Finally and looking to the future, here are some challenges that we might care to ponder:

- Encouraging more ride leaders to offer rides, in good time for the plan
- We have 498 members allocated to our group by Cycling UK based on postcodes - an increase on last year - but only about 50 of these ever come on rides. How do we encourage the others to come out with us?
- Should we engage more with the other cycling groups in our area, perhaps under the Cycling UK umbrella?
- Our type of CTC rides perhaps tend to appeal to the more 'seasoned' cyclists. If we want to attract new blood and new ride leaders in the future, do we have to compromise the very nature of our type of rides?

John Bennett  
Secretary