

Chair's Report 2023 – 2024

This year has been a year of mixed success and a few areas of concern.

The technological changes we've made make it easier for ride leaders to manage rides and for committee meetings to be held online. The monthly Zoom meetings every first Tuesday continue and are a good way for occasional riders to keep in touch. The various signal and WhatsApp groups make communications easier and enable changes of arrangements to be communicated rapidly. The forum has been discontinued due to lack of activity - to keep it on would have given casual users of the website that the club is somewhat lacking in dynamism. We have joined Regent's Park Cyclists which promotes responsible cycling in the Park and represents the interests of 5000 cyclists. I am hoping that this group may provide reinforcements to the ranks of 3 & 4* riders.

The injury list is too long and serious for comfort. Virginia Knox is slowly recovering from a broken hip having been hit by a car. Inez Thorn managed to break her collar bone and some ribs in a fall. Simon Slater, John Wray and yours truly managed a hat trick of broken wrists. All happily recovered.

The Club has racked up some impressive statistics. A total of 324 rides were offered attended by 1926 riders. The top attender was (surprise) Colin Hartridge-Price who managed 97 rides. Top woman was Inez Thorn who managed 55, a very impressive total given that she was sidelined for 2 months. The figures do reveal however some areas of concern.

The 1* group are in danger of disappearing due to the lack of leaders and riders. The number of rides offered has dwindled to a mere 18, and the number of riders averages around 4 per ride with a maximum of 8. There is no WhatsApp or Signal group for this group and such few rides that are posted rarely provide a map and profile details all of which would make the 1* offering more attractive to newcomers. Linus Rees has stood down as ride coordinator, and, at the time of writing no one has volunteered to take on the role.

The 2* groups by contrast are thriving and offer both weekend and midweek rides. Electric bikes are increasingly a feature of this group and at least one regular 1* rider has ridden enjoyably with assistance in this group. There have been 51 Sunday rides attended on average by 10 riders with a maximum of 19. These rides are frequently oversubscribed, and there is scope for more than one ride to be run at weekends. The midweek groups attract healthy numbers averaging just under 6 for each day and have increasingly ventured further

afield rather than confining themselves close to London as in years prior. The groups, especially the weekenders are diverse in terms of both ability and riders with a lively social network.

The 3* section has seen a reduction in the numbers attending and has been hit by a shortage of ride leaders. Nonetheless 51 rides were offered attended by around 6 per ride with a maximum of 12. The Regent's Park circuits continue to be popular, especially in summer. Again, there's a well used WhatsApp group to facilitate communication.

The 4* section caters for a smaller number of riders but attracts a loyal and enthusiastic following, aided by a particularly lively Signal group. 47 rides were offered with an average of just over 4 riders attending with a maximum of 9. The Zwift group (mainly 4* riders) continues to cycle enthusiastically without moving anywhere but getting very fit in the process!

The tours offered have been very successful, due in no small measure to Jenny Hung who has coordinated 3 tours this year which have attracted 27 riders in total with a maximum of 14. Interest in tours has increased dramatically resulting in the upcoming Borders tour being filled in days with a waiting list.

I would like to thank all the Committee members who have helped to steer the club over the last year and I'm pleased that all but two are continuing next year. Thanks also to the retiring members, Linus Rees and Christine Johnson for their years of service.

Finally a big thank you to the ride coordinators, Julia Moye, David Kurtz, Richard Jaggard and Nick Bloom for their sterling efforts over the year, and to everyone who has led a ride in the last year. We really need ride leaders – without them we won't have a club.

Keep it rubber side down and see you on the road.

Paul Foster

Chair.