

Saturday, August 8, 2009

Left Behind at Ashwell and a ride to The Orchard at Granchester



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This weekend we were staying at Ashwell in Hertfordshire with relations, and as usual had our bikes with us - on this occasion the Airnimals. We had heard about the Ashwell Cycling Club from Yvonne's sister so decided to look them up, and after reading their website turned up at 9.00am (Wheel Easy please note, yes 9.00am!) to join the "club ride".

The first thing we noted was that for a village they mustered 20 riders almost all in the club kit. The second, and this should have rung some warning bells, was that the machinery was all mighty impressive. Shall we say Boneshakers would have been hard pressed to put together a fleet of exotic carbon fibre bikes to match this turnout. We were made very welcome and off we set, and clearly this was not a Wheel Easy pace of any sort. After 3 miles we decided discretion was the better part of valour and after a few pleasantries told them to leave us to a gentle Wheel Easy pace jaunt.

So the first Wheel Easy tradition to follow was coffee, and we chose The Orchard at Granchester, just outside Cambridge. This is famous for being frequented by the Granchester Group, including Rupert Brooke, E M Forster, Virginia Woolf, Bertrand Russell, Maynard Keynes, etc, etc.. The Orchard is the inspiration for Brookes poem "The Old Vicarage, Granchester" and the final lines –

Stands the church clock at ten to three,
And is there honey still for tea?
Next door live Jeffrey and Mary Archer but they just lower the tone!

So after sitting in the Orchard and enjoying super scones and coffee we set off north for a ride through the fields and lanes of North Cambridgeshire. We made a stop at the US War Memorial and the lines of crosses and stars were quite sobering on a sunny afternoon.

After 3 rides in the last week, all including big hills in North Yorkshire and the Cotswolds, the boring flat lanes were a delight. A pub lunch was enjoyed in the sunshine, and after 62 miles we returned home for Yvonne's Sister's Birthday Party. A great day!
Martin W

