

Stranded in sunny climes

I was one of the early members of Wheel Easy back in 2006 – at the 10 year WE anniversary dinner it was read out that I was one of the participants on the/a first ride.

Even though I live in Harrogate I generally ride with Ripon CC, as I have been a member there since 2001, but over the years I have had a great many enjoyable rides with WE. I particularly enjoyed a couple of Away Day rides (a great concept) in 2019 and I do the Bridlington ride whenever I can.

I retired in April 2013 and following that we bought a house in Florida, near Sarasota on the Gulf Coast. My wife, Laura, is an American citizen and we now spend most of each winter (October through March/April) in Florida to escape the UK winter. It's a fabulous climate and it's rare that I even have to wear a base layer under my cycling top. I also run so much better in the warm weather and have started winning age group (and below!) 5k's. I alternate my exercise with cycling one day and running the next etc.

The house that we bought has a back gate onto an old tree lined railway line that has been made into a tarmac surfaced cycling/running/skating/walking trail, so most of the time I run and cycle on that. The trail is 12 feet wide so plenty of room for everyone. I can do a 30 mile ride on this trail without any vehicle traffic, and just two minor roads to cross (the others are crossed with bridges) – very flat of course, but that's Florida - 130 feet of total ascent over 30 miles, and that's the bridges. To offset the flatness is the wind – most days there is a strong headwind one way or the other, and no hiding from that. We are also 2 miles along the trail from a State Park, so once a week I run there on the grass pathways.

The picture shows me standing in front of our pool in my Wheel Easy top before going on a ride on 1st May – lovely day, little wind and 28c.

We have just spent a month in East Texas sorting out new care arrangements for Laura's 90 year old mother. I took a bike with me and found some quiet country roads with some hills which made a change from flat Florida, but the weather

there in April is pretty poor – lots of rain and very cold at times. On the 1,100 mile drive back on 25/26th April we filled up in Alabama at \$1.09 a US gallon – at current exchange rates that equates to about 23p a litre.

In mid January this year I could see what was going to happen with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic (isolate, travel restrictions etc.) and we had the choice of coming back to the UK (I had a ticket for February) or we could stay put and I could apply for a Green Card which will give me the right to reside in the USA both now and “permanently” if I want to. With an American spouse the Green Card process can take 9 to 12 months (much longer otherwise), and for much of which you cannot leave the USA. Thus it seemed sensible to overlap this process with the isolate/travel restrictions – hence the fact that I am currently “**Stranded in sunny climes**”.

Congratulations to Wheel Easy on 14 years, and to all those that work so hard to make the club so successful. Let’s hope that group riding can start again soon – in both Europe and the USA.

In the meantime, here is a study by Belgian/Dutch scientists about how close (or not!) you should be when running and cycling.

<https://medium.com/@jurgenthoele/belgian-dutch-study-why-in-times-of-covid-19-you-can-not-walk-run-bike-close-to-each-other-a5df19c77d08>.

A key extract from the above:

*On the basis of these results the scientist advises that for walking the distance of people moving in the same direction in one line should be at least 4–5 meters, for running and slow biking it should be 10 meters and for hard biking at least 20 meters. **[yes, that’s circa 60 feet!]***

Stay safe everyone.

Mike Bissell