

Ashby Amblers – Report for 2022-23

The Ashby Amblers is the adopted title of the Ashby St Mary cycling group initially set up in 2014 when 'Cycling For Fun' was introduced. The current title seemed highly appropriate given the style and level of riding the participants of the group undertake.

Following the pandemic and other circumstances it wasn't until around Easter of 2022 that cycling enthusiasts from Ashby and Thurton were invited to signify their interest in meeting as a group. Very soon a plentiful 'peleton' of cyclists was formed which undertook rides of varying distances and routes, meeting in all temperatures, every Tuesday morning at 0930 opposite the Thurton George & Dragon public house.

From an initial 8 cyclists from the two villages, the Ashby Ambler numbers have gradually increased to 17 attracting a mix of ladies and men. Due to availability, usually 7 - 10 cyclists take part in the Ambler's rides. Although the majority are from Ashby and Thurton, our group now boasts enthusiastic cyclists from Heckingham, Thurlton, Norton Subcourse and even Norwich. The 29 varied routes so far cycled have taken the Amblers from Thurton to Reedham, Beccles, Bungay, Shotesham, Whitlingham, Surlingham and Norwich as well as through all the villages inbetween, totalling in 12 months, over 1000 miles so far.

It must be said a couple of Amblers needed convincing to take part as they were under the misapprehension that they 'wouldn't be able to keep up' or they 'couldn't possibly ride as far as 20 miles'. They are now the most enthusiastic members of our group! That demonstrates all personal standards are catered for – our rides are as gentle as the slowest rider, hence 'ambling' features in the group title.

The most noticeable aspect of the Ashby Amblers is the level of camaraderie that has gradually established itself within the group. Cycling while chatting to fellow riders is a great way to bond with others while achieving useful exercise. It is also the perfect way to cycle more miles than one ever thought possible! One important aspect of Ambler rides is that without fail the group enjoys a relaxing refreshment stop en route at any one of currently sixteen establishments we visit. There would likely be a riot if the traditional refreshment break was not included! It's yet more exercise working off coffee and cake or tea and a sausage roll.

The Ashby Amblers keep in touch with each other, both socially and with updates confirming upcoming rides via its dedicated WhatsApp group. The system works exceptionally well. Inclement or icy weather has fortunately only cost one cancelled ride in the year since the Amblers was formed.

Every level of cycling ability is catered for, as is every form of bicycle, be it old, modern, electric or tandem – between them, the Ambler riders have all of these. The Amblers would welcome more cyclists supporting their community group – its activities provide good exercise, friendship and most of all, it's fun. Test us and see. Nobody who has joined the group has yet to drop out so it must be doing something right! Early evening rides in the summer to accommodate a wider spectrum of cyclists are under consideration.

To find out more details, or just for a friendly chat about the Ashby Amblers, contact Mark on 07796 528329 - or be at our meeting point outside the Thurton George & Dragon next Tuesday. It's to be hoped 2023-24 is as progressive as the last twelve months has been. This brings to an end the first year's report on behalf of the Ashby Ambler's cycling group.