

## Fathers Day in Mill Hill

Fathers Day! The pubs will be full of lucky Dads being treated by their grateful offspring, leaving no room for loiterers in smelly Lycra, who haven't even booked. Clever Loiterer leaders know this and head instead for venues untroubled by such trade, the London Equestrian School at Frith Manor, Mill Hill. Here loiterers can expect to be welcomed by a host of young ladies clad in tight jodhpurs, to whom anyone who doesn't smell of horse is a breath of fresh air.

We meet a new recruit, Stephen, who joins us on Montague Street.

Arriving at the gates of Ickenham Marsh there are doubts.

"We don't go over there, it's a marsh".

"Listen matey, a swamp is flooded all year round, a marsh however, for only part of the year, and now the mud is like concrete. What's more, this track was built to give access to the airfield for fire engines and crash tenders, we will be fine, trust me". We proceed, enjoying the lush greenery, birdsong and general natural tranquility.

"Fire engine up" yells a mischievous tail end Charlie.

Leaving Morrison's at Hatch End.

"So its Mill Hill, then Staples Corner and Hangar Lane is it"? Older, wiser loiterers smile, wave and head west. We head east.

It's a steep climb up Noel Redding.

Idiot leader takes wrong turn at Wood Lane substituting 4 miles of blissful open country with 2 miles of nose to tail traffic. Loiterers smile, unconvincingly.

At Totterheels and Whetfoot we turn south into Doris Valley Greenway. Sorry Doris!

We arrive triumphantly at Lullington Garth, so silly a name I haven't even needed to make it up. We are welcomed at the London Equestrian School by a beaming..... eastern European bloke!

There is no finer feeling than pedaling along a network of elevated cycle paths gazing down at the gridlocked traffic below. Such was our passage at Staples Corner.

We turned into Doris Hill Lane. Sorry again Doris! Then into Gladstone Park, then we were in London proper, Monopoly board territory. I took a chance, it said;

"you have taken a wrong turning, return to go!"

"I always wondered what was down this street". I said, laughing heartily to the scowling loiterers. I took another chance, wrong turning again, go back three spaces.

"I was sure this junction had traffic lights". I pleaded, noting a loiterer tapping his fingers on a brake lever, menacingly. "Does anyone know this area?" I asked desperately.

"I come here often," said tail end Charlie, helpfully, "but I never come up above ground".

At 4:20 sharp we arrived at the Brentham club for afternoon tea. The sign reads Sunday opening 10:00 till 4:00.

"That's funny", I quipped, "last time I did this ride we arrived at 4:15 and it was closed then as well." Loiterers screamed with laughter. Every cloud, as they say: the new café in Pitshanger park was excellent and opens until 6:00. Two tills: pay for hot drinks on the left, cold drinks and ice creams on the right??

Dispersal commenced at Northala Park.

Moral of the story:

Don't think that because you found your way round a route in 2013 you can do it again in 2015. Changing names to silly ones to make them easier to remember doesn't work.