

New Forest Family Cycling Week 2025: Cycling, Sunshine and Scrapes.

Next year's dates are Friday 24th July - Saturday 1st August.



As reluctant as I am to think about the summer holidays disappearing into the distance like a teenager on a climb, it's the perfect moment to look back and celebrate the special times we had, again this year, during the New Forest Family Cycling Week. A week of sunshine (don't mention the "showers"), ponies, paddling, and the kind of adventure only a cycling rally can deliver. Let's be honest; none of us really want to think about the summer ending, so instead we'll relive the rides, games, camping, laughter, and the dancing. This rally really does have something for everyone, whether you're four or ninety-four.

The cycling was as varied as ever, and even a lorry stuck under a bridge couldn't stop the rides. Some of the keener legs began with a trip to Lymington parkrun, while others had a more sedate start to their week with the local market, rides into the forest, or a spot of armchair rugby in the pub. Some of our younger (and young at heart) riders had a ball at Brockenhurst, with plenty of paddling and tree-climbing and



Andrew's epic Isle of Wight adventures stretched the stamina of the bold. For many it just wouldn't be Cycling Week without crabbing, cake and a pilgrimage to Annie's Tea Room. Along the way we spotted New Forest ponies, donkeys and deer, with regular stops for ice cream ensuring no one ran out of energy - or excuses for sticky smiles. Alastair, true to form, reminded us that "getting lost is half the fun", while the likes of Andrew and Jason braved ford at Donkey Bottom. I'm only slightly disappointed no one got wet this year!



Not everyone was on two wheels, of course. The walking contingent didn't let cycling-related injuries hold them back; pedestrian adventures included trips to Annie's, Hurst Castle, and the nature reserve adjacent to the campsite, proving there's plenty to do for everyone.



Evenings were just as busy, thanks to volunteers stepping up to arrange activities throughout the week. The Sunday barn dance had all ages swinging and spinning, with Bridie, Holly and Tessa keeping everyone fuelled and refreshed. When the meek wondered if the quiz might be rained off Sharon suggested, "waterproof pens and paper?" But Becky, our quizmaster, was not easily put off and the rain was soon long-forgotten like much of our general

knowledge. The quiz itself was fiercely competitive (teams of teens, all-adult squads and mixed-age groups locked horns in a battle of wits) and full of surprises. Who knew that lycra-clad men of a certain age knew so much about the Spice Girls?

The children's time trials were a highlight as usual and the younger generation threw themselves into the races with gusto. The adults had their own "wine" version, suggesting that age doesn't have the same impact on balance and coordination as it does on a good bottle. The limbo returned to great acclaim, with lots of fun had by rally goers and children from across the campsite.



The ghost walk became something else entirely when a thunderstorm rolled in. Huge thanks to Phil B, who didn't just roll with it but turned the storm into the perfect spooky backdrop, with added magic. Who needs a haunted castle when the sky provides the drama and the atmosphere for you?

Of course, the campsite itself deserves a special mention. Hurst View welcomed us with open arms for the third time this year, from friendly staff and excellent facilities to nightly bat sightings, and a truly relaxed, family-friendly vibe. The closing night BBQ was the perfect way to wrap up the week: drinks flowing, food sizzling, marshmallows toasting, and enough noise and laughter to let the rest of the campsite know we'd had a good time.



The Monday night AGM was animated as ever; lots of interesting contributions, and a good number of people prepared to roll up their sleeves to make things happen. Clara stepped forward as our new Youth Ambassador, a brilliant addition to the team and a great sign that the next generation is taking ownership of the rally's future. Minutes from the AGM are now on the website and please help us keep our records straight by completing this year's attendance spreadsheet, if you haven't already.

We had sunshine, we had showers, and we had plenty of laughs. Some days needed raincoats, most sunscreen, often both at the same time. The New Forest Family Cycling Week once again proved it has something for everyone; leisurely pedals, faster rides for the keen, adventures, games, fun and excellent company.



Here's to the team spirit that makes it all happen - and to doing it all again next year. **Next year's dates are Friday 24th July - Saturday 1st August.** Put it in your diary now, don't forget your bike, your bucket and spade, your sun hat... and your sense of adventure.

Hope to see you next year. All the best,

Becca

Secretary