

Last Saturday's Surestart ride

Three people weren't really thinking straight when Darren asked for volunteers to help on a Saturday morning with a Surestart group of dads and children and a fourth person made the mistake of turning up "to see how it was going" and was unable to sneak away, but Roy, Denis and Elaine were really glad Alan did, especially as Darren was "refereeing" somewhere else!

Three bike trailers and three carriers were attached to the appropriate bikes with some difficulty, and six dads and about forty children (well maybe twelve!) were helmeted up for a spin around the Three Sisters.

Things took a bit longer than usual as one very little lad didn't want to wear a helmet and one small girl wanted to ride an adult bike, but we "coaxed" them and set off in some style.

The trailers had to be carried bodily across some of the "obstacles", and one bike burst its derailleurs quite early on, but Denis rode rapidly back to do a swap.

We managed to get everyone safely and rapidly across the road to Viridor (leader training!) but an incident caused a holdup, when Little Lad managed to get his leg free from the carrier strap and stick it in the rear wheel of his dad's bike - and we thought he could cry when he didn't want to wear his helmet!

Another little girl, who had only learnt to ride a few days before, got distracted and took a flyer, scraping her palms quite badly. You can't spit on your hanky to mop up someone else's child these days but she soon recovered with the loan of Elaine's mittens.

We made it safely back to the pod and Little Lad redeemed himself by gathering up all the helmets and bringing them to the pod. (He was about 18 months old!)

All in all it had been fun, we had all used our cycling and child psychology/grandparenting skills to the maximum, and the Surestart lady sent us a very nice thank you - she was grateful there had been so many of us to make it go so smoothly - not so grateful as we were for each other! The dads and children seemed to have enjoyed it too, though I can imagine a few mums saying "how did you get them in such a state?" when they got home, but that's what going out with Dad is all about, isn't it?