

U3A Bike Rides Putney and Fulham Palace Tuesday 9th September 2025

We could not have asked for a better day as we met at Brockwell Lido, and particularly because we were to take part in a photoshoot....

By way of explanation, a few weeks previously D&D u3a had contacted me to say that they would like to arrange for a photographer to come to take photos and videos of the group, for use in the new website. And so, by appointment Juliet Barclay arrived to take photos.

Juliet then arranged us in various configuration, all the front wheels turned to the correct angle; group members in conversation; and then videos of us cycling up and down the path. The results were so professional, as this photo shows!



That completed, we set off on a familiar route to Clapham Common and Wandsworth Common. We tried a variation of the route (to avoid busy Ram Street) down the footpath beside Trinity Road. At East Hill, A205, we paused as a police cavalcade swept past, followed by Prince William and others in their big limousines. Then it was on via Wandsworth Station and so to the Thames Path.

We stopped at Putney Pantry at St Mary's Church, Putney, to find it almost empty; plenty of room for the group of 12. We welcomed Eunice on her first ride with us, and also husband John, and also Eileen. The first-time visitors of the group to the Pantry enjoyed this coffee venue.

The church itself has an interesting history. St. Mary's Church (full title, the Church of St. Mary the Virgin), Putney has been a centre of Christian worship on this site from at least the 13th century. In 1647, during the English Civil War, the church was the site of the Putney Debates on the English constitution. One of our group members, Martin, has spoken of an ancestor who was a member of "the Levellers" and who took part in the debates. The church has been Grade II* listed since 1955.





The crossing at the south side of Putney Bridge needed care but we were then on to a bus lane across the bridge, and then turned into Bishops Park. Cycles were secured to railings and we proceed on foot through the gardens and past the Victorian greenhouses where volunteers were busy at work.



We entered the Tudor courtyard of historic Fulham Palace, the home to Bishop of London for 1,400 years, until 1973) and set out to explore the Great Hall and the Chapel, then on to the sunny patio, for a leisurely lunch....and more chattering!



Leaving Bishops Park, we followed national cycle route 4 to Chelsea Harbour, to Lots Road and past the splendid newly-restored power station before joining the cycle route along the Embankment. We crossed Albert Bridge and into Battersea Park before cycling back to Brockwell Lido.

Riders; Caroline Strallen. David Rosenfeld. Eileen Hogan, Eunice Zeffertt Irene Skiadopoulou. John Clements. John Zeffertt, Julie Stent., Mark Stones. Mary Burke. Patrick Mulhern. Sally Willcock.

Reference:

<https://www.fulhampalace.org/>

Ride leaders: John and Mary

Report and photos by John, 11th September 2025

Notes:**Fulham Palace**

As the home of 120 Bishops of London over 1,300 years, Fulham Palace embodies their power, wealth and passions. The look of the Palace has changed dramatically over time as each Bishop made alterations to suit their own taste, commissioning leading architects and landscape designers to remodel the house and create spectacular gardens.

Fulham Palace was the residence of the Bishop of London until 1973. It was once one of the most powerful positions in the country and the different Bishops have played a major role in shaping British history, being involved in many important national and international events — from signing the Magna Carta to performing coronations and overseeing the church's activities in the British colonies.