



Welcome

Closed. Ah! Not the best café stop, then. We'd arrived with great expectations of warmth and hot drinks. It was a cold, grey Sunday in February, with a breeze that bit and roads awash with muddy puddles. The café, we knew, had good coffee and a great selection of home-made cakes. When it was open. Which it wasn't.

As ride leader, this was my fault. You're supposed to know. The rides I've led over the years have generally gone pretty well. People have been happy. I've never lost anyone. I'm a decent roadside mechanic, an outdoor first aider (lapsed, come to think of it) and a qualified Trail Leader. My local route knowledge is good enough. If I need to improvise, I've got navigation apps on my phone.

Improvisation was called for. "Sorry. There's another café five miles away. We'll go there." Only that wasn't merely closed: it had shut down some time over the winter. For good.

"There's another just over a mile away," I said, less confidently. But it was open. It was warm. We could relax.

The moral of the story? Don't assume. That goes for everyone on a group ride, of course, because we depend on each other to have good time. Don't carelessly assume you brought your phone/water bottle/energy bar/rain jacket/correct shoes. All this is simply more important if you're the ride leader.

I don't want to make ride leading sound like a military campaign. It's not. It's good fun. But it's definitely worth knowing not just where the café is but whether it will, in fact, be open...

DAN JOYCE
Editor

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On the cover
Riding the Drauradweg, outside Lind im Drautal, Austria.
By Beatrice Searle

Top to bottom: Steve Behr, Robert Tomlin, Beatrice Searle, Andy Taylor

we are cycling UK

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