

## Any wheel in a storm

OK, it wasn't really a storm, but the roads were wet enough from last-night's rain that it was time to get the rain bike out of the garage, with its fenders, wider all-weather non-slip tires and cheaper wheels that I don't mind so much about grinding into the ground from brake wear. It's simply nowhere near as fun or efficient to ride as my Madone, but it's a lot more fun riding in the muck than sitting at home thinking about riding in the muck.

Just a few of us out there this morning; myself, John, Karen and George. Unfortunately for me, all three are stronger than I am on Kings, causing me to lose contact just about three quarters of the way up the climb, but never more than half a corner behind. Still, despite having to fight my way up the hill on tires that are anything but responsive (if you don't think tires can completely change the personality of your bike, think again!), I did get up in just under 30 minutes, definitely faster than I thought I'd be doing. Oh, right, I'll blame my rain bike for one other thing- Flinstone bearings. It's making an awful racket from both the crankset and the rear wheel, undoubtedly caused by bearings that are no longer round.

That's the beauty of a true rain bike. You replace things when they're destroyed, rather than worrying about something not working quite right. But- please, please, PLEASE don't treat your nice bike like that!!! One ride in the rain, just one, can cause enough damage to require a couple of hours of cleaning and continued riding in the rain will require far more frequent replacement of tires, brake pads and even wheels. If you've got a nice road bike that you place value in having run properly with good shifting & brakes, get a second bike for rain.

Getting back to the ride, I did start feeling better as it went on, becoming increasingly confident I could hold onto whatever wheel was in front of me, although I didn't have a choice in wheels as we headed west towards Old LaHonda, since both John and Karen had to get early and cut the ride short. Thankfully George was in a merciful mood today!