

Turned up at Trencherfield car park and found Denis waiting. Explained he was expecting his buddy Paul, no not the clumsy one, a former work colleague, meeting him at Wigan Pier so promptly vanished down the canal towpath to get him. In the meantime I receive a txt message from Ray and Joyce explaining they had been on Harold's ride in the morning but unfortunately had got soaked, sub-plot being they wouldn't be able to make the 2.00pm ride, at least they kindly let me know.

Just then a guy I know from the Bocket but only know him as Jim appears from the towpath, (this could get confusing), and tells me he has ridden from Plank Lane having just ridden with Harold and about a dozen or so other riders.

Denis with Paul in tow returns and off we set. Jim explains that he will come with us to Haigh Hall but will need to get home sooner rather than later in order to acquire some 'brownie points' as he also wants to get to the Bocket to meet some friends for 4.30pm. He must have already been out since 8:00am at the latest, what a bloke! (need to get some tips off him).

We make good progress up the canal and Jim decides a quick left along WLL will get him home a little quicker, so we bid him farewell and continue as planned. In doing so we discover the towpath after top lock has some pretty poor drainage, gone were the nice dry tracks of the last few weeks, replaced instead with large puddles stretching the all the way until we left the towpath at the green bridge. We passed a wedding party getting ready for photos outside Haigh Hall, Denis ever the opportunist asking did they want to include us in their album - he got short shrift with that remark. The ride then took us down Pendlebury Lane along Leyland Mill Lane and across onto Mesnes Road. It was this point that someone (I can't think who) suggested that as there were only three riders, would a visit to the Bocket be a better option than an ice cream in Mesnes Park. Unanimous decision, the Bocket it was.

After suitable refreshment and much discussion about Man U (Paul is a long-standing Man U season ticket holder) and Liverpool (Denis territory) we decided we had better complete the ride. We made our way through Mesnes Park admiring the new Fountain (impressive) and Bandstand (equally impressive) along Park Road/Woodhouse Lane to the canal towpath. Paul took his leave and headed back to Appley Bridge while Denis and myself made our way back to Trencherfield.

The weather was very kind to us, other than for a 5-minute shower mid ride. Paul appeared to enjoy himself and expressed a real interest in coming along to the Preston Guild Wheel ride in July. Not a great many miles covered but enjoyable nonetheless.