

Plank Lane Swing-bridge 9:00am, an early but not too bright start for our morning excursion. A mixed group of 15 riders ignored the weather forecast and turned out for the ride. After formal introductions and the usual discussion about route, etc, and a group photograph for good measure, the (larger than normal) group set off Eastward's along the canal to Marsland Green Bridge. Disaster soon struck though with just 800 meters covered, sadly for one of the riders it was a mechanical failure and he had to drop out and return to the car park. The group set off again undeterred, continuing along the canal and down Marsland Green Lane, before joining the cycle track along the East Lanc's for the short stretch to Astley. A misunderstanding, and a road crossing delay saw the leading group turn left into Ellesmere Street, the rest continued down the road past the Boat House. A quick phone call reunited the group and Ray volunteered to be our back marker (did a great job for the rest of the ride). At the Mooring's Harold misjudged a small hop-up and hit the deck good style, after a mandatory count of 10 he was back on his feet and a queue to use the Boatyard toilets gave him more time to recover. The ride continued along the canal, through Worsley and onto Monton before joining NCN 55, as we made our way to the Old Station Platform, where the mandatory stop for coffee and refreshments was taken. Alas the stop was cut short by the onset of the day's rain, it also saw the second fall of the day when Margret came a cropper on the wet slippery platform, landing flat on her back, (at least she didn't fall off the bike). With Margaret suitably recovered, we continued along the old railway line firstly to Walkden and then down to Ellenbrook along the 55, emerging back onto the East Lanc's cycle track. At what once was the Queens, Harold had his second fall of the day, under braking the bike skidded and he hit the deck yet again, (first blood to the tarmac) whilst getting back to his feet he was greeted with "wrong choice of tyre's mate" The group, and rain, continued on to the Greyhound where yet another rider, possibly the youngest of the group, and not wanting to be outdone by Harold and Margret's acrobatics, caught a concrete block and hit the deck himself. Following the mandatory 10 count, he was back on his feet again. After checking his bike and phone the group were on the move again, Pennington Hall followed by the Flash and finally the canal towpath back to Plank Lane. At the car park we bid our farewells to Joy and friends and the same to Margaret at the Bridge. The remaining eight wet riders rode the short distance to the Nevison for a well-earned pint or two. World affairs put in order and pleasantries exchanged; a quick wash of the bikes using the pubs hosepipe saw the group head their separate ways, homeward bound.