

## **Brief Encounters**

Millennium Bridge Lancaster 10:30am, not a soul in sight, the weather forecast had prompted one or two no shows, not everyone though surely! Seven of us were still making our way convoy style through the Lancaster traffic looking for parking places. We eventually made it to the bridge about half an hour later than planned, but were still the first ones to arrive. Couple of phone calls soon rounded up the rest of days participants and following Jims health & safety briefing (quite likes that role) it was time to get underway. Eleven of in total including two guests, one returning (for some more punishment) the other new to the club, but known by most from last years trip to France.

Cycle-path it was, along the banks of the River Lune heading inland towards Halton, the sun wasn't exactly shining but it did keep making an appearance, just to remind us it was actually spring. Halton reached and one of the easiest sections completed it was now down to the days graft, couple of miles of steady climbing, on relatively quiet roads though, as we made our way towards Nether Kellet. Brief stop for breath and a quick drink at the top of the first section prepared us for the last bit of climbing (well almost) before the nice descent almost all the way into Carnforth.

The Heritage Centre based on the Station is host to a well themed tribute to days gone by and of course the "Brief Encounters" scene, fabulous café as well in the Station Masters old office, both packed with memorabilia. Plenty of photo opportunities available; even managed to get one of Paddington Bear ready to embark on his travels, something wasn't quite right though! Coffee's and cakes devoured it was time to bid farewell to Carnforth and proceed via a stretch along the banks of the River Keer before joining the Lancaster Canal towpath for the next leg to Hest Bank. Slight mishap just as we got to the canal, Enid got freaked out at yet another roundabout and took a slight tumble, similar thing happened a few weeks ago on a previous ride, car that time, bus on this occasion, may need to avoid routes with roundabouts in future, either that or make her get off and walk.

Plenty of fabulous canal-side properties on show as we made our way along the towpath, many with splendid views across the bay to Grange over Sands & the Furness peninsula, (not envious at all). Hest Bank, time to leave the towpath and link up with Marine Drive for the jaunt into Morecambe, should have been one of the easier sections, traffic free, flat, and beautiful scenery to take your mind off pedalling. Not to be though, there happened to be (for want of a more accurate description) a slight breeze facing us, so slight if fact that if you stopped pedalling you went backwards, not a cobweb was left in place by the time we got into Morecambe. No visit here would be complete without a photo with one of its famous sons and namesakes as it happens, bet you can't guess who! "What do think of it so far" may be a clue. Photo shoot with the newly repaired statue was duly taken, even yours truly was coerced into the scene, (made such a good job of it you can hardly see the join) was one of the quips that were exchanged, went over most peoples heads that one Tony, sorry.

Cycle-path back into Lancaster and a ride over the Iconic bridge completed our excursion, only thing left to do was find somewhere for lunch, dined in the Green Ayre last time but couldn't quite remember how to get to it, Jim asked a passing fellow cyclist (quite an eccentric looking one as it happened) "which Green Ayre" came the reply, there are two, a rough one and a decent one. He then proceeded to give directions to the decent one, think by this stage Jim wished he hadn't asked. Apparently it was the rough one we dined in last time and would be again this, wasn't bad at all actually, although there were a few dubious looking characters in there, cant say we hadn't been warned. Hang on a minute though, we were all sat in front of a mirror, explains a lot now I come to think about it!

Suitably watered and fed it was time for the homeward journey, the rain that had kindly stayed away for the entire ride had now begun to fall, if only we hadn't stopped for Lunch. Only a short distance to travel, but it was through the City centre, one or two roundabouts and some unfamiliar junctions had Enid in a bit of a panic, understandably so as well. Traffic safely negotiated, we reached the cars and loaded the bikes just as the heavens began to open, talk about timing, "the sun shines on the righteous" apparently.

Another great days cycling, beautiful scenic route, fantastic company, superb coffee & cake stop, dive for lunch and just a little bit of rain right at the end nothing more to say really. Just over 21 miles covered but with the light zephyr to contend with, lets call it 31. Hope our returning guest hasn't been put off joining us again, few slight inclines to deal with last time, hint of a breeze this time, plague of locusts next time perhaps!

One question from the day and many other days for that matter still remains to be answered, one of life's mysteries you might say, how can you ride a circular route and be facing into the prevailing breeze all of the time? Answers on a postcard please if you don't mind!

Many thanks to those that came along, hope you enjoyed it, know I did. See you all on the next outing hopefully.

Final thanks to goes to Denis for hi chauffeuring duties, dropped Jim off at the front door and despite telling him that I would ride home he went out of his way to drop me off at the front door as well, cheers Denis you're a star, (amongst other things that is).

Next up Tatton Park, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.