

Heswall & Chester Loop

We began the ride from the Glegg Arms in Heswall. Our start was delayed slightly as the Wigan contingent had encountered a few problems getting bikes onto bike racks and then negotiating the early morning school run. We set off around 10.25am with the early morning rain showers having passed over leaving a bright but cloudy morning.

A few minutes into the ride we descended a fairly steep hill at a decent speed, which provided a good opportunity for a few photo shots of the ride participants. The only negative was that we would have to encounter the hill again in the opposite direction at the end of the ride. We soon joined a section of the Wirral Way which provided good cycling surfaces in a traffic free environment so giving us plenty time to chat and catch up on the gossip from the weekend. It soon became apparent that we were cycling into a steady headwind although it wasn't strong enough to cause us any concern at this stage in the ride. Alan who was leading the ride assured us that we would have a following wind on our return so no problem. We were cycling parallel to the River Dee and enjoyed some splendid views across to the Welsh mountains. The route took us through Neston and then briefly into Wales where we passed through the Deeside Industrial Park. We knew we were in Wales as there were sheep everywhere and they left their mark on the cycleway to make sure we knew we were on their territory.

We arrived at our Chester destination shortly after noon. The sun was peeking through the clouds as we settled down for lunch at Tower Wharf. Five members of the group decided to nip to Telford's Warehouse, a pub around 5 minutes walk away, for a coffee after lunch. On the way to the pub we spotted a pair of swans nesting on the banks of the wharf oblivious to a busy road over the wall from their nesting site. Unfortunately, the nip for a coffee proved to be wishful thinking, as it must have taken 15-20 minutes for the barman to produce our drinks. The three guys who had been patiently waiting with the bikes sent Ray on a mission to bring the group back to commence the return to Heswall. Jean was forced to hastily drink as much coffee as she could before she was whisked away to join the rest of the group.

We were all looking forward to cycling with the following wind as we set off back but, as so often happens, the following wind did not materialise. Instead, we faced a fierce headwind as we followed the banks of the River Dee for around 6 miles. It was hard toil but at least we each had a saddle on our bike unlike one young guy who passed us pedalling like fury on a mountain bike with only a seat tube. After a steady battle against the wind we finally left the banks of the Dee and headed away from the river where there was a little respite. We welcomed the signpost telling us we were back in England and had a brief stop outside the Harp Inn at Neston for a group photo. The final leg of the ride brought us to the dreaded hill right at the end. Credit is due to everyone on the group here as we all ascended the hill - at various speeds but there were no quitters. Thanks to Alan for guiding us on the ride with the able accompaniment of his brother in law, Ray. Enid, Jean, Joyce, Sue, Denis and Phil made up the group of eight riders who covered a distance in excess of 31 miles. Whilst much of the route was relatively flat it provided a decent challenge for everyone in the windy conditions.