

Tuesday 16 February 2016

It had been very cold overnight with temperatures reported to be as low as -6 degrees. Would this have a negative impact on our numbers venturing out for our weekly Tuesday ride? Not a bit of it – 23 riders turned up all suitably layered and ready to go.

We set off from Trencherfield Mill along our tried and tested canal towpath on the way to Top Lock. However, having overlooked to tell everyone the route we were taking Jim took the opportunity at Manchester Road lock gates to remedy that oversight with a brief description of our en-route destinations.

Tony took the lead for a short stretch leading us off the towpath through the estate roads of New Springs and into Withington Lane at Top Lock. Meanwhile, Brian ever the gentleman, had swapped bikes with Rita and found to his dismay both tyres desperately short of air, no wonder he was panting during the climb to Top Lock. With tyre pressures duly sorted we set off along Hall Lane towards St Elizabeth's Church where a right turn took us onto Bolton Rd and a long steady climb up Dicconson Lane to join Chorley Road (the A6) at Wingates. The climb up Dicconson Lane proved to be a real tester but everyone made it in one go and as Chris reflected 'it doesn't seem to be a problem coming up in the car'!

The short stretch on the A6 took us into Blackrod via Manchester Road and from there it was a left turn into Greenbarn Way taking the quieter route through the village to Little Scotland. We turned right at Suzanna's restaurant into Blundell Lane for a nice easy downhill to Arley Lane, through the golf course (and for you royalists in the group you may be interested to know that Prince Andrew once played this course) and onto Red Rock. Another downhill to turn left into Chorley Road up to Boars Head, left into Gidlow Cemetery and on towards Gidlow Lane. At the end of Gidlow Lane we crossed Prescott St and with Doreen now leading we followed her via a short-cut to the finish at the Community Warehouse. Just over 15 miles with some serious climbing but perfect cycling conditions, cold but dry (and especially for Roy and Anthony no serious mud or puddles)!